HOPE E-news Bulletin 2020 #03 --- March 2021

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

Happy March, everyone!

We kick off the month with Clean Up Australia Day (7th) and end with the Internationally observed Earth Hour (27th).

As we ease out of one of Australia’s milder Summers, we must not lose focus of the importance of addressing climate change, as overall temperatures continue to rise worldwide. This month’s newsletter includes some insightful articles by our volunteer researchers on further strategies to fight climate change through individual, community, and political interventions.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind our readers that the brilliantly informative podcast series ‘After the Virus – In S.E. Queensland’ brought to you by HOPE is available on our website as well as other major podcasting platforms including Spotify, Podbean, and Google Podcasts.

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

2020 National/International Events Calendar

March
2 Business Clean Up Day
2-5 ABARES Outlook 2021 conference
3 World Wildlife Day
5 Youth and Schools Clean Up Day
6-14 SeaWeek
7 Clean Up Australia Day
7-13 National Groundwater Awareness Week
7-15 World Parks Week
8-14 Sustainable Seafood Week
19 National Ride2School Day
21 International Day of Forests
22 World Water Day
23 World Meteorological Day
27 Earth Hour

April
18 World Heritage Day
16-19 May Australian Heritage Festival
22 Earth Day
24 World Veterinary Day 2021
25-1 May Water Week
Good morning folks,

Our quarterly meeting on Saturday 13 February focused on the re-imagining of our Youth Summit event from a physical “gathering of students” to a virtual series of ZOOM meetings.

And, I’m pleased to report that HOPE Inc., in partnership with St. Ursula’s College, will hold a series of 4 Zoom meetings, over consecutive days, to discuss issues of concern relating to the environment, social justice, animal welfare/conservation and heritage. The 4 afternoon ZOOM meetings will be held on 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd April 2021, from 4pm to 5pm. Years 9, 10, 11 and 12 secondary students and their home-schooled equivalents are invited to participate in this FREE regional event and hear presentations from government, industry, academia and community group representatives. Each presentation will be followed by a Q&A session.

Once the Youth Summit program of speakers is finalised, we’ll circulate the Youth Summit program to secondary schools and issue a regional media release.

A package of take-home resources will also be made available to participants. Youth participants will be asked to submit their registration for one or more of the Youth Summit ZOOM meetings directly to HOPE at office@hopeaustralia.org.au. Students should include their name, year level and school.

Regards,

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

Volunteers needed

More active volunteers – both local and remote (i.e., online) – are required to help us maintain our level of activity. Volunteers are needed to help with projects, events and display activities, as well as general admin duties and media/publications, work. We invite members and supporters to step up and volunteer some time and talents to help share the workload. Current vacancies include: Researchers; Media Officers; and Publications Team members.

Please contact the office on 07 4639 2135 or email office@hopeaustralia.org.au to offer your assistance.

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, media and 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 or phone (07) 4639 2135.

Current volunteer positions available are:

- **Media Officers** – required to write media releases, event notices, date claimers and design promotional flyers/posters for projects, campaigns, events and activities
- **Publications Team members** – required to write information articles for our newsletter; website summaries; and assist with the development of PowerPoint presentations and information sheets
- **Membership Officer** – assist Office Manager with recruitment, training and management of volunteers; also responsible for maintaining Membership database (using Excel Spreadsheet)

Advertising Rates

HOPE is keen to raise some much-needed revenue through the introduction of paid advertising in our newsletter.

At this stage, we are offering a 15cm x 4cm sized ‘strip’ adverts for $30 + $3 GST per edition; OR $300 + $30 GST for a full year.

If interested, please send your advert to office@hopeaustralia.org.au and your payment to HOPE Inc., PO Box 6118 – Clifford Gardens, Toowoomba QLD 4350.

