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## HOPE E-news Bulletin #31, 28 February 2010

Hello,

Did you all sign up for Clean Up Australia Day? You can find out on the website [how to get involved](#). And you can always clean up your own patch. What a difference it would make if everyone would look after their own backyards. And front yards. Have a tidy up around the house, so that no rubbish gets left to harm our environment.

We have started our Climate Action News section, both here and on the [website](#), so check it out. I hope you will enjoy this edition of the e:news bulletin.

*Miriam Sharp*

Secretary - [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au)

*"I must do something" always solves more problems than "Something must be done." Author Unknown*

### Office news

#### **Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) / Department of Environment & Resource Management (DERM) meetings, 17-19 February**

My trip to Brisbane for the Queensland Environment Network (QEN) meetings and the roundtable discussion with DERM was successful on many fronts, although we were not able to formally present our case for operating funding. I'll explain further after I've given my account of the QEN activity.

On Wednesday morning after brief introductions all round, organisations present were asked to give a report on their activities.

Highlights included SCEC's (Sunshine Coast Environment Coast) *10,000 Solar Roofs Project*; a number of public forums on Population Growth; and the potential negative impacts of mining in central Queensland. My report of HOPE's 2009-2010 activities was well received. Conversely, the afternoon sessions included formal presentations from CAFNEC (Cairns & Far North Queensland Environment Council) on the *Carpentaria Gulf Floods of 2009*, and MCG (Mackay Conservation Council) on *Carbon Intensive Development in the Galilee Basin: Community Questions*. Both excellent PowerPoint presentations. TWS (The Wilderness Society), WPSQ (Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld) and FoE (Friends of the Earth - Brisbane) gave verbal presentations.

On Thursday morning, we were engaged in discussions on the 3 presentations - Biodiversity Strategy; Coastal Management Plan; and the Growth Summit - which were to be presented to DERM on the Friday.

The afternoon session focussed on reaffirming our commitment to QCC's Joint Campaign Documents and to chart the documents progress through government policy and legislation. I left early to attend an Earth Charter +10 Conference at New Farm.

Now .... operating funding. My meeting with Minister Kate Jones was cancelled and I was unsuccessful in gaining a meeting with Terry Wall, the Associate Director-General for Operations and Environmental Regulator. So, I ended up leaving our request letter and supporting documentation with a staff member. The bottom line is that under the current funding arrangements, DERM will only fund one group in Toowoomba.

### **Earth Charter +10 Conference**

From the meeting on Thursday 18 February, I learned that the EC+10 committee are well advanced with organising the many varied and interesting aspects of the 16 -22 September event.

Day 1's theme is *Inspiration*; day 2 covers *Seeds of Change* (formal education stream), *Living and Breathing Communities* (individuals and local communities stream), and *Harvesting the Benefits* (corporate and governance stream); and day 3's theme is *Celebration*.

-->I have offered the committee the use of our set of 12 *Seeds of Change* posters; and in return they have invited HOPE to have an information display at separate venues on different dates. They may also be interested in seeing/using Andrew's *Sustainability - A World View* presentation.

### **Clean Up Australia Day, 7 March 2010**

Planning for our local Clean Up Australia Day event with Neighbourhood Watch (NHW)

Toowoomba 32 is well in hand with the Glennie School and St. Mary's Christian Brothers College both supplying groups of students to help out on the day. All up there are 19 sites registered for clean up in the Toowoomba Regional Council area.



Glennie School Interact Group, Frank Ondrus (sun-glasses) and Hon. Kerry Shine MP, Member for Toowoomba North

### **Gardenfest 1-3 March 2010**

Preparations for HOPE's *Gardenfest* site are also fairly advanced with the following activities locked in:

- HOPE's shade tent with information display - Frank, Miriam & other volunteers
- Square Foot Gardening bed - Neil Tracey-Smith
- The Meter Man - David von Pein
- Composting (incl. tumbler) / Worm Farms (various types)- Neil T-S & Terry Ryan
- Chook Tractor - Ian Simons

- Companion Planting / Seed Bank / Container Gardening- Jan Rankin & others

If you're a Toowoomba local and you have some spare time over the Labour Day weekend, please volunteer to help staff our display area. Contact Frank on 4639 2135 to register your availability.

