



Sequestration or Carbon Capture & Storage - *keeping it simple*



By Andrew Grant - CEO CO₂ Australia

'Carbon sequestration by terrestrial biomass'...

Now there is a catchy phrase. Raise it at a dinner party and you will quickly end up on your own.

Seriously, it really is a problem.

Response to climate change has shown such pace and passion over such a range of issues that most people have been left baffled. The public, and business too, do not fully understand the implications of what is happening to climate and environment because it is too complex, too scientific and increasingly exclusive.

It is frightening that we face global climate change and all the serious implications that brings with it and yet we are hampered by a communications problem.

Awareness is not the problem: understanding is the problem.

Climate change and efforts to reduce carbon emissions promoting it cannot afford vacuums in community understanding - especially not amongst our leaders and key opinion makers.

Aggravating this situation is the fact that some in our ranks who are immersed in the science see a focus on communications as 'soft', a distraction.

At CO₂ we believe that promoting understanding of both the problems and the proposed solutions is a vital part of our job. That most people in the community are better informed about skin cancer, measles and standard drinks, than how we can 'save the planet' and address climate change underlines not only the challenges we face, but also the opportunities.

At CO₂ we are working to make the issue of carbon reduction user-friendly. This doesn't mean we are 'dumbing it down'. It means we are making it more accessible.

We are working to put into plain English many scientific 'boffin' terms like 'sequestration', 'biomass,' 'carbon sinks' and even 'reforestation.' It is not easy. We can all become captives of the vernaculars that emerge in any field of endeavour, but we are trying.

We are trying because we know that, unlike academia, business usually wants less rather than more. If a commercial case cannot be explained simply and briefly, then it is not as appealing as it should be. We must work with that reality.

Indeed, the best examples of simplifying messages, promoting understanding, changing attitude and spurring action are commercial. And while some of my colleagues will question taking a lead from Apple or Virgin, enterprises like these highlight how marketing communications can transform pedestrian goods and services like phones and travel into highly desirable - indeed 'sexy' - must-haves.



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I am not suggesting that we make climate change 'sexy', rather that we can, through increased commercial response to pollution reduction, leverage this involvement by business to better spread the word.

With this in mind, as CEO, I encourage the CO₂ team to continually simplify our messages, and align our offering with the commercial goals of our partners in this process. These partners include Woodside, Eraring Energy, INPEX Browse, Origin Energy, Qantas, Macquarie Bank, Wannon Water, City of Sydney, Big Day Out and Victoria Government

The bottom line is that CO₂'s plain talking is helping a range of organisations get a better and faster grasp of their carbon reduction strategies. It is just the tip of the iceberg of pragmatic solutions that CO₂ offers.

CO₂'s offer hinges on the harsh reality that is the Australian landscape. Pragmatic solutions are required in response to a long heritage of cleared grazing and cropping paddocks. Unlike most other countries, or indeed continents, our case for reforestation is a strong one and it rests on delivering much longer-term benefits across Australia.

CO₂'s reforestation program involves establishing long-term (greater than 100 years) plantings of Mallee Eucalypts. These forests generate carbon credits at a commercial scale unsurpassed in the industry.

Reforestation provides many other physical benefits that are also commercially exploitable. These include:

- increase in biodiversity or, more simply, our plantings provide natural nooks and crannies which attract a range of native plants and animals where there were few previously
- reductions in the impact of soil and wind erosion
- lowering the impact of water logged or dry land salinity caused by the clearing of native vegetation
- improvements in water quality.



Financially, CO₂ offers an attractive low cost option to meet the challenges of lessening the effects of climate change and it offers a proven low-cost solution for companies seeking to hedge their carbon liability. Further, our reforestation programs provide financial and other benefits for landholders and their surrounding communities.

These benefits are being re-packaged by our partners as part of their corporate response to managing obligations under the pending CPRS. They, too, see the value in presenting a clear and easily understood 'story' to their stakeholders.

'Simplification of messages' and 'greater commercial alignment' may sound like spin or buzz words to some people. But, if we want broader community support, including in boardrooms and parliaments, then the science and solutions we espouse must be communicated effectively - in ways that the market likes.

It is that simple.  CE