



## Householder's Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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## HOPE Enews Bulletin 2016 #03 --- 15 March 2016

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](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au).

Deadline for articles is 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month. If you would like to discuss news items displayed or have letters for the editor please contact the office or <[newsletter editor - hotlink](mailto:newsletter_editor - hotlink)>

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### Editorial

*Stuck for something to do over Easter? Then look no further than this month's issue. Reverse Garbage (Brisbane) will be holding some fun and entertaining workshops throughout March and April. I encourage you all to visit their website and discover how to recycle, create and innovate. Their web address can be found at the end of the article entitled "**Not Junk. Make and mend.**"*

*Also in this issue you will be able to read about the plight of Australia's furry friends the Koala's and how there is hope for the chlamydia epidemic through the Koala Chlamydial Vaccine. This month's issue is guaranteed to have something of interest for anyone who is interested in our environment.*

Jingyi Sun, Newsletter Editor, [fivedragons@ymail.com](mailto:fivedragons@ymail.com)

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### Calendar of Events

Search the [national environmental events calendar](#) and/or [national community calendar](#) for any events that might interest you.

#### APRIL

- 16-24 [Australian Heritage Week](#)
- 18 [World Heritage Day](#)
- 22 [International Mother Earth Day](#)

#### MAY

- 1-7 [International Composting Awareness Week](#)
  - 9-15 [National Volunteer Week](#)
  - 10-12 [OZWater'16](#)
  - 14 [World Migratory Bird Day](#)
  - 21 [World Fish Migration Day](#)
  - 22 [International Day for Biological Diversity](#)
  - 23 [World Turtle Day](#)
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## National Membership Drive

### Help HOPE promote sustainable living in your community!

*Are you concerned about the environment?*

*Do you want a sustainable future for your children but don't know how to achieve it?*

*Don't despair. There's always HOPE.*

**You can promote sustainable living practices in your community and help protect the environment.**

**You are invited to join HOPE (Householders' Options to Protect the Environment) Inc. and learn more about sustainable living.**

**Membership to HOPE is free and open to anyone, including individuals, families, businesses and community organizations.**

#### **What does HOPE do?**

HOPE encourages people to take responsibility for their relationship with the environment in their daily lives.

HOPE's focus is to:

1. Raise awareness by providing people with information – letting people know about current environmental issues;
2. Educate – suggestions on how to tackle these issues;
3. Show – how easily it can be done

#### **YOU can help!**

HOPE encourages people:

- to view environmental problems in their local, economic and global context;
- to use what is already there, making the most of existing resources, technology and community networks; and
- to create, communicate and celebrate lifestyles which reduce consumption and improve quality of life.

While HOPE endorses individual action, it also encourages people to act together in their local communities, and in society as a whole, to really make a difference.

You can help by adopting sustainable living practices in your home; and by promoting these same practices within your community. HOPE has a range of "helpful hints" brochures, booklets and information sheets readily available from our website. We are also able to assist you with information on specific topics.

**As the need to conserve energy and resources becomes more crucial, HOPE is striving to expand our national network of members and supporters. You can become part of that network and spread the philosophy of HOPE in your area and beyond.**

Go to our website at [www.hopeaustralia.org.au](http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au) ; read up on HOPE and become a member today and help us promote sustainable living!

*And remember: You **CAN** make a difference!*

*Please encourage family, friends and colleagues to join the HOPE network.  
Visit <http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/membership/> for all membership information.*

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## Office News Report --- March 2016

Good afternoon folks,

This past month has been more hectic than usual, due to:

- the commencement of our 2<sup>nd</sup> local Landcare project – “Encouraging Peri-Urban landholders to develop Wildlife Friendly Gardens and Landscape Connectivity”;
- the non-stop preparations for our participation at the 2016 Ipswich Plant Expo;
- seeking expressions of interest from secondary schools in the Toowoomba region to participate in our 3<sup>rd</sup> Landcare project – Youth Engagement in Landcare; and
- the submission of a funding application to Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC), to stage a Building Biology workshop.

### Partnerships – Businesses

HOPE has joined forces with a number of sustainability focused businesses to form mutually advantageous partnerships based on shared values.

Our business partners to date are Green Harvest, Excel Power/Excel Solar and Ecospecifier Global.

On return from the Plant Expo, we learnt that our funding application to TRC was unsuccessful. We are still keen to hold a Building Biology workshop – so if you live within a 50km radius of Toowoomba and you would like to participate in a workshop, lodge your expression of interest with Joanne Galea at <http://www.designsforcreation.com.au/> .

