



Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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HOPE E-news Bulletin 2020 #11 --- November 2020

The following items have been gathered from various e: newsletters received by HOPE in recent times; and/or prepared specifically by HOPE members and supporters. If you have any news to contribute, please forward to office@hopeaustralia.org.au. Deadline for articles is 15th day of the month.

Editorial

Hi everyone, here we are, already in November.

In this month's issue we observe recycling week (9-15) by drawing attention to Australia's significant contribution to plastic pollution and preserving Earth's finite resources by emphasising the sale, exchange, and re-gifting of items so they can be reused and repurposed.

This month we hold our Annual General Meeting and ask members to consider nominating for a position on the management committee (Toowoomba residents) or admin support (local & remote). Please contact the HOPE office if you are interested.

Regards,
Daniela Dal'Castel, Newsletter Editor – HOPE Inc.

2020 National/International Events Calendar

November

- 5 [World Tsunami Awareness Day](#)
- 8-15 [Pollinator Week](#)
- 9-15 [National Recycling Week](#)
- 9-19 [UN Climate Change Conference COP 26](#)
- 14 **HOPE AGM and 1st Ordinary Meeting of new committee – Toowoomba, Qld**
- 18 [International GIS Day](#)
- 21 [World Fisheries Day](#)

December

- 5 [International Volunteer Day](#)
- 5 [World Soil Day](#)
- 10 [Human Rights Day](#)
- 11 [International Mountain Day](#)

HOPE Office News --- November 2020

Good morning folks,

This month's focus is on our Annual General Meeting (AGM); the 1st Ordinary Meeting of the 2020-2021 Management Team; and reviewing grant applications, projects and future undertakings.

If you would like to contribute to the development of HOPE's 5year Strategic Plan, please notify the office of your interest in being on a working group; and/or your suggestions regarding HOPE's future.

Regards,

Frank Ondrus, Office Manager – HOPE Inc., ph. 07 4639 2135, www.hopeaustralia.org.au

Volunteer Profile

Regina Kimble, HOPE social media and researcher QLD



I have recently started volunteering with HOPE Inc. in August. My main role is posting content onto our main social media platforms: Facebook and Instagram. I also write articles.

I am originally from California, but have been in Australia for the past 5 years now. My love for scuba diving and the Great Barrier Reef brought me to Australia in 2015. I have a Bachelor in Marine Science and a Masters in Environmental Management, majoring in Sustainable Development. I currently work as a Health, Safety and Environment Advisor in the construction industry. I am passionate about keeping people and the environment safe.

I started volunteering with HOPE Inc. because I missed learning about conservation and sustainability. Working in the corporate world, my day-to-day is focused on niche work. Diversifying my interests and reading not only helps me be more environmentally conscious, but also helps me identify and solve problems in a different way at work. I also am passionate about the idea “think globally, act locally”. I think as individuals we make our greatest impacts by our own actions and how we influence our family and close friends.

Feature Articles

Australian Earth Laws Alliance’s Bioregional Governance Initiative: GreenPrints Program

By *Sofija Belajcic* - HOPE researcher NSW



The growing interest in Earth law and the need for governance which helps to protect natural ecosystems has given rise to the questions on practical implementation of these ideas. Australian Earth Laws Alliance, a not-for-profit organisation which advocates for Earth-centred governance and laws, has created the GreenPrints program which aims to pilot Earth centred governance systems in bioregions.

The GreenPrints program is designed to provide the “blueprints” for designing governance systems to support Earth centred human societies. Through the collective effort of experts from natural sciences, Indigenous knowledge systems, law, planning and many other disciplines, AELA is exploring the creation of models for bioregional ecological health. Specifically, GreenPrints focuses on providing answers to the issue of creating governance systems within our ecological limits. Currently, the ecological crisis facing society is a result of increased encroachment into natural habitat, fuelled by industrialisation and our never-ending consumption habits. Learning to live within our ecological limits is therefore imperative if we wish to reverse this problem. The Earth jurisprudence perspective on this issue advocates that laws must be designed to ensure that human activities fit within the ecological limits of the natural world.

