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HOPE E-news Bulletin #24, 6 September 2009

Hello all,

The public's response to HOPE's LCD public meeting and workshop programs has been disappointing. We have changed "tack" and have some positive directions to follow! The next big thing is the Sustainable House Day on **13 September**. And there are always new projects to be set up, like the environmental film project (see the office news). We are already thinking about our AGM in November, because we have a reason to celebrate: HOPE turns 21 this year. We will keep you up to date about all these happenings in the next few months.

Miriam Sharp, Secretary - office@hopeaustralia.org.au

Office news

HOPE puts in submissions for environmental film project

by Andy Nicholson

As an organisation HOPE seeks to diversify the way it connects and engages with the local community. In light of that need, two recent bids for funding have been made to develop an environmental film project with the working title "Right in my Backyard: local visions for climate change adaptation in the Darling Downs region."

A separate project submission is being made to the Ergon Energy Enviro Fund and the Green Door Group for a documentary film of about 50 minutes' duration that will be used as a resource to stimulate debate within the local community on the implications of projected climate change trends for the Darling Downs.

The key purpose of the film will be to make available in easily accessible form some of the best ideas, creative policy aspirations and pro-active visions for a low-carbon future from key players who have or will have significant influence over decisions affecting the Darling Downs region in the future.

If the funding application is successful the film will be produced by Andy Nicholson, a local environmental educator, and completed by the second half of 2010. It is anticipated the project would then have a 'shelf-life' and capacity to stimulate debate for a minimum of 2 years following completion. Its educational impact could be widened by a number of one-off, public events linked to the film, e.g. a free, public invitation discussion forum to be held within 6 months of the film's release and dealing with the issues raised.

HOPE Turns 21!!!

What a milestone for our group! HOPE has been conducting its business since 1988, first in Victoria and now based in Queensland. Since 2007 we have been incorporated as HOPE. We would like to celebrate our birthday at the AGM on **Saturday 14 November**. Everyone is welcome that day. We will organise something fun. Keep an eye out for more details in the coming enews bulletins.

"Think globally (conceptually), but act locally (systematically)"
by Paul Perkins, Chair of Kimbriki Environmental Enterprises (Insidewaste, Jul-Aug 2009)

Low Carbon Diet project and related news

HOPE LCD project update

- We have received three requests for LCD presentations - Gabbinbar State School; East Creek Neighbourhood Centre (ECNC); and Garden City Rotary Club.
- We asked the Queensland Department of Education to promote the LCD program and related initiatives throughout the state schools network of Queensland - *they have agreed to do so!*
- Ms Rhonda Monroe of Toowoomba's *Home and Community Care* has agreed to distribute HOPE's *Low Carbon Living Starts at Home* booklet to their clients.
- A special thanks to Nigel Kimball of Yarramine Environmental for managing Toowoomba's *Sustainable House Day* event on behalf of HOPE.

Sustainable House Day Reminder

A record 170 homes will open their doors to the public for this year's Sustainable House Day (Sunday, 13 September 2009) as millions of Australians continue to embrace renewable energy, recycling and other practices designed to lessen our impact on the environment. For the first time, homes will open to the public free and the day provides a fantastic opportunity to get first-hand advice and information from ordinary homeowners about the benefits of sustainable living.

The Sustainable House Day website has a list of all open houses and the energy and water saving improvements each house has made. This year HOPE has helped involve two local premises to participate in the Day, one showcasing solar energy usage in a community building and the other sustainable home gardening and permaculture techniques. To view details concerning the location and sustainable living activities of these premises and others around Australia visit the Sustainable House Day website www.sustainablehouseday.com.

Green Loans Program Gathering Steam

The Australian Governments' Green Loans program, a program designed to assist in the retrofitting of 200,000 households around Australia with energy and water saving measures, is gaining momentum. The program commenced on the 1st of July 2009 and as of the end of August has undertaken over 6000 Home Sustainability Assessments by the 870 certified assessors nation-wide currently involved in the program. A further 10,000 bookings for Assessments are currently in the pipeline. The program comprises of a free detailed Home Sustainability Assessment and report for householders, and access to an interest free \$10,000 green loan from participating financial institutions.

The idea of the loan is to assist householders to implement the recommended energy and water saving actions identified in the assessment, which involves the physical inspection of a homes' major energy and water systems relating to thermal comfort, water heating, lighting, refrigeration, cooking, entertainment, water efficiency and outdoor consumption.

Assessments are undertaken by an accredited home sustainability assessor on behalf of the Australian Government. Data collected during the assessment is then entered into a sophisticated assessment software tool to produce environmental impact calculations.