Also, due to the lack of response from secondary schools, we have abandoned the “Youth Engagement in Landcare” project at this time.

On a positive note, HOPE has been invited to:

- co-host with Places You Love (PYL) Alliance, an evening workshop on Nature Laws, sometime in April; and
- attend the 2016 Logan Eco Action Festival (LEAF) on Sunday 5 June

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Landcare Project



Part 1 of this Landcare project consisted of 2 workshops (20 February and 5 March) where our consultant Steve Cupitt of Crossroads Rural & Environment, explained the benefits of removing pest plants and animals; and creating habitat for native wildlife; and registering interested participants for property assessments.

Part 2 of the project involves Steve undertaking these property assessments on each registered site.

### Ipswich Plant Expo, 12-13 March 2016

At the start of the 2 day Expo, we were set up and ready to go!

A team of 11 HOPE members helped with transport, setting up, staffing, selling raffle tickets and packing up.

A big thanks to Ruth O’Dowd the event organiser for giving HOPE the free sites for information display and demonstration activities and the raffle concession.

Thanks also to all the Expo exhibitors and HOPE contacts who donated items for the raffle.

There were 34 prize hampers in all.



Frank Ondrus, President – HOPE Inc., ph 07 4639 2135

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## Feature Articles



### The Long Shadow of Thomas Malthus

By Jane O'Sullivan, President of the Queensland Branch of Sustainable Population Australia

February 13, 2016 marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Thomas Malthus. He is probably the most controversial figure in the history of economics. His conviction that population growth would inevitably lead to more misery has seen him labelled variously as a pessimistic misanthrope, or the prophet of an

unassailable, if inconvenient, truth. With famine re-emerging on our TV news, it might be a good time to review this debate.

At a time when optimism for egalitarian social progress was burgeoning, Malthus was indeed a bit of a wet blanket. He surmised that poverty could not be eliminated, because relieving it simply led to greater population increase, until the miseries of deprivation re-emerged to check the population. It was less a prophesy than an observation on the cause of poverty, past and present, but its implication was that the prevailing remedies for poverty would ultimately be futile, since they did not eliminate the underlying cause.

The American economist Kenneth Boulding – a founder of ecological economics – perhaps most succinctly restated the Malthusian argument in his “dismal theorems”:

*The dismal theorem:* If the only ultimate check on the growth of populations is misery, then population will grow until it is miserable enough to stop its growth.

*The utterly dismal theorem:* Any technical improvement can only relieve misery for a while, for so long as misery is the only check on population, the [technical] improvement will enable the population to grow, and will soon enable more people to live in misery than before. The final result of [technical] improvements, therefore, is to increase the equilibrium population, which is to increase the total sum of human misery.

*The moderately cheerful form of the dismal theorem:* If something else, other than misery and starvation, can be found which will keep a prosperous population in check, the population does not have to grow until it is miserable and starves, and it can be stably prosperous.

When Malthus wrote, option three seemed unlikely. Neo-Malthusians are more hopeful, thanks to modern contraception. Through voluntary family planning, enabled by universal reproductive rights and availability of modern contraception technologies, humanity finally has the means to avoid the Malthusian trap. Many countries have followed this path, succeeding despite poverty and illiteracy, because their people understood the benefit for themselves and their children. Each has gained an enormous boost in human development by lessening the burden of rapid population growth. From South Korea and Thailand to Tunisia and Chile, development took off after births were reduced – not before. The sooner and faster that fertility is reduced in all remaining high-fertility countries, the better for their development and security, and for the preservation of biodiversity and our planetary life support systems.

What is most disturbing is the extent of resistance to this view. It seems that almost any excuse will do, to justify opposing action to reduce population growth. “Development must come first,” goes the claim – despite the many examples disproving this. “Girls’ education is the key” – although most family planning countries succeeded without it, and were able to improve education much faster after fertility fell. “Every extra mouth comes with an extra pair of hands” – but they are not much use with insufficient natural resources to employ them. “Family planning must be about women’s health and rights only – if it’s about population, it is coercive” – this bizarre logic has done more to undermine family planning programs, and thereby women’s health and rights, than any other.

There were regrettable instances of coercive practices, but they were always rare, ineffective and unnecessary, and are unlikely to recur. To shun all family planning promotion on their account is like banning schools because there were instances of child sexual abuse. Simply to have smaller families as an explicit goal of voluntary programs doesn't make them coercive. If I have the right to smoke, is it coercive to tell me that it's bad for my health? If population growth is the most important factor generating poverty and food insecurity, isn't it a greater moral hazard *not* to encourage smaller families? Wouldn't recognition of the economic benefit of population stabilization give governments a greater incentive to deliver reproductive rights and education for girls, and to tackle the tough job of changing male attitudes?