To map out how Earth centred governance looks like in practice, the GreenPrints project begins with bioregions. A bioregion is a land or sea area which is defined by its common characteristics such as natural features or environmental processes. Bioregions do not have political borders, rather they have natural boundaries such as mountain ranges. Much like the laws of human society begin with humans as their unit of analysis, The GreenPrints take bioregions as its unit. In this way, all of the ecological communities within that bioregion, including human beings, are covered and effective laws may be mapped out. Part of the GreenPrints approach involves the GreenPrints mapping tool which allows anyone to find the bioregion in which they live, see how it is being used, and develop responses on how to restore ecosystems and manage impacts in the future. This mapping tool is part of the broader, ‘citizen governance’ approach to law, empowering everyday individuals and communities to take control of the information on their bioregion and participate in decision-making processes.

Greenprints is uniquely Australian and starts by connecting us to our local bioregion and learning from First Nations peoples about how to care for country

To find out more about GreenPrints and to get your community involved, please visit their website at www.greenprints.org.au and follow AELA on Facebook at @AustralianEarthLaws to find out about more Earth centred governance projects.

National News

Community Exchange System (CES) Australia - www.communityexchange.net.au

By Christopher Leivesley – HOPE researcher QLD



CES functions as a parallel microeconomy, offering an online platform for the exchange of goods and services. Unlike a bartering system, which relies upon the improbable coincidence of two members each having something the other wants, Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS), such as CES, use the fluidity of currency. Contributions earn credits to be spent at the provider's convenience, while buyers incur a debit to the community. LETS are distinct from a traditional economy in that their currency is not subject to interest. Furthermore, members are pushed to equalise their balance when they accrue high debit or credit. There is therefore a strong impetus circulating community credits, preventing stagnation and the pockets of poverty and affluence unavoidable in the real-world economy.

The apparent shortcoming in LETS is their limited size. The Global CES networks 1,170 LETS communities spread over 102 countries; 42, 215 members use the server. Such small and sparse groups could not meet their needs without the larger economy, but the value of LETS' should not be underrated. CES users are primarily unemployed, underemployed, or retired; community exchanges effectively create employment, allowing members to save on purchases available within their network. BrisLETS, one of the trade communities on the Australian CES server, has seen major purchases, such as accommodation and building materials. More everyday offers, such as financial advice or camping equipment, will obviously make a significant impact to members living on low incomes.



LETS' reach their potential during economic crises. As unemployment rises and cashflow constricts, more people can benefit from augmenting their income with the pseudo-currency of a community exchange. In Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1995, an exchange network began with a garage sale wherein attendees each brought an unwanted item in return for photocopied notes with which to make their purchase. By the end of the Argentinian Great Depression in 2002, 7% of the population were using exchange network currency (Créditos), trading hundreds of millions of dollars-worth of goods and services. During depression, much of an economy's skills and produce fall into disuse without the spark of money to ignite trade. LETS uses fake currency to break the absurdity of this bind.

CES runs an additional server in Australia for Timebanking. The cousin system of CES, Timebanking allows volunteers to offer their unique skills to the community, with the bonus of later trading their hours of service for equal hours of favours. For the ultra-altruistic, Timebanking permits members to donate their time, then give-up their time credits to another user.

The major struggle for community networks, localisation and low membership, has become less pertinent with the world shift to online interaction. CES allows for the exchange of credits between all LETS, including communities on different servers. As international travel and face-to-face interaction become less popular and unemployment sits at record highs, the CES network has the potential to become an essential resource.

CES exchange newsletters: www.communityexchange.net.au/cen.htm

CES Australian exchanges: <https://communityexchange.net.au/joinexchange.asp?country=AU>

BrisLETS demonstration site: www.community-exchange.org/demo/index.htm



International News

Plastic Pollution in Our Oceans

By Regina Kimble - HOPE Researcher QLD

Marine Plastic Pollution

Plastic has become an integral part of daily life. Plastic production has increased over twentyfold since 1964 and is anticipated to double again by 2030 (Reisser et al., 2013). Plastic is an inexpensive and simple material that's used in multiple industries, ranging from making personal protective equipment to food production. However, if it is not disposed of properly, plastics enter waterways and oceans, creating a major threat to marine life. Marine animals can become entangled in plastic pieces like fishing nets or ingest microplastics. Microplastics are pieces of fragmented plastic that are smaller than 5 millimetres, they usually come from synthetic clothes or microbeads from personal care products. Microplastics can bioaccumulate up the food chain and consequently in the seafood we eat – for example, sardines can have up to 3 milligrams of plastic inside them (Riberio et al., 2020).



