



## Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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ABN 48 036 173 161

### HOPE E-news Bulletin 2017 #01 --- 15 January 2017

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.

### Editorial

Welcome to 2017. The HOPE management team has an extensive program of activities planned for the year (pages 2-3) and you are encouraged to support as many of these undertakings as possible.

Likewise, please review this year's Environmental Events Calendar (page 4) provided by the Federal Department of Environment and support a good number of the events as well.

This month's feature article "Building Australia Through Citizen Science" is supplied by Alli Taylor; and the bulk of the general articles have been written by Sue Higgins. Thanks to both Alli and Sue for their contributions.

Regards,

Frank Ondrus, Office Manager – HOPE Inc., ph 07 4639 2135, email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au)

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### Letters to the Editor

Dear HOPE,

I am delighted to share with you, the 2016 report based on results from the winter stage of Australian Bird Feeding and Watering Study. You can [download your copy here](#) or by visiting [www.feedingbirds.org.au](http://www.feedingbirds.org.au). I really hope you enjoy reading the report and see how important your contribution is to the science of bird feeding.

The results from the winter stage of the study were very surprising and really interesting. For a start our data suggests a higher diversity of birds in gardens where both food and water were provided. This is compared to gardens where only water or only food was provided. Wow!!! So maybe bird feeding isn't the dire threat to our garden birds that we are lead to believe? Maybe our birds can/are actually benefiting positively from the supplementary food and water we provide - imagine that!!

However, before we can draw any established conclusions, there is still lots more to do! And I can only do it with your ongoing support and help. So please take part in the summer stage of the study which starts the end of January and runs for 4 weeks. If you cannot take part in the whole study, just do what you can. The dates are as follows:

- Week 1: Monday 30 January to Sunday 5 February
- Week 2: Monday 6 February to Sunday 12 February
- Week 3: Monday 13 February to Sunday 19 February
- Week 4: Monday 20 February to Sunday 26 February

That's all for now folks! From all the team at the Australian Bird Feeding and Watering Study, we wish you and yours a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year. We look forward to working with you again in the summer survey.

Very warmest wishes,

Ms Gráinne Cleary, [g.cleary@deakin.edu.au](mailto:g.cleary@deakin.edu.au)  
(received late December)

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## Office News Report --- January 2017

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### A Busy Year Ahead for HOPE and our Environment

2017 promises to be a HUGE year for Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE) Inc. with activities planned at the national, Queensland and Toowoomba level.

Nationally, HOPE will be implementing a new marketing strategy to lift our profile and increase our membership.

"We will also be looking to expand our range of alliance/partnership colleagues (<http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/about-us/partnershipsalliances-ngos/> )" said Mr Frank Ondrus, President of HOPE.

National campaigns being supported by HOPE include "Protect the (Environment) Laws that Protect the Places You Love Alliance (<http://www.placesyoulove.org/> ) and GM-Free Australia Alliance - <http://www.gmfreeaustralia.org.au/gm-freeze> .

With HOPE's headquarters located in Toowoomba, Queensland, we will be working closely with our many state-wide and local colleagues to support and promote their projects, campaigns and events – as well as heavily promoting our own undertakings.

"Certainly, promoting "Volunteering for the Environment – with the sub-theme of "Youth Engagement in Landcare" is high on our agenda", said Mr. Ondrus.

Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) <http://www.queenslandconservation.org.au/> campaigns being supported this year include Nature Protection and Climate Change.

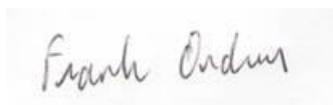
HOPE will also be promoting Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC) <http://qwalc.org.au/> Green Nomad program <http://www.greennomads.com.au/> .

In Toowoomba, we are busily putting the finishing touches to:

- A series of Community Forums (to be held in February, April, June, August and October)
- Acknowledging the contribution that Darling Downs Women have made to the Environment (as part of Qld Women's Week), 11 March 2017
- Nature Journaling workshops (as part of National Youth Week), 8 April 2017

We are also investigating funding options to undertake 4 (local) landcare projects; a series of *Going Solar* information sessions; governance and administration training for community groups management committees and admin support staff; and several workshops.

For more information on HOPE, visit our website at [www.hopeaustralia.org.au](http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au) .



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

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### Volunteers needed

More active volunteers – both local and remote (i.e. online) – are required to help us maintain our high levels 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 Facebook Administrator, Media Officer and Membership Officer.

Please contact the office on 07 4639 2135 or email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto: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](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au) or phone (07) 4639 2135.