### Transition Towns

Several committee members met with Dr. Karey Harrison from the University of Southern Queensland on Friday 12 February to discuss the merits of the Transition Towns concept and its possible implementation in the Toowoomba Regional Council area. Donnell Davis, Friends of SEQ, has offered to assist in this exercise.

*Frank Ondrus, President*

### Positions Vacant - Areas where you can help

HOPE is looking for volunteers who can help in the following areas:

--- Admin assistance; Media Team; Membership; Marketing & Public Relations; Issue Campaigners - Climate Change; and Genetically Modified Organisms; and Media Monitors.

A fair portion of the above work would ideally be done by locals (i.e. in the Toowoomba area) because the HOPE office is in Toowoomba. However, quite a bit of the literature review, research, publications activity can be done via email. If you have a little bit of time to help us in any way, then contact the HOPE office on email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au) or phone (07) 4639 2135.

### Climate Action News

The "A Climate of Change" toolkit developed by BREAZE climate group in Ballarat, Victoria, contains a range of resources under headings such as advocacy and campaigning, community bulk buy, fund-raising, governance, media, networking, running events, starting a group, strategies and plans, working with volunteers AND MORE! Visit <http://breaze.org.au/groups>. Another toolkit can be found at <http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/library/check-out-our-climate-action-toolkit>.

### Wind Energy Powered Ahead Globally in 2009

The Global Wind Energy Council has announced the world's wind power capacity grew to 157.9GW in 2009. During last year, 37.5GW of wind turbine capacity was added, representing growth of 31% over 2008.

### Australia A Smart Grid World Leader

Australia is now considered to be one of the world leaders in a technology to play a critical role in addressing how the world utilises energy in the future - smart grid development.

Read more at [http://www.energymatters.com.au/index.php?main\\_page=news\\_article&article\\_id=758](http://www.energymatters.com.au/index.php?main_page=news_article&article_id=758)

The [Community Climate Network Queensland](#) brings together grassroots climate action groups from across the state to support a strong climate movement.





[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.

#### [Comparing carbon policies made easy](#)

As major debate now envelops Federal Parliament on climate change and how Australia will respond to the threat, a Charles Sturt University expert on climate change policy has developed a simple comparison between the two policies.

#### **Green Streets**

How green is your household? Your street? Your neighbourhood? Log on today to [www.greenstreet.net.au](http://www.greenstreet.net.au) to see how you rate, set yourself some targets to reduce your carbon footprint, and share ideas with others who are practicing sustainability in the suburbs.

	<b>National E-Waste briefing to bring together recyclers and manufacturers</b> As smaller and more advanced electronics pour into the market place, an avalanche of outdated equipment heads for to our landfills.... <a href="#">More&gt;&gt;</a>
	<b><a href="#">2010 Premier's ClimateSmart Sustainability Awards - Call for Nominations</a></b> Queensland Conservation has teamed up with Brisbane gardening celebrities Annette McFarlane and Jerry Coleby-Williams and two of Brisbane's leading restaurants to make your mouth water and your thumbs greener. <a href="#">Find out more... &gt;&gt;</a>
	<b><a href="#">Switch to solar and save</a></b> Switching to solar has never been more affordable with the Queensland Government's Solar Hot Water Program. <a href="#">Find out how to save money here... &gt;&gt;</a>
	<b><a href="#">SEQ schools to go low carbon!</a></b> The Department of Environment and Resource Management and Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland (KABQ) have now kicked off the new Low Carbon Diet in School Communities program. <a href="#">Find out more... &gt;&gt;</a>

#### **Updates on Upcoming Events**

**Clean Up Australia Day**, Sunday **7 March** 2010, **Business Clean Up Day 2 March**, **Schools Clean Up Day 5 March**, <http://www.cleanup.org.au/au/>

#### **[Sustainable Population Forum](#)**

Stop Squeezing the Life out of South East Queensland! Steps to a Stable and Healthy Future  
A Public Forum at the Queensland Museum Theatre, South Bank - Saturday **13th March**, 8:30am - 12.30pm. In this forum our expert presenters will explain how you can make all levels of government cooperate to solve the problems of South East Queensland's unsustainable population growth.