Detailed information can be found on the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts Green Loans website <http://www.environment.gov.au/greenloans/index.html>

In the Toowoomba region, there are two certified assessors currently operating, both associates of HOPE - Oliver Kindler and Nigel Kimball. Local residents interested in having an assessment undertaken are encouraged to contact either Oliver on mob: 0420 325 499 or Nigel on (07) 4638 2442 to book an assessment time.

Climate Change @ Work Conference

The [Climate Change @ Work conference](http://www.wrc.org.au/event-details.php?eventid=78) addresses Australia's potential for increased sustainability in the workplace. It has been running successfully in Sydney for two years addressing issues such as the potential for green skills and green job growth and the potential for carbon reduction in the workplace. Amongst many other themes it has provided insights into established sustainability programs in the workplace. 9am - 5pm, **Thursday 29th of October** at Ship Inn, South Bank, Brisbane. Early bird \$600. Register online: <http://www.wrc.org.au/event-details.php?eventid=78>

Ballandean embraces energy saving ideas

Saving energy and money was the focus of a community information night at Ballandean Community Hall in mid August, run jointly by the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) and the Ballandean State School.

More than 40 people attended the presentation to learn how to reduce energy consumption in their homes and save money on their energy bills. The evening outlined the links between energy use, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, and showed participants how they could limit their energy consumption through simple actions, such as turning appliances off at the wall.

QMDC Education Officer and presenter, Renee Fletcher said while actions might be small they make a difference in reducing everyone's carbon footprint.

"By simply turning off the television at the wall when not in use, households can save money on their energy bills. This also limits our energy consumption and reduces our impact on the environment. Additionally, there are grants and funding available to help families become more ClimateSmart, so it really is becoming easier to be more sustainable around the home," said Ms Fletcher.

Ballandean State School Principal Kath Wenban said it was important the whole community recognised the need to reduce its carbon footprint.

The event was part of the Ballandean Community's Low Carbon Diet Challenge, a ClimateSmart initiative of the Queensland Government. The Challenge aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the school and across the community through behaviour and attitude change.

For further information visit the [QMDC website](http://www.qmdc.org.au), phone 4637 6224 or contact Kath Wenban at Ballandean State School, phone 4684 1254.

***Sustainable House Day 13 September**

Thinking about doing some work on your home to boost its energy, waste or water efficiency? Chatting to sustainable home-owners and checking out their improvements is a great way to test out ideas and get some tips. A record number of homes will open for the eighth annual Sustainable House Day as hundreds and thousands of Australians continue to embrace renewable energy, recycling and other practices designed to lessen our impact on the environment. Around 170 homes are scheduled to open around the country on Sunday 13 September, with 12 of them opening in Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast; and three in Toowoomba.

***Brisbane public hearing about energy efficiency - 11 September 2009**

A public hearing for the Qld Parliamentary inquiry into energy efficiency improvements will be held in the Parliamentary Annexe on Friday 11 September 2009. The hearing will allow speakers to clarify points raised in submissions and to gather further information. Anyone can attend the hearing and be in the audience. To register to do this or to receive further details, please call Carolyn on 3406 7908 or send your contact details to erc@parliament.qld.gov.au.

***New Qld sustainable housing laws are here**

The Queensland Government has introduced new sustainable housing laws to improve the water and energy efficiency of our homes, and encourage smarter design. The laws apply to new houses, townhouses, units and major renovations. A number of the new laws came into effect on 1 March 2009, and others will be introduced at various stages until 1 March 2010.

For more information go to <http://www.forthegreenergood.qld.gov.au/>.

(* Items sourced from Sustainable Jamboree and Planet Ark)

Air-conditioning Laws

The Queensland Government has introduced new sustainable housing laws to improve the water and energy efficiency of our homes and encourage smarter design. The laws apply to new houses, townhouses, units and major renovations. A number of the new laws came into effect on 1 March 2009, and others will be introduced at various stages until 1 March 2010.

The next stage is from 1 September 2009. This affects the installation and sale of inefficient air conditioners in Queensland.

As of 1 September 2009, air conditioners up to a cooling capacity of 65 kW that are installed or sold in Queensland must meet a minimum tested average Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) of 2.9. This is generally equivalent to 4-stars on a current energy rating label.

The goal of these new laws is to promote the use of more efficient air conditioners in Queensland, not ban the use of air conditioners altogether. However, other sustainable housing laws, such as the minimum 5-star energy equivalence rating for houses and townhouses, aim to reduce the need to use air conditioners by cooling your home naturally by using insulation, ventilation and effective house orientation.

Visit the [website](#) or talk to your building professional to find out more about efficient air conditioners and how they can help make your home use less energy and be more sustainable.