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## HOPE's schedule of meetings, events and projects

The HOPE management team invites you to its Toowoomba schedule of committee meetings, community forums, special projects and other activities as listed below.

### Members Meetings schedule:

11 Feb Ordinary meeting  
 10 June Ordinary Meeting  
 9 Sept Ordinary Meeting  
 11 Nov AGM for 2016-2017  
 11 Nov 1<sup>st</sup> Ordinary meeting for 2017-2018

→ All committee meetings are held at the HOPE office, 22 Vacy St, Toowoomba

### Community Forum program

This year's community forum program will be held at the new Toowoomba City Library, cnr of Herries and Victoria Sts, Toowoomba.

DATE	START TIME	END TIME	THEME	SPEAKER(S)
18 Feb	1pm	4pm	1) An Introduction to Organic Gardening 2) Organic Pest Control - Non-toxic preparations for insect & disease control 3) Healthy soils, healthy plants ... it's that simple!	1) Mike Wells, TAFE Horticulture 2) Peter Macqueen, TAFE Horticulture 3) Colin Johnson, Earthlife Pty Ltd
22 Apr	ditto	ditto	The Value of Heritage to Queensland (and the Darling Downs)	Qld Heritage Council, Stephanie Keays and Gail Lipke
17 June	ditto	ditto	Going Solar – On/Off Grid with Battery Storage	Terry Davis & Michael Reiken, Excel Solar
19 Aug	ditto	ditto	An Overview of Condamine Alliance (NRM / Landcare) - beginnings, current achievements and future plans	Various staff
21 Oct	ditto	ditto	An afternoon with Jerry Coleby-Williams	Jerry Coleby-Williams, ABC Gardening Australia TV presenter and Patron of HOPE

### Special Projects

11 Mar Qld Women's Week – Launch of booklet “acknowledging the contribution of Women on protecting our local environment”  
 8 Apr National Youth Week – Youth Engagement in Landcare – an Open Day at Redwood Park featuring information displays; short guided walks and talks; and 2 Nature Journaling workshops.

### Attendance at local community events

20 Aug Toowoomba Languages & Cultures Festival  
 23 Aug U3A Seniors Expo

### Your financial support sought- <http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/annual-pledgedonation/>

We invite members and supporters to consider making an annual financial contribution to help cover our operating costs of approximately \$20,500 p.a.  
 Currently, our income is derived from project grants, fund-raising, corporate sponsorship and donations, but falls well short of our requirements.  
 Your financial support, by way of an annual pledge or donation, will considerably help us to achieve better financial viability.

## 2017 National/International Events Calendar

- [2017 – International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development](#)
- [2014-2024 – International Decade of Sustainable Energy for All](#)

### January

- [World Future Energy Summit](#) - 16th -19th
- [Australia Day](#) - 26<sup>th</sup>

### February

- [World Wetlands Day](#) - 2nd
- [International Day of Women & Girls in Science](#) - 11th
- [Business Clean Up Day](#) - 28<sup>th</sup>

### March

- [World Wildlife Day](#) - 3rd
- [Schools Clean Up Day](#) - 3rd
- [Clean Up Australia Day](#) - 5th
- [National Ground Water Awareness Week](#) - 5th to 11th
- [Green Cities Conference](#) - 6th to 8th
- [International Day of Forests](#) - 21st
- [World Water Day](#) - 22nd
- [World Meteorological Day](#) - 23rd
- [Earth Hour](#) - 25<sup>th</sup>

### April

- [World Heritage Day](#) - 18th
- [National Trust Heritage Festival](#) - 18th - 21st
- [Earth Day](#) - 22nd

### May

- [International Composting Awareness Week](#) - TBC
- [World Migratory Bird Day](#) - TBC
- [World Parks Week](#) - 1st to 7th
- [National Volunteer Week](#) - 8th to 14th
- [OZWater'17](#) - 16th - 18th
- [International Day for Biological Diversity](#) - 22nd
- [World Turtle Day](#) - 23rd

### June

- [World Environment Day](#) - 5th
- [World Oceans Day](#) - 8th
- [Global Wind Day](#) - 15th
- [World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought](#) - 17th

### July

- [World Population Day](#) - 11th
- [Schools Tree Day](#) - 28th
- [National Tree Day](#) - 30<sup>th</sup>

### August

- [International Day for World Indigenous Peoples](#) - 9th
- [National Science Week](#) - 12th to 20th
- [World Humanitarian Day](#) - 19th
- [Keep Australia Beautiful Week](#) - 21st to 27<sup>th</sup>