Australia's Climate Action Summit, **13-15 March** 2010, <http://www.climatesummit.org.au/>

**Earth Hour** 8.30 pm, Saturday **27 March**, 2010, <http://www.earthhour.org.au>

**Gardenfest**, **1-3 May**, TAFE Toowoomba. Info at <http://www.gardenfesttoowoomba.com.au>

## Letter to the Editor

### Carpentaria Gulf Floods of 2009

*The inundation of over 10 million hectares of the Gulf country early this year will have far reaching consequences for the region's flora, fauna and grazing. Some areas were under water for up to 8 weeks leading to devastation of animal and plant communities over large areas. Land once covered by a rich coat of native grasses are now bare earth, rivers and waterholes once healthy are choking with the death and decay.*

*Occurring at the same time as the Bushfires in Victoria, the Gulf Floods received little attention in the media. State and Commonwealth governments were also largely unaware of the disasters extent until documented and brought to their offices by the Georgetown-based Northern Gulf Resource Management Group.*



*Before flood*



*Post Flood - July 2009*

*Ecologist Noel Preece has recently visited the area and reported that it is difficult to know how the country will recover. "The disturbing thing I found in summary is that most of the ground animals - the skinks and probably the small mammals - are gone," he said.*

*"In the trees the things I would normally expect in surveys of that nature were still there. It's like the bottom half of the equation is gone and the top half has still survived."*

*The flood waters killed and leached nutrients from plants whilst overland water flows removed topsoil and seed banks. The result is landscape similar to that after a protracted drought. The spread of weeds is also likely to be yet another pressure resulting from this event.*

*Cattle have suffered and many died both during and after the flood. Longer term strategies are being developed to remove cattle to other areas and allow the landscape to recover, a process that may take many years in some areas. The effect on many landholders will be significant and long lasting.*

*Disaster relief required to enable landholders to manage their operations in a changed landscape should be forthcoming from State and Commonwealth governments. The coming years will provide the communities of the Gulf with many challenges and all levels of government must ensure adequate resources are allocated to enable the landscape and communities to recover. We must ensure there is not simply more pressure placed on graziers to extract more from their land when it most needs to recover.*

*For more information on the floods visit: [http://www.northerngulf.com.au/stay\\_informed.html](http://www.northerngulf.com.au/stay_informed.html)  
(Photos courtesy of the Northern Gulf Resource Management Group)*

*By Steve Ryan, Cairns and Far North Environment Centre*

## Queensland News

### Smart Steps For Schools

*By Michelle Smith*

**As part of the Queensland Government's climate change response to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the TravelSmart Schools' program will be expanded state wide this year.**

The Government recognises the vital role that schools play in supporting its Toward Q2 target of reducing private household emissions by one-third by 2020. By encouraging staff, parents and students to become active travellers and decrease their use of private vehicles, schools have the potential to contribute dramatically to the success of the TravelSmart program.

Much of this success can be attributed to the implementation of School Travel Plans (STPs). The STPs are online tools designed to identify current transport trends and to suggest alternative methods of transport that, if adopted, will greatly improve environmental sustainability. As a result, the school community will be encouraged to participate in active travelling such as walking, cycling, carpooling and public transport.

Apart from the obvious benefits to the environment, school communities will profit from a range of positive effects through the implementation of STPs. Reduced traffic congestion and noise and air pollution will contribute to healthier students and staff and a decrease in absenteeism. In particular, students taking advantage of active travelling will become physically fit, in line with the Government's Smart Moves program, and demonstrate a better knowledge of road safety and the environment. The long-term result should address growing concerns that increased car dependency is producing generations of adults with sedentary lifestyles.

Among other detrimental effects, car dependency has been identified as one of the major factors contributing to child obesity. Other long-term consequences include the omission of some important life skills such as navigation and road awareness and other health issues arising from pollution from gas emissions.

Given the many benefits of reducing private car use, TravelSmart's STPs make sense. The Government has allocated \$5 million to implement this program across the state. Although it is not compulsory for all schools to participate, it is one way that they can assist in actively decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, while at the same time, provide a healthier lifestyle for the whole community.