That was indeed the experience of the family-planning adopting countries in the 1970s and '80s, all of which have seen women's roles and freedoms blossom after relieving them from unwanted pregnancies and encumbering siblings. The 'sexual and reproductive health and rights' agenda that took over from the mid-1990s failed to sustain this success. In its wake, global population growth rebounded, seeing UN projections of peak population increased by two billion so far, and food production per person not keeping up. The self-righteous who believe they are saving underdeveloped nations from “Malthusianism” may instead be locking them into Malthus' nightmare.

For more information on Sustainable Population Australia visit <https://population.org.au/> .

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## Dr Les Westerlund and his research into hand-made paper

Les Westerlund has devoted his hobby and academic life to perfecting the art and science of hand-made paper. From first year uni back in 1977, he showed an interest in recycling paper, wood, plastic, glass, saving energy and solar energy. Back then you were criticized and questioned for trying to care for the holistic environment, instead of exploiting the ecosystems for maximum profit and no environmental guidelines.

In the 80s he also studied a Diploma of Iridology and set up a natural health and healing clinic in Busselton, WA. Leslie also helped local country sport as athlete, competitor and committee member, then chairman of the South West Games with 16 shires, and 6000 competitors. Leslie also helped the SES, and was involved in a whale rescue at Augusta and storm damage to houses at Margaret River.

Leslie then developed his papermaking into a trial cottage industry. From 1985, over a decade, he succeeded in perfecting smooth technology increasing production levels to an amazing 1000 A3 sheets of paper per batch. He then went back to Murdoch University to complete his 20 year B.Science in 1996, and start an Honours project in 1997 on understanding and perfecting the new smooth surface technology of his papermaking.

He started helping out at the university Environmental Technology Centre and get involved in helping and supporting a holistic range of research into alternative technologies. Help local, state, national and international conferences over 2 decades. A Masters project at the University of Wollongong (UOW) was the next challenge in 1999-2000, with looking at a range a waste agricultural and forestry waste fibres options to make paper. Millions of tonnes of alternative fibres were found to be available for papermaking and save the pressure of exploiting old growth forests. He also helped out at the UOW science centre to promote educational tourism displays.



(Les (centre) helping make Fijian English books)

After visiting and living in Fiji and seeing how the locals live in sustainable traditional village and cultural ways he started his PhD in 2005, in technology transfer to help empower developing countries with best available alternative appropriate and sustainable ways forward. This was an amazing experience, the Fijians look at life so differently to western ways. Family first, church first, village life first, and so rich in culture, yet trying to come to terms with western technologies. This evolved into networking with the local village, with local industry and university engineering dept. The Wainimakutu Village was helped with making better paper, quicker, and holistically. Some local cultural stories were also written up as short stories and books and translated into English-Fijian books printed on handmade paper in the village, amazing.

Against many odds and hurdles over many decades, Leslie graduated last year with his PhD. Dr. Leslie is now continuing his holistic papermaking research with developing a mobile papermaking trailer and going to local schools and Ag Shows to promote the fun and art and science of papermaking to children and artisans.

Dr Les Westerlund, sms 0402 528 350

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## Not Junk. Make and mend. --- Reverse Garbage (Brisbane)

As most of our longer serving HOPE members will know and our newer members will soon know. Hope has had a long association with "Reverse Garbage Queensland". There is no wonder that we continue this association when they make recycling this much fun, please read on.

This year is an amazing time to learn how to repair, create and become inspired by Reverse Garbage.

In March Reverse Garbage Qld are adopting the philosophy "make do and mend." The slogan first appeared during WWII in response to wartime rationing. Now is the time to once again embrace this motto and upcycle, DIYers and all sorts of people who want to reduce the amount of waste they create by thrifting, repairing and reusing.

So: if you have something that needs repair, if you want to create that masterpiece that you have always dreamed of or you need to become motivated then check out the Reverse Garbage Queensland website to get all the motivation that you need. Here are a few of their upcoming workshops:

### What's on in the Warehouse?

Special Guest Speaker for Reuse Roundtable (Event #1)

We're excited that Leon Fitzpatrick of MadeForward will be joining our roundtable, alongside passionate up-cyclers from the community.

Reuse Roundtable Demo (Event #2): Upcycled Table or Freestyle Salvaged Craft

\$5 registration gives you a MDF table top (discarded of course) plus a voucher for \$10 raw materials to make and create with. Or register as a freestyle DIY crafter instead (see details on the registration page).