### September

- [National Biodiversity Month](#)
- [National Wattle Day](#) - 1st
- [Sea Week](#) - 4th to 10th
- [National Landcare Week](#) - 5th to 11th
- [National Threatened Species Day](#) - 7th
- [National Bilby Day](#) - 10th
- [Sustainable House Day](#) - 11th
- [International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer](#) - 16th
- [Bushcare's Major Day Out – BMDO](#) - 17th
- [World Car-Free Day](#) - 22nd
- [World Maritime Day](#) - 29<sup>th</sup>

### October

- [World Habitat Day](#) - 2nd
- [World Space Week](#) - TBC
- [All Energy 2017 conference](#) - 11th to 12th
- [National Ride 2 Work Day](#) - 12th
- [International Day for Disaster Reduction](#) - 13th
- [World Food Day](#) - 16th
- [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#) - 17th
- [Bird Week](#) - 23rd to 29th
- [Aussie Backyard Bird Count](#) - 23rd to 29th
- [National Water Week](#) - TBC
- [United Nations Day](#) - 24th
- [World Day for Audiovisual Heritage](#) - 27<sup>th</sup>

### November

- [World Tsunami Awareness Day](#) - 5th
- [Pollinator Week](#) - 12th to 19th
- [National Recycling Week](#) - 13th to 19th
- [National Walk to Work Day](#) - TBC
- [World Fisheries Day](#) - 21<sup>st</sup>

### December

- [International Volunteer Day](#) - 5th
- [World Soil Day](#) - 5th
- [International Mountain Day](#) - 11th

## Feature Articles

### Building Australia Through Citizen Science

By Alli Taylor, HOPE Supporter (Qld)

Citizen science enables members of the public an opportunity to work closely with scientists on an important scientific project that aims to benefit the wider community. Many Australians cherish their environment, as we are privileged to still have a large exposure to our natural landscape, in most places. Currently, there are approximately 130,000 Australians that are active in over 90 citizen science projects<sup>1</sup>, predominantly in environmental science fields. Many kinds of organisations are also involved, including universities, all levels of government, schools, industry groups, community groups and museums<sup>1</sup>.

The diverse projects undertaken, produce many observational records that would otherwise be unachievable by a single scientist<sup>1</sup>. This is crucial in a fast-paced changing climate, especially where development almost springs up overnight. As an example, over 500 people searched for koalas on one day in South Australia, recording 1,500 sightings as part of The Great Koala Count<sup>1</sup>. Researchers then developed a model of koala distributions from the spatial data collected<sup>1</sup>.

Depending on the project, the collaborative work undertaken will require different relationships between the scientists and community members. There are three recognised forms of partnerships which include:

- Contributory - citizens collect or process data for scientists
- Collaborative - citizens engage in work beyond data collection or processing, such as project design, analysis or communication
- Co-created - citizens and scientists work together in all aspects of the scientific process<sup>1</sup>.

There are many benefits of this work, including the vital contribution to the growth of Australia, by the protection of its unique fauna and flora and tangible advantages are gained for the research community, individuals, and society<sup>1</sup>. Citizen science is a way to further increase ones' exposure to the natural world, and through this, manifests a deeper appreciation and sense of belonging to something greater. When the Australian Conservation Foundation asked readers to participate in a survey, inquiring whether they would rather be a part of - a movement, a team, a network or a community, an overwhelming response indicated that participants would rather be a part of a community<sup>2</sup>.

Citizen science aids to provide new information for government decision-making, through highlighting issues such as; pest and disease outbreaks, pollution breaches or the discovery of new species<sup>3</sup>. It also creates a greater understanding of science principles, increases education which leads to the development of new skills, and helps the research community gain an increased scale of data collection and access to resources such as private land<sup>3</sup>.

We are entering a phase of history where every single human being should be acknowledging how they impact the Earth, and be aware of our role as planetary stewards. Individuals alone cannot solve all our pollution and extinction crisis<sup>2</sup>, however when we work together as mobilised and organised community, we can create the change we wish to see in the world.