To be a part of this initiative, schools simply have to log on to [www.transportandmainroads.qld.gov.au](http://www.transportandmainroads.qld.gov.au) to register their interest with the TravelSmart team. On approval, they will be allocated tools, information and resources to implement the program.

It is exciting news for all Australians and a way to participate in a community project to enhance Australia's sustainability. Don't miss out in an opportunity to share in the TravelSmart initiative.

Travel better. Travel smart for a sustainable future.

## Mutual Support Partnership news

### What is Gecko?

Gecko - Gold Coast and Hinterland Environment Council is a collection of remarkable people who join together to use their talents, skills and knowledge to care for our planet and its entire species. Gecko formed in 1989 from a coalition of local conservation organizations. It is a not-for-profit, non-party-political volunteer organisation which is situated in Gecko House on Currumbin Creek. Gecko members are volunteers and the organisation is managed by an elected Management Committee. Gecko is recognised as the peak regional environmental organisation by all three levels of Government. Gecko comprises advocates for the environment, artists, bush regenerators, librarians, researchers, lobbyists, writers, builders, people good with figures and money, people who can educate, people who network, people who sit on committees, people who interact with politicians and the media and most of all people who like people.

In 2010 Gecko members are involved in a range of activities, including:

- **Launching a new website** - OUT NOW! See [www.gecko.org.au](http://www.gecko.org.au)
- **Youth Earth Network** - a group of young people interested and active in a variety of environmental activities throughout the community
- **'Healthy Planet' projects** - focusing on reducing carbon pollution and mitigating climate change in homes, in organisations, and throughout the general community
- **GeckoEd** - providing quality environmental education to schools and the community
- **Campaigns** such as saving the Gold Coast's koalas, removal of shark nets, protection of local National Parks, transport issues, sustainable housing, water management...
- **Bush regeneration** at Nicoll Scrub, Elanora Wetlands and Tarrabora Reserve
- **Events** including Environmental Awards, Clean Up Australia Day, Green Day Out festival, and a Gecko stall presence at other events
- **Guest Speakers** on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm.
- **Submissions to government** and consulting on current issues, e.g. the Draft Queensland Government Coastal Management Plan
- A monthly **e-newsletter** and an environmental **library / resource centre** open to all
- Finding and applying for **grants** to continue our work

**General Meetings** are at 6.30pm on the second Wednesday of each month at Gecko House. New members/volunteers are very welcome. We have a niche for you whatever your interest.

## General

Food security is a term that, like global warming and climate change, we are going to hear a lot of in 2010, and with good reason. But, unlike a lot of earth threatening issues that seem just too big for an individual to make a real difference, there is so much each and every one of us can do to ensure food security for our families, our communities and the planet. Find out about food security, and how we can all make a difference here. Read more at <http://www.sgaonline.org.au/?p=704>

Have some fun! Play "[Save the Cows](#)". Highest daily scores get a voucher. Do your bit for the environment one fart at a time!

### Perth CBD now good enough to eat

Perth residents have welcomed a new, sustainably-designed addition to their inner CBD, with the opening of the unique 'Greenhouse' bar. Read more at <http://www.gmagazine.com.au/news/1789/perth-cbd-good-enough-eat>

## Landcare News

### Death to destructive feral animals with new funding

Australia's most damaging vertebrate pests, including camels, foxes and wild dogs, will be targeted by 12 new Australian Government projects around the country. Pests such as rabbits, foxes and feral pigs have a major impact on agricultural production each year. Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke announced the projects will receive more than \$629,700 through the Australian Pest Animal Management Program, administered by the Bureau of Rural Sciences.