(Direct debit banking details available on request.)
Feature Articles

The numerous benefits of rewilding

By Finn Bartram, volunteer copywriter for www.worldanimalday.org.uk

On October 4, people and organisations from communities all over the world will celebrate World Animal Day to have fun and raise awareness for animal welfare. Animals play an important role in ecosystems, part of the complex web of connections that makes life on Earth possible and enjoyable. When walking around urban areas, buying food from supermarkets and using water from a tap, it’s easy to forget that none of it would be possible without the natural world. Everything we need to survive is fundamentally a product of nature. We rely on natural ecosystems to produce clean water, grow our food, and oxygenate our air, as well as a host of other “eco-services”. As Sir David Attenborough put it, “we are part of the natural world. If we damage the natural world, we damage ourselves.” Unfortunately, our actions are causing serious harm to the habitats and ecosystems upon which we rely. Rewilding is a form of conservation that lets nature take care of it self. By reintroducing natural processes and species ecosystems will restore themselves, with far-reaching benefits.

Yorkshire beavers to reduce flooding

A lot of the natural fauna of the UK has been wiped out due to hunting and habitat destruction. In the UK beavers were hunted to extinction around 500 years ago, coveted for their fur and castoreum. A tragic loss of these charismatic creatures. But now, in 2020, beavers are being reintroduced back into Yorkshire as part of a rewilding project. Researchers are interested to see how their activities can enhance the effectiveness of artificial dams. This follows studies in Scotland and Devon that found that the positive effects of beaver activities: flood management, filtering pollutants, boosting other wildlife populations such as fish and amphibians, outweighed the negatives: flooding of upriver farmland, loss of orchard trees. It is hoped that similar benefits will be gained in Yorkshire and that, following this, more beavers will be reintroduced across the UK.

Rewilding land to fight climate change

As well as being beautiful and providing homes for wildlife, habitats such as woodlands, wetlands, peatlands, heathlands, salt marshes, and coastal waters all make significant contributions to reducing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. Therefore, these habitats could play a significant role in the UK and other countries meeting their carbon reduction targets laid out in the Paris Climate Agreement. In a report published by Rewilding Britain, it is estimated that rewilding 6 million hectares of the country has the potential to remove 10% of the UK’s current annual greenhouse gas emissions. A natural solution for fighting climate change.

Rewilding for sustainable farming

A lot of lands that were once wild are now intensely cultivated for farming. However, it’s not always the case that land is particularly suited for such activity and that it would be environmentally and economically beneficial to let nature take it back. The Knepp Castle Estate in West Sussex is an example of this. Following years of fluctuating profits, the owners decided to make the switch from a traditional farming business and take a different approach with rewilding.
Rather than being fenced in, their animals are allowed to roam free across the estate with minimal supervision, driving habitat and soil restoration. Over the years since they implemented the changes, nature has boomed and the farm has been transformed into a sanctuary for wildlife, including rare turtle doves and endangered nightingales. What is more, the owners have been able to boost their income through a prosperous eco-tourism and camping business.

**How to support rewilding**

The above examples are just three of the many tangible advantages of rewilding. By now you’re loving the concept and thinking “great, how can I get involved?” A good place to start is by heading over to the Rewilding Australia website, or by taking part in World Animal Day to raise awareness for wildlife and animals in general. For rewilding to take off, it’s going to need the support of people and communities across all levels of society, so any help you can give will be greatly appreciated.

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**A call for a new generation of Australian Environmental laws**

*By Maria Hernandez, HOPE researcher WA*

Australia’s beautiful and unique natural environment is in an unsustainable state of decline. This has been demonstrated by the Australia State of the Environment Report 2016, which had identified persistent environmental problems such as a biodiversity loss, land degradation, extensive development along coastlines and cities, and climate change impacts.(1) More recently, the Australia’s Environment Summary Report 2019(2) has also reported that the national Environmental Condition Score (ECS, based on Australia’s key environmental indicators) was 0.8 out of 10 in 2019; the lowest score since at least 2000. This report has also stated that, in 2019, Australia’s list of threatened species included a total of 1890 species, representing a 36% increase from 2000. Furthermore, a study published by leading Australian ecologists in 2019(2) has found that over 7.7 million hectares of potential habitats and communities were cleared between 2000 and 2017, contributing to the wildlife extinction crisis Australia is currently facing.