### Easter Family Fun

In the week leading up to Easter we are having fun and games at RGQ. Come along to join in the Easter hunt around the shop and then get eco-crafty at the free Easter themed making table. Prizes for all participants

### Green Day Out

The 2nd annual Green day Out (formally Recycle Expo) is coming up on April 10th.

- Macramé Wall Hangings
- School Holiday Workshops
- Puppet Making
- Creative Costumes
- Monsters and Dragons
- Mad Hatter's Tea Party
- Outer Space Adventures

Visit <http://www.reversegarbageqld.com.au/> for more information, dates and times.

## Something to celebrate in March

### Environment Hour, Day/s and Week Celebrations

Author: Stacey Vorwerk, Australia, March, 2016



The month of March 2016, is the busiest calendar month of the year, packed full of environmental celebrations and events. With the business, school and general clean up days now behind us, Earth hour and The International Day of Forests along with a list of others are ahead.

The Earth Hour celebrations have been the 'loudest' publically celebrated in recent years, with the famous starting in Sydney Australia, as a lights-off event, in 2007. Interestingly the many other events listed for this month are not fully celebrated in mainstream (media) Australia.



The question I would like to raise here is: How do the environmental events need to be portrayed to get the results and attention like that of the initial Earth Hour celebration? 'The Hero's Journey' diagram may start the initial journey to answer this question, in moving from the known of what we currently do and have previously experienced to moving into the unknown where we haven't gone before. The 'unheard of' environmental events need to find a way to weave into mainstream media – the unknown zone for these events...



Non-copyrighted image (Wikipedia)



Non-copyrighted forest image (Facebook)

As for The International Day of Forests celebrations, I read an article the other day and the definition of forests also included street trees as there are some people in this world that will only know of the trees in singular form in their street. This is quite an amazing concept in that, there may be a day when street trees are the only trees that exist.

The importance of communicating the environmental celebrations to communities requires a fresh positive and proactive revamp to creatively allow the specific aim of each celebration to actually be truly celebrated with and through the community.

## Toowoomba Regional News



“**Become a Volunteer Today!**” was the theme of HOPE’s display at the University of Southern Queensland’s (USQ) Orientation Market Day on Thursday 25 February 2016.

Frank Ondrus, President of HOPE, was on hand to “recruit volunteers for the environment”.

Register for either indoor volunteer positions (i.e. admin related tasks) or outdoor volunteer activities such as weed

clearing, revegetation and tree planting.

If you too would like to volunteer for HOPE or any the many environment groups in the Toowoomba region, contact the HOPE office on phone 4639 2135, email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au) or online at <http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/membership/volunteer-form/>.

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### **ATA Toowoomba Branch**

The Toowoomba Branch of ATA was established in January 2015 and in held three public meetings and several smaller gatherings for members in 2015. The objective of the branch is to have a group of people interested and engaged in alternate technologies meeting regularly to listen to a speaker or engage in site visits, engage in local projects and attend local events such as Sustainable House Day or World Environment Day.

At a broader level, the Branch seeks to promote the development of sustainable technologies and contribute to ATA policy submissions and *ReNew* and *Sanctuary* articles. The Branch now seeks to stimulate broader public interest in renewable energies and engage people who are interested in larger scale projects which have the potential to support industry development.

Planning is underway for branch activities in 2016 and we have secured a venue at the new library for the following dates – Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June & Tuesday 9th August. As soon as speakers are confirmed for these dates an update will be forwarded to HOPE. An Electric Vehicle Expo is planned for October and we already have several home owners who have agreed to open their houses on Sustainable House Day in September.

The ATA is grateful for the support of HOPE in helping to promote our events and looks forward to working cooperatively in 2016.

Contact details for the ATA Toowoomba Branch – Ross Campbell (Secretary) Email - [Toowoomba@ata.org.au](mailto:Toowoomba@ata.org.au)

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### *HOPE request*

#### **Positions Vacant on Media Team**

We urgently require a team of 5-6 volunteers to help with literature research and the preparation of media releases, short information articles, community service announcements and/or date claimers.

So, if you have some spare time and talents to offer, please give the office a call on 07 4639 2135 or email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au) and register your interest in looking after one of these positions.

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, Queensland. However, quite a bit of the literature review, research, publications activity can be done via email.