"Feral animals cost ..." See more at

[http://www.maff.gov.au/media/media\\_releases/2010/january/new\\_funding\\_to\\_tackle\\_destructive\\_feral\\_animal\\_pests](http://www.maff.gov.au/media/media_releases/2010/january/new_funding_to_tackle_destructive_feral_animal_pests)

### Australian Framework for Landcare

The Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister for Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry is supporting the Landcare community to develop an Australian Framework for Landcare to guide Landcare for the next 20 years. The development phase of the framework is your opportunity to have a say about the way forward for Landcare. In December 2009 the National Landcare Facilitator (NLF) and the Australian Government conducted extensive consultation with the Landcare community including workshops designed to facilitate discussion on the framework held in each state and territory. Extensive input has also been received from the community by written and email comments as well as submissions to an internet blog hosted by the NLF. The framework will be introduced for discussion at the National Landcare Forum being held in Adelaide on 23-24 March 2010. Following the forum, the Australian Landcare Council will take responsibility of the framework and together with the new NLF, Brett de Hayr, will lead the further development and implementation of the framework. In the interim period the recently appointed Reference Group for the Australian Framework for Landcare will guide and help refine its development. For further information about the framework see [www.landcarefacilitator.com.au](http://www.landcarefacilitator.com.au) or to provide input please contact [landcareframework@daff.gov.au](mailto:landcareframework@daff.gov.au).

### Landholders get a helping hand

Local landholders in the Ravensbourne and Crow's Nest districts are being offered assistance to manage native vegetation, including rainforest, semi-evergreen vine thicket, brigalow and eucalypt forest communities on their properties. The initiative represents one of six initial projects across Southern Queensland funded through the five-year, \$1.6 million Powerlink GreenWorks program. The program aims to deliver lasting environmental benefits to communities where Powerlink is planning to develop and operate essential electricity transmission infrastructure. The Emu Creek, Ravensbourne and Crow's Nest project is being managed by SEQ Catchments, in partnership with Toowoomba Regional Council, Emu Creek and Ravensbourne Landcare Groups and the Crow's Nest Creek Catchment Group.

## Resources

### Web resources

#### Water Education Toolkit

The *Water Education Toolkit* is the first national water education resource of its type in Australia, bringing together hundreds of online water education materials into one easy and convenient place. It provides Australian teachers and schools with better access to a multitude of water curriculum and resource material, to enhance students understanding and awareness of this valued natural resource.

Visit the Water Education Toolkit today [www.environment.gov.au/wet](http://www.environment.gov.au/wet)

(Sourced from DEWHA News, Feb 2010)

## **The Centre for Sustainability Leadership Fellowship Program**

The Centre for Sustainability Leadership is a progressive not-for-profit organisation with the unique vision of creating a new generation of sustainability leaders in every sector of society. To achieve this, the Centre offers an acclaimed scholarship-based program combining leadership skills with sustainability - the Centre for Sustainability Leadership Fellowship Program. The program runs for eight-months from April to November in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia and equips participants with the right skills, knowledge, and networks to drive real sustainability initiatives. Additionally, the program involves weekly training evenings, residential retreats, project work and a mentorship program. Scholarship places are available. More information can be found at our website [www.csl.org.au](http://www.csl.org.au). Applications close 28th February 2010.

## **Helpful hints and tips**

### **Numerous things we can do to help save our planet - part 1**

Each one of us needs to reduce our 'carbon footprint' as much as we possibly can. We need to decrease it to the bare minimum. Here are numerous easy ways we can all contribute to saving our planet.

#### **In the home:**

- Use green cleaning products.
- Get a compost toilet in your home - there is a range of these available.
- Put a brick in your toilet cistern, or have an economy flush fitted to your toilet.
- Use solar heating in your home.
- Work towards a carbon-zero home.
- Check that the wood you use in your fireplace / wood heater is environmentally friendly.
- Don't leave unfinished DIY products lying around; use them up or donate them to someone or an organisation who/that will use them.
- Get your whole house insulated, especially the ceiling, and exclude all draughts from your home.
- Use natural paints and materials to decorate your home. Many of the ones people use 'leak' harmful gases into the atmosphere.

#### **Garden:**

- Plant trees.
- Grow plants on your roof (green roofs).
- Keep a compost bucket and heap (perhaps a worm farm/wormery too).
- Shower - don't bath your plants.
- Don't use peat compost, try making your own.
- Make a wildlife pond in your garden.
- Plant ground covers.
- Put out a water container.

*Remember, you CAN make a difference!*

Think before you print! 1 ream of paper = 6% of a tree and 5.4 kg CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere; 3 sheets of A4 paper = 1 litre of water

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