Since its enactment in 2000, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act) has been subjected to two independent statutory reviews: the first review completed in 2009 by Dr Allan Hawke AC (3) and the second, currently being finalised by Professor Graeme Samuel AC (4). Both statutory reviews concur that the EPBC Act is complex and that it should be redrafted comprehensively or replaced by a new Act (or set of related Acts). Both independent reviews also assert that the environmental impact assessment and approvals regime under the EPBC Act is inefficient and should be streamlined to reduce duplication and inconsistencies. Furthermore, the interim report of this year’s EPBC Act review indicates that the Act is ineffective, and it is not fit to address current or future environmental challenges. Fundamentally, this interim report proposes a reform package involving the development of a new set of legally enforceable National Environmental Standards, the creation of an independent compliance, monitoring, and enforcement regulator, the accreditation of State and Territory assessment and approval processes (‘devolution’), and the centralisation of information and data collection.

Despite that the second statutory review of the EPBC Act is still in progress and that the final report is not due until the end of October this year, the Federal Government has started to propose changes to the national environmental laws, arguing this would support Australia’s economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis without compromising the environment. Just recently, on August 27th, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Streamlining Environmental Approvals) Bill 2020 (Cth) (EPBC Amendment Bill) was introduced to the Australian Parliament, with the purpose of facilitating devolution of approval powers to States and Territories (referred as ‘single touch’ environmental approvals) and improving the bilateral agreement process. However, as the EPBC Amendment Bill failed to include the creation of new National Environmental Standards and a strong independent compliance and enforcement regulator, environmental experts are concerned that it could instead weaken environmental protections. This EPBC Amendment Bill has been strongly criticised as it is almost identical to the ‘one-stop-shop’ legislation introduced by the Australian Government in 2014. Conservationist groups does not support this ‘devolution’ regime,
arguing that State and Territory environmental laws and enforcement process do not meet federal standards, States and Territories may have conflict of interest in approving projects which are of financial benefit to them, and States and Territories would need additional funding to be able to take over this job. Some even claim that the ‘single touch’ regime may create a more complicated system rather than simplifying it. (5)

A similar approach has been taken by the Places You Love (PYL) Alliance, a network of leading environmental non-government organisations across Australia. In response to similar concerns about the complexity and ineffectiveness of the Australian environmental law system, PYL convened the Australian Panel of Experts in Environmental Law (APEEL), calling for a major overhaul of national environmental laws. As a result, APPEL released the blueprint for the next generation of Australian environmental law (6) in 2017, including 57 recommendations. With this reform proposal, APPEL was seeking to ensure a healthy and resilient environment for future generations.

Additionally, several Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) performance audits have been conducted to examine the operation of the EPBC Act since it came into action in 2000. The latest ANAO performance audit report (7) released in June this year has indicated that the administration of referrals, assessments and approvals under the EPBC Act is neither effective nor efficient. Likewise, according to this report, previous ANAO performance audits conducted in 2003, 2007, 2014, 2016, and 2017 have also reported deficiencies in compliance monitoring and enforcement arrangements.

Australian environmental laws should enable protection, conservation, management, and restoration of Australia’s natural and cultural heritage in an effective and efficient manner. However, as clearly identified by the multiple audits and independent reviews conducted on the EPBC Act since its commencement in 2000, the Australian Government’s central piece of environmental legislation is failing to deliver. A fundamental reform in the way the Australian environmental laws are written, applied, and enforced is necessary to stop this environmental crisis and work towards the protection and recovery of Australia’s precious environment without compromising its economy.

References:

The Queensland Government has numerous resources and advice on building a home with one of the seven sections focused on the growing interest in sustainable housing (environmentally sustainability, economical sustainability and social sustainability). Their definition of Sustainability is ‘about meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs’ (qld.gov.au). There are three main areas the Queensland Government consider when building a sustainable home including: the climate and changes to your existing home as well as the maximisation of sustainability opportunities.