Letter to the Editor

A comment about the Murray Darling Buy Back Scheme - Cubbie Station

QLD environment groups support a Commonwealth buy back of water rights from Cubbie Station under the \$3B Murray Darling Buy Back Scheme. This will put water back into the Murray-Darling system and help protect essential downstream wetlands. Importantly it will help protect the Narran Lakes down stream from Cubbie. Narran Lakes are a RAMSAR listed wetlands and subject to Commonwealth protection. In the age of climate change SW QLD is likely to have dramatically reduced rainfall and more drought. It means that major cotton properties-like Cubbie- are increasingly unsustainable. Agriculture needs to move away from water-intense practices towards less water-dependent activities. Buy back of Cubbie water rights is golden opportunity to assist Murray Darling and shift emphasis towards more sustainable agriculture.

Toby Hutcheon - Executive Director Queensland Conservation Council, <http://www.qccqld.org.au>

Local News

Climate Change Forum - Climate Proofing our Communities

A great deal of energy and thought has been invested in anticipation of climate change in southern Queensland by government, community, industry groups and research bodies over the last ten years. This forum will present some of the activities and initiatives already occurring, providing a shared opportunity for review of where we are going in collectively adapting to the impact of climate change in this region.

Where: University of Southern Queensland, lecture theatre C204

When: Wednesday **16th September** 2009

RSVP essential to Don Gibson by 9th September on 3357 1124, 0418 556 670 or dgibson@cva.org.au

Queensland News

Draft coastal development guide seeks public input

A new draft plan for Queensland's coastline indicates a predicted sea level rise of 80 centimetres by 2100.

Climate Change and Sustainability Minister Kate Jones recently said the Draft Queensland Coastal Plan is open for public comment and Queenslanders are asked to help shape the future of coastal management and protection.

Queensland has the longest coastline on Australia's eastern seaboard. More than 80 per cent of Queenslanders live on the coast and one of the greatest threats is to the coastal lifestyle and economies as the rise in sea levels is brought about by climate change.

Ms Jones said after a review of the existing Plan, a new draft plan was prepared and it is compiled in two parts. The first part includes policies to address public access and natural resource management on the coast. For example, policy direction and guidance is provided to local governments and community groups to carry out on-the-ground management activities such as the maintenance of pedestrian and four-wheel-drive access to coastal foreshores.

"The second part will be a State Planning Policy under the Integrated Planning Act 1997 to provide better integration with Queensland's planning laws and the Government's planning reform agenda. It focuses on four major policy issues for conserving coastal resources - urban settlement patterns, maritime development, protecting areas of high ecological significance and managing development in areas potentially at risk from coastal hazards," said Ms Jones.

The draft plan contains mechanisms to protect Queenslanders from coastal hazards such as coastal erosion, storm tide inundation and permanent inundation due to sea level rise. The predicted 80-centimetre sea level rise by 2100 will inform many decisions about the allocation of new areas for urban development and planning by councils for coastal erosion and storm tide inundation. Public comment closes on 31 October.

For a copy of the media release visit the media statement website, and to view the Draft Queensland Coastal Management Plan visit the [Department of Environment and Resource Management website](#).

National News

The Total Environment Centre

Total Environment Centre is a homegrown Australian organisation which has been advocating for the environment and working to bring about real social change for over thirty years. Staffed by some of Australia's most effective and seasoned campaigners (see staff profiles), TEC works with community and government, as well as advising business groups and media, to create awareness and shape crucial policy and legislation to protect our environment. For more info check out the website:

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

Feasibility study of a container deposit system for Tasmania

Report on the feasibility of introducing a Container Deposit System (CDS) in Tasmania undertaken by Hyder Consulting. It examines Australian and overseas systems for recovering empty beverage containers, and assesses options for Tasmania

<http://www.environment.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=4994>

Australian-First Fast Food Composting Initiative Launches In Adelaide As KAB Week Begins



ADELAIDE is host to an Australian-first fast food composting and recycling trial as Keep Australia Beautiful (KAB) Week kicks off nationally with the theme Waste Lives On. ...

[More>>](#)

Updates on upcoming events

September:

- Biodiversity month - all month
- National Threatened Species Day - 7th
- National Landcare Week - 7th to 13th
- Sustainable House Day - 12th to 13th
- International Day for preserving the Ozone Layer - 16th
- World Water Monitoring Day - 18th
- National Neighborhood Day - 20th
- World Car-Free Day - 22nd

Going Green Expo

Come and see energy solutions, carbon neutral beers, waterless car washes, baby products, building products, free seminars, green offers, carbon offset & trading programs and much more! Find out how easy it can be to help save the environment and contribute to a more sustainable future for all of us with products and solutions that don't cost the earth!