## Queensland News



### Koala Chlamydial Vaccine Editorial from Koala Action Inc.

"Chlamydia continues to be a common infection leading to serious disease in koalas in Queensland. Chlamydia pecorum is the main bacteria of concern. Infections are often sub-clinical with 25% to 50% of koalas infected at any time. A proportion of infected koalas progress to disease which can manifest as (a) conjunctivitis leading to severe scarring and blindness, (b) female reproductive tract disease, including urinary incontinence, large cysts and infertility in female koalas, as well as (c) proctitis in male koalas. While there are antibiotics effective against Chlamydia they are much less useful for infected koalas because, (a) antibiotics kill many of the essential bacteria present in the koala's gut, which are required for the digestion of eucalypt leaves and (b) standard antibiotic treatment (for

female urinary tract infections) requires antibiotics daily for 30 or more days. Subsequently, the development of a Chlamydial vaccine is considered a major goal and priority.

A research team led by Professor Peter Timms (based at the University of the Sunshine Coast) has made significant progress towards the development of such a vaccine in the last 5 years. A total of 8 vaccine trials (in captive or wild koalas) has been completed or is in progress, with the following major achievements:-

1. Koalas can make a strong and lasting immune response to a Chlamydial vaccine.
2. The strains of Chlamydia affecting koalas vary across Australia but it is possible to develop a multi-antigen vaccine to deal with this.
3. The vaccine is safe to give, even in koalas that already have the disease.
4. Modelling shows that a vaccine can be effective for wild populations.
5. It is possible to discover and develop a completely new set of immune tools and reagents for the koala, to be used to develop vaccines.
6. It is possible to develop a single dose vaccine to replace the earlier 3-dose version.
7. Male koalas (not just females) can also be vaccinated and produce a good immune response.
8. Tests of the vaccine in a wild population in the Moreton Bay region showed significant protection against Chlamydial infection load as well as improved reproductive success in females; a major achievement.
9. Preliminary data suggests that koalas with early stage disease can potentially also be effectively vaccinated.
10. Over 100 koalas (captive and wild) have now been successfully vaccinated with no adverse vaccine events.

The medium to long term goal is to further optimize the vaccine to be both a prophylactic (prevent or at least reduce new infections) and therapeutic (reduce infectious load in koalas already infected) as well as prevent progression from infection to disease. The research team is hopeful of having a version of the vaccine "approve" for wider use in the coming 3 to 5 years.

This outstanding success has only been possible due to the efforts and dedication of the many research staff and students at the University of the Sunshine Coast and QUT, together with the field and financial support of many partners including Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary, Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital, Endeavour Veterinary Ecology, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Friends of the Koala, Koala Action Inc, Koala Genome Consortium, Queensland's DEHP, Dept TMR, Gold Coast City Council, Redland City Council, ARC Scheme and many other private and government organisations as well as individual donors."

Vanda (aka Wanda) Grabowski - President/Secretary, Koala Action Inc., [www.koalaactioninc.org](http://www.koalaactioninc.org)

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#### HOPE request

##### **WANTED – PHOTOCOPY PAPER**

HOPE has used up its current stock of photocopy paper and we are asking our members and supporters to donate a ream or two of A4 photocopy paper. Donations of paper can be left on the table in the carport at 22 Vacy St, Toowoomba.

Alternately, cash or cheque donations can be made online at <http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/annual-pledgedonation/> or posted to HOPE Inc., PO Box 6118 -Clifford Gardens Toowoomba QLD 4350.

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## National News



### **What is the Alternate Technology Association? ATA**

The Alternative Technology Association (ATA) is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to connect, inspire and assist people to make sustainable choices in their homes and communities. Established in 1980, the ATA provides expert, independent advice on scientific and sustainable solutions for the home to households, government and industry. See more on the website: (<http://www.ata.org.au/>)

While the ATA has had a strong emphasis on solar technology, it also focuses on building design and materials, water efficiency, electric vehicles and recycling.

### **Membership Services**

The ATA has 14 active branches across Australia and over 6,000 members who are actively creating a sustainable future in their own homes and communities. The ATA provides an online and over the- phone advice service for members, member discounts from the ATA Webshop and other suppliers. Advice areas include:

- Heating and cooling solutions
- Energy efficiency
- Water conservation
- Solar power and other renewable options
- Lighting options
- Grey water
- Solar hot water
- Energy and water audits
- Building and renovating for sustainability

### **Advocacy and Research**

The ATA, working with partner organisations, has campaigned to defend the Renewable Energy Target. The organisation used its unique, specialist technical knowledge to advocate for long-term reform of the National Electricity Market for the benefit of consumers and environmental sustainability. The ATA helped organise Australia's first Community Energy Congress in Canberra, which showed there was enormous momentum for Australian communities to take control of their energy future.