This webpage refers to the Australian Government initiative, Your Home, which aimed to guide the creation of sustainable homes in collaboration with the building and design industry. This is an ongoing project with regular changes and updates to reflect those that occur within the building and design industry. Your Home was first published in 2001 as a technical manual on sustainable building practices and has grown to become a resource for those building, buying or renovating homes.

The intention of Your Home has been to remain current and address significant changes in the building industry by providing comprehensive and expert advice to those invested in a future achieved with sustainable housing. Support for the development of Your Home is sourced from individuals as well as the industry and other sectors since the project's initiation. Your Home has, in turn, supported the building and design industry by remaining a current and reliable guide to environmentally sustainable homes. In response to user feedback and reviews they've transitioned to a singular website (with free-to-download resources) and book that incorporated the former manuals and buyer/renovator guides. With the efforts of committed people; they also provide users with a number of case studies to refer to. These case studies are found on the Your Home website and account for different states of Australia and their varying climates. Because of the ever-changing nature of the building and design industry, Your Home’s text and diagrams are reviewed as necessary for currency and accuracy updates including references to other documents or websites and the authors listed at the end of each article published.

Your Home’s website has a user-friendly homepage comprised of five sections; passive design, materials, energy, water and housing encompassing several aspects of building and designing an environmentally conscious and sustainable home.

(Information for this article sourced from the Your Home [www.yourhome.gov.au])
Intrepid Landcare - intrepidlandcare.org

Intrepid Landcare is a grassroots movement offering community-level projects to everyone between their teens and thirties. The idea began in 2009 when Megan Rowlatt, a coordinator for Landcare Australia, tried to fill a gap in youth involvement. Her spinoff - Illawarra Intrepid Landcare - piqued the interest of fellow Landcare activist Namoi Edwards. In 2015, the two ran a retreat encouraging students to lead their own projects, and Intrepid Landcare was born. The organisation has already established 18 tribes in 4 states and hopes to spread through the rest of Australia.

Typical Intrepid projects are day or weekend events. In 2019:

- Tribes sent members to Great Keppel Island, QLD, to rebuild a boardwalk essential to protecting an aboriginal midden. Volunteers worked under the guidance of Bunnings staff and alongside local landcare groups and the Woppaburra traditional owners.

- Helped by his school, a year 10 Somerset College student and Intrepid member launched a 5-year project to restore a degraded creek. The project was inaugurated with a native tree-planting day.

- Gippsland Intrepid Landcare combined a nature learning trek with the installation of 20 motion-activated cameras to track deer movements in the Strzelecki rainforest. Their data will be fed into a citizen science app that helps Victoria manage pest deer.

For anyone itching to organise a beach clean-up after covid-19 restrictions, joining a tribe or starting one of your own will allow you to preserve the environment while connecting with like-minded people. For those of us too old or too young to join Intrepid, many projects are available through local Landcare groups and Youth Landcare. Intrepid Landcare provides a model for informative, useful, adventurous projects that reach the next generation of environmentalists.

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.

To find out more about GreenPrints and to get your community involved, please visit their separate www.greenprints.org.au. You can also follow AELA on Facebook to find out about more Earth centred governance projects.

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Australian Student Environmental Network (ASEN)

Main Aims
The Australian Student Environmental Network (ASEN) is an organisation which aims to connect student environment groups from around Australia in order build a grassroots movement for change. ASEN achieves this through running campaigns and educating people on critical ecological and social issues. ASEN’s organisation is based on collectives which are the building blocks of its network. Individuals come together to form a collective and each collective enjoys the autonomy to determine its own projects and internal procedures. These collectives come together in the state networks and they all come together in the national network –ASEN.

Major Achievements

**Students of Sustainability Conference**
The Students of Sustainability Conference is the largest and longest-running environmental justice conference in Australia with 20+ year history and growing interest in the event every year. It engages students, community members, Indigenous activists, academics, environmental educators and the like to participate in educational forums, workshops and excursions.

**Activist Education**
Activist Education is a skill-sharing platform which provides learning tools and resources for educating activists. Projects include workshops on building and maintaining collectives, facilitation and campaign strategy, as well as training materials for youth climate leaders.