RNA Showgrounds - Brisbane - **September 18-20**, 2009 - Commercial Halls 1 & 2

<http://www.goinggreenexpo.com.au>

Trust Organic

A Fortnight of Awareness featuring Organic Standards and Climate Change

Friday **October 2** to Sunday **October 18**, 2009

Trust Organic has two main aims:

- It will be used as an awareness campaign to help consumers identify genuine organic products
- It will also be used to launch the OFA's Australian Government climate change project that will see workshops in every state and territory from 2009 to 2011

The fortnight will generate a lot of media on certified organic products and the benefits of organic farming systems in mitigating climate change. More information can be found at

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

Resources

Web resources

A brand new federal government website with everything you could ever want to know about green living. The **LivingGreener** website provides a starting point for information about living more sustainably and reducing your environmental impact. It also includes information on government programs and financial support. <http://www.livinggreener.gov.au/>

The **organics directory** is an annual publication designed to help consumers find organic products. It is set up as a free community directory. Go to <http://www.theorganicsdirectory.com.au>

Safe Climate Australia is a non-government organisation formed and steered by a foundation group of concerned scientists, community and business leaders with a shared understanding of the scientific and moral imperatives for emergency action to restore a safe climate. For more info go to www.safeclimateaustralia.org

Do the right thing - Use the right bin!

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/waste/public_place_recycling/index.html



Greenpeace Australia Pacific provides resources such as fact sheets, fun and games, FAQs, links, maps, photo stories, reports, videos and audio. Visit <http://www.greenpeace.org/australia/resources/>

The **Energy Efficiency Council** is the peak body for commercial and industrial energy efficiency services and products. The Energy Efficiency Council aims to build the market for energy efficiency products and services, ensure that energy efficiency is implemented with excellence and accountability and establish energy efficiency as the pre-eminent measure for carbon mitigation to 2020. Their website is <http://www.eec.org.au/>.

Landcare/NRM news

Landcare week

Landcare Week 2009 (Sep 7-13) is nearly here, and this year it marks the 20 year milestone of Landcare Australia. Under the theme "*Join the Landcare Journey*", the awareness week celebrates the huge contribution landcare volunteers have made to environmental conservation in their local communities, as well as encouraging others to put up their hands and get involved. New Landcare Australia research shows that many people are willing to get involved, but few actually do; mainly because they aren't sure how. During Landcare Week, local landcare groups throughout Australia will be holding community activities and would value volunteers who want to get involved. Go to www.landcareweek.com to participate.

Councils across Queensland are really going green!

Forty eight local councils across Queensland, from the Cape to Coolangatta, will begin recruiting members of Queensland's Green Army to fill 262 Green Traineeships, that are up for grabs! For further information or to register for a Green Army project, visit the [Green Army website](#) , phone the hotline 1800 249 215, or visit the [Skilling Queenslanders for Work website](#).

(Sourced from The Bugle, August 2009)

**visit a Sustainable House
in your neighbourhood**
Sunday September 13 | sustainablehouseday.com

A tip / helpful hint

Melissa Glen has prepared a series of helpful hints sheets on Sustainable Living. We will publish parts of these in our e-news bulletin on a regular basis. The full version of the series is available from the office, and will also be available from the 'helpful hints' page on our website soon. Thank you Melissa for your contribution.

Helpful Hints - Ethical eating

by Melissa Glen

To be aware of the food chain and be more disciplined about what goes into our mouths is very important in order to minimise our negative impact on the planet. Ethical eating is a complicated issue that requires awareness of numerous factors, while also recognising that there are no hard and fast rules. Often it is virtually impossible to know that everything you eat has been ethically produced. However, important issues to consider include, factory farming, genetically modified crops, organic food, free-range eggs, vegetarianism and of particular importance in the context of global warming, 'food miles'.

What you can do:

- **Buy locally and seasonally** to combat the negative impact of 'food miles' and 'ghost acres'. *Think globally, act locally* - get to know your local neighbourhood by walking rather than driving, support local retailers not multinationals, and support local producers. Keep in mind that though depending on the methods used to grow the produce, buying locally may not always be the best option.
- Buy **organic** foods where you can, and buy your fruit and vegetables in season as much as possible. Organic fruit and vegetables are generally grown locally and in season because they cannot be transported very far and do not have the preservatives that conventional produce does.
- Check ingredients lists and avoid products that are excessively packaged or contain high levels of artificial colours, flavours and sugars.

Remember, you CAN make a difference!

Think before you print! 1 ream of paper = 6% of a tree and 5.4 kg CO₂ in the atmosphere; 3 sheets of A4 paper = 1 litre of water

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