### **Publications**

**ReNew Magazine:** *ReNew* has been published by the Alternative Technology Association (ATA) since 1980. Each issue features renewable technologies such as wind and solar power, along with ways to make our homes more energy efficient.

*ReNew* is available from newsagents, by subscription (\$30) and as part of ATA membership.

**Sanctuary Magazine:** The ATA also publishes *Sanctuary*: modern green homes, providing inspiration and practical solutions for a sustainable home including sustainable heating options, building materials and design.

### **Projects**

**East Timor:** Since 2003 the ATA has installed clean solar-powered lighting in homes, schools, community centres, hospitals and orphanages in remote villages. It is estimated that 20% of all houses in East Timor will never be connected to an electricity grid. A sustainable solar-powered lighting industry in East Timor is one step closer to reality after the ATA received \$250,000 for the Solar for Timor project from Google Australia. The funding will mean the ATA will go ahead with Solar for Timor, installing solar-powered lighting in 1000 homes in Timorese villages without electricity and training 50 local installers/technicians in the next two years.

**Sunulator:** The Sunulator is a detailed feasibility tool for community solar projects which uses half-hourly consumption and generation data over a whole year and calculates project feasibility over a 30-year time frame. Sunulator is specifically designed to assist community organisations to install solar systems via a range of potential investment options.

### **ATA Branches**

ATA branches are local groups of ATA members with shared interests that meet regularly and provide members and non-members the opportunity to exchange experiences, information and ideas on sustainable living.

Branches allow new initiatives to flourish and establish important community networks. All elected branch representatives are volunteers. The current scope of branch activities includes organising presentations, site visits and movie screenings, running workshops and practical demonstrations, organising forums, seminars and mini expos, participating in large and small scale sustainability events through stalls and presentations and contributing to ATA policy submissions and *ReNew* and *Sanctuary* articles.

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**RenewEconomy** - <http://reneweconomy.com.au/>

RenewEconomy is an online resource dedicated to tracking the “next industrial revolution”. The website was founded by renowned journalist Giles Parkinson in 2012, and has since grown into one of the most reliable sources of information in the industry. The main purpose of the website is to inform the reader about trends in clean energy as well as anticipating, discussing and analysing climate policy. Topics of discussion include climate change, energy security, resource scarcity and how these relate to the economy in dollar terms. With regular contributions from established authors such as Paul Gilding, the information on this website is up to date, informative and well analysed. The reader can subscribe to receive a daily newsletter that highlights the topics for discussion on the day. Contributions from readers are also accepted, but are closely moderated to ensure that the quality and integrity of the website is maintained.

According to their own statistics, the website had more than half a million views in September 2015, and it is the most read website dedicated to the topic in Australia. To find out more, head to <http://reneweconomy.com.au/>

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## **The Places You Love alliance - Defending what we have, looking to a better future**

Over the last few years we have seen the ascendancy of the resources sector in Australia and a strong anti-conservation political push. Conservative governments in several states and in Canberra have attempted to roll back conservation gains we have all fought hard for over many decades.

In the context of this assault an alliance of conservation organisations began by defending existing laws and has moved now to focus on improving the current system.

The Places You Love alliance has 42 member organisations including the Victorian National Parks Association.

Our first joint campaign was to stop the Gillard and then Abbott governments from gutting the federal environment law by handing decision making to the state and territory governments. Together, we have halted this so-called “one stop shop” policy and there is little prospect of it being enacted during this term.

Last year the alliance led a joint response to attempts by the Abbott government to remove the tax-deductibility status of environmental organisations undertaking advocacy work. A House of Representatives committee was established and the intentions of the government were made clear. Together we marshalled over 650 quality submissions into the Inquiry, worked with the sector during the hearings across the country and helped ensure there was a united front against the intentions of the government. We are still awaiting the committee report but we galvanised our sector in a way not seen for a long time, if ever.

We also brought together broader civil society organisations that had also been under attack under conservative governments. Together we released an excellent report written by the Human Rights Law Centre and launched by over a dozen major organisations including the Australian Council of Social Services, the ACTU, Save the Children, Amnesty, National Congress and the National Press Club.

Again in 2015 the federal Attorney General launched a campaign against the legal standing rights in the federal environment law. He stated his belief that environment organisations were waging “law-fare” against development. Again our alliance worked with other allies and this government proposal appears to be dead as well.

Obviously over this period we have seen the conservative Victorian and Queensland governments removed as well as the Prime Minister and the resources sector weakened by falling demand.

So our work to defend our existing laws has been effective.

However we also acknowledge that the current laws and institutions are failing us. We all know that, at best, we are managing the decline of the natural world in Australia.