**Projects/Campaigns/Events**
Some of ASEN’s most prominent campaign activities include “Fossil-free universities” where students led protests against the university sector’s investment in fossil fuels. Another is the “Mining the Truth Roadtrips” which began with 12 members of ASEN’s NSW/ACT branch in 2011 who explored coal and gas communities in the Hunter Valley and the Liverpool Plains regions. Their aim was to see how industrial extraction affected the local communities and initiate environmental change. An award-winning 30-minute documentary was also made by ASEN to track the experiences of these members. ASEN collectives are also heavily involved in campaigns against coal and gas with ASEN members involved in the Leard Blockade, Pilliga Push camp and Break Free protests in Newcastle.

If you would like to find out more about ASEN head to their website and sign up to their newsletter. Also remember to follow ASEN on Facebook where you can find out about their latest events.
Conservation and Protection of our Biodiversity

By Seemab Asif, HOPE Researcher, NSW

The Impact of Conservation

Conserving biodiversity has so much impact because of the profound domino-like effect it has. Conservation of our biodiversity = healthier ecosystems = Cleaner drinking water and more fertile soils = growing better quality food. Out in the oceans means supporting the economic growth of industries like fishing. Culturally it has a deep connection with Indigenous Peoples. Product-wise, it’s the means of producing bio-products from naturally derived ingredients. Finally, it allows us to enjoy nature from national parks and beaches to beautiful world heritage sites.

How to help

Living in a digital and highly globalised world makes it very easy to help conserve Australian biodiversity. The following is a list of ways to get involved:


2. Help the Australian Network for Plant Conservation to promote and improve plant conservation by becoming a member or donating to their cause at [www.anpc.asn.au/support-us/](http://www.anpc.asn.au/support-us/)

3. Get outdoors and plan a trip to one of the many Australian iconic national parks, and learn about how Parks Australia conserves 6 national and over 50 marine parks on [https://parksaustralia.gov.au/](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/)


References

2. [www.biodiversityv2.org/content/megadiverse-countries](http://www.biodiversityv2.org/content/megadiverse-countries)
International News

The Ecological Citizen Journal
By Regina Kimble - HOPE Researcher QLD

Overview and Aims
With scientists discovering society is facing an imminent global environmental collapse, it is imperative that the public is able to educate themselves on the current crisis. The Ecological Citizen journal is an online, free-to-access journal that publishes independently peer-reviewed articles on climate change, conservation and environmental justice. The Ecological Citizen publishes two issues a year and also publishes art, history and poetry.

The Ecological Citizen journal goals are to address the critical issue of ecological destruction and decline that our current society faces and to establish an ecological civilization. This ecological civilization is defined as a mutually beneficial and respectful relationship between society and the ecosphere.

The Ecological Citizen wants to educate the public that society’s actions are unsustainable and has destroyed countless ecosystems and wildlife. With many species and habitats under threat of extinction because of our actions, The Ecological Citizen sets out to educate the public on this destruction and potential actions we can take to remedy this devastation and help our Earth get back to a healthy, sustainable state.

The Ecological Citizen journal has 5 main aims to:
1. Advance ecological knowledge.
2. Champion Earth-centred action.
3. Inspire ecocentric citizenship.
4. Promote ecocentrism in political debates.
5. Nurture an ecocentric lexicon.

Some of the actions The Ecological Citizen journal explores to help save the Earth:
• Large-scale restoring and rewilding of habitats,
• Designing and executing steady-state economies;
• Breaking down the paradigm of consumerism;
• Stabilizing and lowering our global population;
• Rethinking food production.

Key Friends of the Journal
The Ecological Citizen journal has key partnerships or “Friends” that they actively promote and support through their issues. “Friends” are made up of international and local Australian organisations, including the Australian Earth Laws Alliance and Brisbane Tool Library.

Check out The Ecological Citizen Journal at: https://ecologicalcitizen.net

Source: The Ecological Citizen Journal’s artwork publication.
Image: Aaron Vincent Elkaim

Source: The Ecological Citizen Facebook Page