For further information please visit: <http://www.citizenscience.org.au>

#### References

1. Pecl, G., Gillies, C., Sbrocchi, C., Roetman, P., (2015), *Building Australia Through Citizen Science, Occasional Paper Series, Issue 11, Office of Chief Scientist, Australian Government.*
2. *Australian Conservation Society, (2016), Changing the Story: The power of words, Habitat, Vol. 44, No. 2.*
3. Executive Director, Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, (2015), *From mapping fish to counting koalas Australians are becoming passionate citizen scientists*, University of Tasmania, Australia, (accessed online 07-12-2016, <http://www.imas.utas.edu.au/news/news-items/from-mapping-fish-to-counting-koalas-australians-are-becoming-passionate-citizen-scientists>).

## Queensland News



### Protect the Bush Alliance - [www.ptba.org.au](http://www.ptba.org.au)

Protect the Bush Alliance (PTBA) is an alliance of 36 organisations and 96 individuals who are working together to protect the flora and fauna of Queensland from the increasing threats to our biodiversity as a consequence of land clearing, mining and other activities. We work closely with community groups aiming to protect local tracts of bushland with high conservation value as well as working to ensure that larger developments do not destroy or damage important habitat. PTBA is currently sponsored by BirdLife Southern Queensland.

Our specific aims are:

- To advocate for the protection of areas of high conservation value.
- To identify and encourage activities that improve the understanding of the importance of biodiversity and other environmental values.
- To facilitate the collection of biodiversity data in areas of high conservation value

We look to achieve these aims by:

- Advocating for the improved protection of areas of high conservation value and high biodiversity through submissions, lobbying and other appropriate actions.
- Conducting and facilitating surveys to collect data on the biodiversity of areas of high conservation value under threat.
- Working with landholders and communities to encourage a greater understanding of the importance of conserving areas of high conservation value on private land.
- Examining proposed changes to conservation legislation, and submitting recommendations to relevant Government Departments.
- Developing stronger connections and working with member organisations to advocate for the strengthening of environmental legislation.

Membership is open to any person or organisation that endorses the aims. There is no membership fee. Members will have a wide range of views on other issues, but will work together to achieve improved conservation outcomes. Meetings are held every two months and all members are welcome to attend. Members are invited to get involved in PTBA activities such as animal or plant surveys, campaigns, photographing threatened areas, and helping to write submissions on issues threatening our bush and its biodiversity.

Contact: Sheena Gillman, Coordinator, [sheena@naturesound.com.au](mailto:sheena@naturesound.com.au)

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[Reverse Garbage Queensland Co-op Ltd](#) is a not-for-profit worker run co-operative set up in 1998 to support Friends of the Earth Brisbane in order to provide meaningful and ecologically sustainable employment and to be an example of a truly sustainable enterprise. They promote environmental sustainability and resource reuse and collect high quality industrial discards, diverting them from landfill to sell at low cost to the general public.

Reverse Garbage Queensland strives to be sustainable in every sense of the word: Environmentally, Socially and Financially. They practice social sustainability through a worker-managed co-operative model. This model encourages workplace equity, whereby the people that work in the organisation make the decisions about the direction of the organisation. No one owns Reverse Garbage Queensland; decisions are made using a consensus decision-making model.

Any surplus produced by the business goes into improving and expanding their work and supporting Friends of the Earth Brisbane. To ensure long term financial sustainability Reverse Garbage Queensland does not accept external financial support for their core business although they occasionally solicit donations and apply for grants for one-off projects.

Reverse Garbage Queensland: -

- collects industrial [discards](#) from businesses around Brisbane diverting them away from landfill and making them available at low cost to the community
- run environmental [education](#) workshops in schools, festivals, and community groups and at the urban environmental education facility located in their warehouse
- [mail](#) materials anywhere in Australia, an inexpensive and environmentally responsible alternative to mainstream art supplies

Reverse Emporium is a gallery space and gift shop located within the Reverse Garbage Queensland warehouse. Featuring the work of local artists, craft workers and designers who salvage, reuse and up-cycle materials, Reverse Emporium stocks gorgeous high quality art, jewellery, accessories, furniture, home wares, gifts and trinkets that are perfect for the eco-conscious buyer!

A myriad of materials, from timber and scrap metal to textiles and salvaged odds and ends have taken on new a life as beautifully crafted objects and art. Salvaged materials take on new form and meaning, illustrating the possibilities for the reuse of otherwise wasted materials.

Reverse Emporium runs a quarterly series of exhibitions showcasing the work of talented Brisbane artists that demonstrate an awareness of sustainable practices and a devotion to reducing the impact of their craft on the environment.

You can book a tailored talks and tour of the warehouse at Woolloongabba where you will be guided through the warehouse. The talks explain how the organisation operates (structure, ethos, consensus decision making and co-operatives) why reuse is different from recycling, how and where materials are collected and sorted, as well as displaying examples of discarded materials, diverted from landfill and put to creative reuse.