In late 2014 the Places You Love alliance released a comprehensive assessment of the state of nature in Australia in our report *The Australia We Love* ([www.placesyoulove.org/australiawelove](http://www.placesyoulove.org/australiawelove)). This drew from the State of Environment reports and a range of conservative national and international materials. What we found was that most environmental indicators in Australia are declining and that there is a serious lack of data to inform us of what is happening and how we can best resolve the problems.

So, we have started a new project looking at how to fix these fundamental problems. We have started with a group of environmental law experts advising us on improving the legal and regulatory system in Australia. We are also reaching out to environmentalists across the country to be involved in the compilation of experiences, expertise and stories about what is failing and how we can improve the system.

We invite all of you to become involved. Our project includes public workshops and online engagement. Please visit our website [www.placesyoulove.org](http://www.placesyoulove.org) or contact me directly if you have any questions ([glen.klatovsky@placesyoulove.org](mailto:glen.klatovsky@placesyoulove.org)).

Glen Klatovsky, Director - Places You Love, <http://www.placesyoulove.org/>

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## Understanding major sources of marine plastic waste in Australian waters

Millions of tonnes of rubbish, including plastic enter our oceans every year. Plastic pollution is carried along by the ocean's currents and reaches the furthest corners of our seas. Once in the ocean, plastic breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. These pieces are eaten by animals at the bottom of our food chains. Larger pieces of plastic are also mistaken for food and eaten. Wildlife can become entangled causing injury and in some cases death. Plastic pollution travels easily from land to sea, blowing in from land-based refuse sites and via stormwater drains into waterways. As society moves further towards the convenience of plastic packaging, the problem of marine waste also continues to grow.

This week the Australian Government has announced funding to understand the impacts and source of plastic waste in Australia's oceans, reefs and waterways. Research will look at the relationship between debris in the marine environment and litter data from nearby sites, aiming to identify pathways through which litter enters the marine environment. This research forms part of the National Environmental Science Programme.

You can find more information about the planned research at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/hunt/2016/mr20160229.html>

You can find out more about the program at <http://www.environment.gov.au/science/nesp>

(Sourced from NPAQ newsletter, Mar 2016)

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## Bendigo Bank's Generation Green Home or Personal Loan

If you're buying, building or already own a 'Green' home, then Bendigo Bank will look to reward you by offering up to a 0.90% p.a. discount off our Residential Variable Interest rate and no monthly service fee with our Generation Green™ Home Loan. If that's not reason enough to consider a 'Green' home, remember the savings may also extend to your energy and water bills as well as further reducing your impact on the environment.

More information contact:

David Ward | Branch Manager

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd | Margaret St Branch | Cnr Neil & Margaret St Toowoomba Qld 4350

P: 07 4632 8099 | F: 07 4632 1103 | M: 0408 506 375

E: [david.ward@bendigoadelaide.com.au](mailto:david.ward@bendigoadelaide.com.au)

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## The Junk Map - <http://www.thejunkmap.com.au/>

Secondhand, vintage, salvaged, upcycled, restored, recycled. Australia has some fantastic junk but many of the best collections are hard to find.

**The Junk Map** is a curated reference point for renovators, decorators and design professionals looking for quality homewares and materials. It showcases shops, salvage yards, and makers who sell or rework secondhand goods. Each listing includes lots of photographs so it's easy to scout local or interstate suppliers. The site started in Melbourne but is growing around Australia, helping creative minds source secondhand materials for all kinds of projects.

**The Junk Map Shop** launched in January 2016 and is a highly targeted alternative to Gumtree and EBay. Visitors can buy or sell salvaged building materials, recycled timber, secondhand furniture and upcycled homewares, without the clutter of larger classified platforms.

Head over and take a look. The Junk Map received a million page views in 2015 and the junk community has barely begun online. Imagine what's possible in the next few years!

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## Date Claimers

### 11th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference 2016

**'New Approaches to Plant Conservation Challenges in the Modern World'.**

Conference sub-themes have been announced:

- Assisted colonization as a practical tool for climate change mitigation.
- Conservation for people and nature: how do we maximise the benefits for both.
- Rethinking landscape restoration: seed production, provenance, conservation planning.
- Holistic conservation - the role of mutualisms in ensuring functional ecosystem recovery (pollinators, soils).
- Rescuing small populations from extinction.
- New challenges and emerging ideas.