A large concentration of debris and plastic from the Pacific Garbage Patch.
Image: The Ocean Cleanup

Think Globally: Pacific Garbage Patch

Ocean currents, wind movements and wave action move plastic around the globe. Everything that is thrown away is never truly gone, it just moves out our immediate sight. The Pacific Garbage Patch is a concentration of debris pollution in the North Pacific Ocean, that spans over 1.6 million square kilometres (NOAA, 2020). Contrary to popular belief, the Pacific Garbage Patch is not one giant patch of garbage, it is actually made up of patches of debris, with most of the debris being plastics (NOAA, 2020).

Over 50% of the plastics found in the Pacific Garbage Patch come from North America and Asia (National Geographic, 2019). These plastics do not biodegrade, they break down into smaller pieces and eventually microplastics. Marine wildlife can easily consume this microplastic pollution, leading to choking, starvation or chemical poisoning (Riberio et al., 2020). These microplastics also harm plankton and algae because microplastics obstruct sunlight, which these autotrophs need to grow (National Geographic, 2019). This can have cascading impacts on an ecosystem's food web, as plankton and algae are the foundation of the marine food chain. The Pacific Garbage Patch is only one of five patches that accumulate in our oceans, and if society does not reduce plastic waste, these patches will only grow larger and destroy more marine ecosystems.



Common plastic pollution found in a coral reef.
Note, microplastics are not visible to the human eye.

Image: Michael O'Neill/ Science Source

Australia's Plastic Pollution Problem

In 2016 alone, over 34 billion fragments of plastic were found in Australian waters (Reisser et al., 2013). Australia consumes almost 1.5 million tonnes of plastic each year, around only 20% of it is recycled (Riberio et al., 2020). On Australia's beaches, over 75% of pollution found is from plastic, with Gold Coast BeachCare volunteers collecting over 500 kilograms of rubbish from sand dunes alone in one year (Hardesty et al., 2016). In the Great Barrier Reef, over 80% of debris is from plastic, mostly from plastic bags, water bottles, bottle caps and toothbrushes (Lamb et al., 2018). Recent research has found plastics leach toxic chemicals that harm and kill corals (Lamb et al., 2018). With compounding factors like climate change further harming Australia's marine life, urgent action is needed to reduce plastic consumption and waste.

Act Locally: What Can You Do?

There are many actions individuals can take to reduce plastic pollution in our oceans. The most direct impact an individual can have is reducing the use of single-use items. Small actions like taking a reusable bag when shopping, swapping to a bamboo toothbrush, or bringing your own refillable water bottle, cutlery and straws when eating out can greatly reduce plastic consumption. Individuals can also reduce their purchase of synthetic clothes or toiletries with microbeads. These types of products create harmful microplastics that destroy marine life and ecosystems. Encouraging the government to ban single-use plastics is another important step in reducing plastic pollution.

Individuals can sign petitions to support laws that ban the use of single-use plastics. Linked in the next section are some petitions you can sign show support for banning single-use plastics in Australia. While marine plastic pollution is usually out of sight, it is an ever-growing problem that is harming Australia's diverse marine life. By taking these small actions, individuals can help reduce marine plastic pollution.

Petitions to Sign

1. Australian Marine Conservation Society – Support the ban on single-use plastics:
<https://www.marineconservation.org.au/actions/ban-single-use-plastics/>
2. WWF – Encourage politicians to phase out the 10 worst single-use plastics in your state or territory: www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/plastics#gs.hmptxt

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46,572

Australians don't want plastic in nature.

Send a message to your state or territory Environment Minister and tell them to ban single-use plastics!



Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group provides HOPE for people in developing countries, by providing them with lists of locally adapted plants which will address their basic nutritional needs.

History

In the 1970's, Agricultural Scientist, Bruce French was asked by people in New Guinea to provide them with basic information on the most nutritious plants for them to be growing in their villages. This prompted Bruce to investigate edible plants for the region, which led him to establish Food Plants International. Over the last 50 years Bruce has expanded this database to include over 31,000 edible plants from around the World.