A talk and tour by a Reverse Garbage Queensland staff member costs \$1 per person, with a maximum group size of 50 (divided into two groups of 25 per presentation).

Bookings for a talk and tour of the warehouse are essential. You can [contact them by email](#), including the name of your school or organisation, the number and age group of participants attending and a preferred date and time. If you would like the talk tailored to your project, subject or theme, include a brief description to assist you in making your visit a valuable learning experience.

**OPEN: Monday to Saturday | 9am to 5pm      PH: 07 3891 9744**

## National News



The Australian Marine Conservation Society is Australia's only national charity dedicated exclusively to protecting ocean wildlife and their homes.

The [Australian Marine Conservation Society \(AMCS\)](#) is the voice for Australia's ocean wildlife. They are an independent charity, staffed by a committed group of professional and passionate scientists, educators and advocates who have defended Australia's oceans for 50 years. Paid and volunteer staff work every day on behalf of the community to protect our ocean wildlife.



AMCS works on the big issues concerning the sea. The key focus is to create large marine national parks (marine sanctuaries), make our fisheries sustainable and protect and recover our threatened ocean wildlife, such as our sharks, seals and whales.

They also work to protect our precious coasts from inappropriate development, such as is occurring right now along the Great Barrier Reef.

A key component in all campaigns is to give our oceans the best chance of resilience against climate change impacts. If we can keep our oceans in the healthiest and most natural state, without pressures from overfishing and pollution, then they will have increased ability to cope with these changes. Improvement of water quality and reduction of pollution and marine debris, which entangles, chokes and smothers our marine life and habitats forms part of this focus.

If you want to help ensure Australia's coasts and oceans remain healthy and free for tomorrow's generations, consider becoming a [Sea Guardian](#). Sea Guardians are the lifeblood of AMCS. They help to plan for long term, strategic conservation campaigns.

For as little as 66c a day, you can help to continue the critical work to combat overfishing, create marine sanctuaries, and protect our endangered marine life like whales, sea turtles and dugongs. All Sea Guardian donations are 100% tax-deductible. Join as one of the treasured Sea Guardians today and help make a difference for tomorrow.



[Eco-Schools](#) is a proven schools-based sustainability education framework operating in 60+ countries globally and developed by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) based in Denmark. Eco-Schools is a curriculum linked, democratic and participatory program that provides an excellent opportunity for students to experience active citizenship in their schools. Both schools and the wider community benefit from this program.

The Eco-Schools framework is 7-Steps for schools to follow when carrying out projects they have identified to help school and community become environmentally sustainable.

The 7-Steps promote continual improvement in the environmental management of the school, complemented by curriculum development and whole school community involvement.

Step 1: Eco-Schools Committee: Establishing a student-led committee that represents the whole school community. They take the lead in establishing the Eco-Schools framework and achieving the Eco-Schools action plan.

Step 2: Environmental Review: A survey to explore the environmental impacts of the school and identify areas for improvement.

Step 3: Action Plan: Outlining the action projects the school aims to carry out. Schools can choose projects based on issues raised in the environmental review, the outcomes of previous projects and student interests.

Step 4: Monitor and Evaluate: Recording and analysing information about Eco-Schools projects. This enables Eco-Schools to understand project results and continually improve.

Step 5: Curriculum Links: Integrating the Eco-Schools program activities with the school's curriculum. Enabling students to explore the environmental issues facing the school community and the wider world.

Step 6: Inform & Involve: Engaging the whole school and wider community in the Eco-Schools program. Eco-Schools aim to improve awareness of key sustainability messages, and encourage positive environmental behaviours in the community.

Step 7: Eco-Code: A statement, policy, song, poem or mantra which reflects the school's commitment to being an Eco-School.

Registered Eco-Schools gain access to more detailed guidance & tools for implementing the 7 Steps.

The Eco-Schools program also incorporates awards, which are assessed by the Foundation for Environmental Education, National Operator in Australia – Keep Australia Beautiful. Eco-Schools awards are a great opportunity for staff and students to gain that all-important recognition and appreciation for their efforts.

Perhaps the most important step in the Eco-Schools framework is Step 5: Curriculum Links. By integrating the Eco-Schools program into the school curriculum, educators can use the program to achieve required outcomes in a wide range of competencies and key learning areas. Eco-Schools around the world have seen great benefits in this approach, finding that students are more engaged in academic tasks set in the context of a real-life project in the school grounds, the local community or tackling a global environmental issue.