Registrations are due to open in May 2016. Registration fees and the Call for Abstracts will be announced soon. [For further information](#) visit <http://anpc.asn.au/conferences/2016>

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## Resources

**Climate Change Research from Routledge** is a FreeBook featuring curated content from our *Routledge Advances in Climate Change Research* Series. This FreeBook combines a selection of chapters on key themes relating to climate change, in order to share with you some of the important research available on this subject matter. **Sign up for your copy** at [http://tandf.msgfocus.com/k/Tandf/climate\\_change\\_research\\_freebook\\_opt\\_ins](http://tandf.msgfocus.com/k/Tandf/climate_change_research_freebook_opt_ins)

**Join Future Earth's Knowledge-Action Networks - <http://futureearth.org/knowledge-action-networks>**  
**Eight networks will explore societal challenges to sustainability**

This month Future Earth launches eight Knowledge-Action Networks, a key piece of our research strategy. These networks cover topics ranging from natural assets to transformations and finance and economics. We're encouraging researchers and societal partners to join us in these efforts, informing sustainability science that is relevant to communities around the globe.

### **Grid-connected batteries economically attractive by 2030: ATA Report**

In the most detailed economic analysis yet produced in Australia on household battery use with solar, a new report by the Alternative Technology Association (ATA) says grid-connected battery storage should become economically attractive for many homes from around 2020.

The *Household Storage Analysis* report found that the economic value of batteries would be unattractive for many households in the next few years, but this would turn around by 2020 given the projected falls in battery costs.

While batteries have great long-term potential to transform the electricity grid, household bill savings would depend on a range of factors including location, behaviour and grid electricity tariff.

Download at <http://www.ata.org.au/wp-content/projects/ATA%20Household%20Battery%20Study.pdf>

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## **Helpful Hints: from The Self-Sufficiency Shoppe, <http://theshoppe.com.au>**



### **With Just One Bottle of Cheap Vinegar**

Cost: \$1.43 (2 litres) vs Cost to the environment: '0'

#### **You can do the following:**

**Cleaning:** The mild acidity of vinegar cleans and helps strip dirt and grease. Spray dirty surfaces with vinegar to remove grime and grease.

**Disinfecting:** Vinegar is a mild acidic anti-bacterial agent that kills organisms - ideal as a disinfectant. Use to disinfect and clean toilet basin, drains, bathroom basin and bath, tiles etc.

**Deodorising:** Ask Grandma – she'll tell you the best way to eradicate odours from the kitchen are to dampen a tea-towel with vinegar and swirl it around the air! A more modern technique is to pour equal parts vinegar and water in a spray bottle. Spray as necessary to 'clear the air'. As the acid odour of the vinegar dissipates it takes with it all other odours. Add a little fragrance – such as a few drops lavender essential oil to enhance the odour.

**Handyman:** Use vinegar to clean paint brushes, loosen rusty nails or screws, rejuvenate leather and moisten dried glue.

**Laundry:** Vinegar will deodorise clothes (add a cupful to laundry tub during wash cycle). It will also clean residue/debris from inside drainage pipe and pump (ensuring your

machine last longer) and help whiten whites and brighten dyed colours.

**Pesticide Removal:** Soak and wash store purchased fruit and vegetables in vinegar to remove chemical residue from commercial sprays and pesticides. Dilute one part vinegar to three parts water.

**Garden:** A pure, undiluted spray of vinegar will eradicate weeds, moss and algae.

### **Vinegar Recipes:**

#### **Homemade Disinfectant:**

Half fill a recycled plastic bottle (an old vinegar bottle is ideal) with cheap (white) vinegar. Fill the remainder of the bottle with water. Add four drops eucalyptus oil and 2 drops green food colouring. Apply lid and shake. For lavender disinfectant use lavender oil and pink/purple colouring.

**Air-Freshener Spray:** Pour equal parts vinegar and water in a recycled spray bottle. Spray as necessary to 'clear the air'. As the acid odour of the vinegar dissipates it takes with it all other odours. Add a little fragrance – such as a few drops lavender essential oil to enhance the odour.

**Cleaning:** Add 1/2 cup of vinegar-based disinfectant to the floor washing water (along with homemade soap jelly or biodegradable detergent).

**In the laundry:** After every 2-3 washes pour a cup of homemade disinfectant in the washing tub. The vinegar deodorises not only the clothing but the washing machine, hoses, etc. (You can use plain undiluted vinegar if homemade disinfectant is not available).

**In the Garden:** Spray undiluted vinegar onto troublesome weeds to discourage their growth. Repeat up the three times for it to be effective. To remove moss and algae: Vinegar (1 part vinegar with 3 parts water) sprayed onto walls, pathways and other areas will prevent algae and moss growth.