In 2007 as the result of a meeting between Bruce French and Buz Green, from the Rotary Club of Devonport North, Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group was established.

Objective

The aim of Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group was to address malnutrition, through the use of readily available and locally adapted plant food sources. It creates educational publications that help people understand the connection between plant selection and nutrition and empowers them to grow a range of highly nutritious plants with differing seasonal requirements and maturities.

The project identifies food plants that are potentially important for a country or region because they are suited to the environment, they are high in nutrients and they grow with minimal inputs. This is a sustainable solution that empowers people in need, not just for now, but into the future.

The initial focus of Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group was Developing Countries which had high levels of infant mortality, as it has been recognised that every 12 seconds a child under the age of 5 dies from malnutrition. In addition, 1 in 4 children, under the age of 5, do not reach their potential due to malnutrition.

In response to requests from aid workers, the volunteers at FPS draw on the Food Plants International database to develop lists of plants (Field Guides), which people can grow to provide them with a balanced diet. The Field Guides list plants according to their source of nutrients, such as, Protein, Starchy Staples, Leafy Greens, Vegetables and sources of Vitamins A and C as well as Iron and Zinc. Each booklet lists about 40 plants which can then be translated into the local language of the particular country or region. In addition to the Field Guides, picture booklets may also be produced which are more appropriate for people with limited language skills.

Food Plant Solutions does not send people into countries, but forms partnerships with existing aid providers who use the Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group publications to educate communities, and particularly women and children, on the nutrient value of their local foods. Not only does this sustainably address malnutrition and food security, it also empowers women. In many cases this will increase incomes, particularly for women, which benefits the family unit as a whole, and it safeguards and strengthens the capacity of women to provide food security, health and nutrition for their family. Most projects (whether they be housing, water, schools, maternal health, etc.), would be further enhanced by adding a Food Plant Solutions component to them. Most people who are in dire situations require a sustainable way to grow and access nutritious food.



With program partners, Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group encourages the establishment of demonstration food gardens in schools and communities, as these provide ongoing education and improve the health and nutrition of participants, who are provided with nutritious food prepared from these gardens.

With some of our programs achieving a **reduction in malnutrition by as much as 95%**, this approach is proven, cost-effective and sustainable. The link below gives an insight into the impact of FPS in Vietnam

www.youtube.com/watch?v=x32uDwBVRTA

The appearance of the COVID 19 pandemic has increased the of the interest in the production of nutritious food, due to interrupted supply chains. The Food Plant Solutions team has been asked by Rotary Clubs, from around the World, to produce Brief Guides to assist people to grow nutritious food themselves. The team has had requests for Brief Guides from countries as diverse as Finland, USA, Tanzania and various parts of Australia.

These guides highlight a small number of plants which will provide a good balance of nutrients.

Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group offers the World a way to reduce the incidence of infant mortality in Developing countries. It also offers a way to improve the nutrition of children throughout the world to allow them to achieve their potential.

<https://foodplantsolutions.org/>

www.abc.net.au/landline/world-class-cataloguing-the-worlds-edible-plants/12586302



Australian Pollinator Week is a week designated to acknowledge Australia's unique insect pollinators. During this week, community, business, and other organisations can come together and raise awareness of these special insects and the vital role they play in pollination.

Founded by Dr Megan Halcroft of Bees Business in 2015, Australian Pollinator Week followed on from a community project called "Bee Aware of Your Native Bees", funded by Western Sydney University and the Environmental Trust.

Although communities in the Northern Hemisphere have been celebrating the importance of pollinators since 2007, the seasonal differences in our Southern Hemisphere has restricted international celebrations.

Australian Pollinator Week was designated to fill the gap in order to acknowledge the role insect pollinators play in our southern spring. Schools, retirement villages, art groups, community gardens and local councils can all take part through group activities, fundraising and online participation.

Among the pollinators is the endangered Green Carpenter Bee, a beautiful jewel green bee whose habitat has sadly been devastated by the recent bushfires. To help this threatened species, and to find out more about Australian Pollinator Week, head to www.australianpollinatorweek.org.au.