The **Australian Packaging Covenant (APC)** is a sustainable packaging initiative which aims to change the culture of business to design more sustainable packaging, increase recycling rates and reduce packaging litter. It is an agreement between government, industry and community groups to work together to find and fund solutions to address packaging sustainability issues.

Organisations sign the Covenant to signal their commitment to:

- Design packaging that is more resource efficient and more recyclable
- Increase the recovery and recycling of used packaging from households and away-from home sources
- Take action to reduce the incidence and impacts of litter.

The Covenant aims to ensure that all involved in the packaging chain play their part by undertaking these commitments. Currently over 900 organisations (business and industry, government and non-government) are signatories to the Australian Packaging Covenant.

#### **What does being an APC signatory mean?**

When an organisation signs the Covenant, they pay a contribution to the Covenant fund, and develop an action plan that sets out what they propose to do to contribute to the Covenant's objective and goals of design, recycling and product stewardship. Each signatory then submits an annual report which details the progress made towards completing the actions outlined in the action plan.

Through the Covenant industry plays a leading role in managing the environmental impact of its packaging. The Australian Packaging Covenant also provides funding to signatories to develop and complete projects which contribute towards the achievement of the Covenant's goals to increase recycling and reduce litter.

Find out more at [www.packagingcovenant.org.au](http://www.packagingcovenant.org.au) .



**It seems like everyone is talking about the dangers of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) these days. But what are GMOs exactly?**

Genetically modified organisms are the result of a laboratory process that inserts genes from one species into the genes of another to obtain a desired trait or characteristic (e.g., fast-growing salmon). There is considerable evidence that genetically modified foods are not safe. Thousands of physicians prescribe non-GMO diets, and many describe significant, even dramatic alleviation of symptoms such as gastrointestinal, immune, reproductive, and weight issues. Similar problems afflict lab animals fed GMOs and clear up in livestock and pets taken off GMO feed. The incidence of these disorders increased in parallel with the introduction and expansion of GMOs in the US. Furthermore, the two primary toxins found in GMO foods—Roundup and Bt-toxin—have characteristics that would predispose us to these types of conditions.

The [Institute for Responsible Technology](#) is a world leader in educating policy makers and the public about genetically modified (GM) foods and crops. Jeffrey M. Smith, founder of IRT in 2003 is the leading consumer advocate promoting healthier non-GMO choices. His meticulous research documents show how biotech companies continue to mislead legislators and safety officials to put the health of society at risk and the environment in peril. His work expertly summarizes why the safety assessments conducted by the FDA and regulators worldwide teeter on a foundation of outdated science and false assumptions, and why genetically engineered foods must urgently become a top food safety priority. He also states several animal studies indicate serious health risks associated with genetically modified food, including infertility, immune problems, accelerated aging, faulty insulin regulation and changes in major organs and the gastrointestinal system.

IRT has worked in over 40 countries on 6 continents, and is credited with improving government policies and influencing consumer-buying habits. The organisation investigates and reports the risks and impact on health, environment, the economy, and agriculture, as well as the problems associated with current research, regulation, corporate practices, and reporting.

The organisations work comes from a dedicated team of subject experts, consultants and staff who generously donate their time and experience. In addition, IRT employs media experts, social network campaigners, writers, graphic designers, communications specialists, fundraisers, outreach professionals and support staff, who operate from their headquarters in Iowa, and from virtual offices in the US.

their educational programs are driving the tipping point of consumer rejection against GMOs, which is already starting to push genetically engineered ingredients out of the market in the US. The IRT website has become one of the most respected resources for online videos, podcasts, blogs, and reports for accurate and up to date information on GMOs. Subscribe to the Spilling the Beans newsletter for updates, events and news.

[The Seeds of Deception web site](#) is an excellent **resource for educational materials on Genetically Modified Organisms** The online bookstore includes all the award-winning materials written and produced by international bestselling author [Jeffrey M. Smith](#), the leading spokesperson on the health dangers of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). He documents how the world's most powerful Ag biotech companies bluff and mislead critics, and put the health of society at risk. The website includes not only his books, but his DVDs, CDs, and brochures on all aspects of GMOs and how to eliminate them from your diet.

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**HOPE's Pledge facility - <http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/annual-pledgedonation/>**

*We invite members and supporters to consider making an annual financial contribution to help cover our operating costs of approximately \$20,500 p.a.*

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## Resources



Since its launch in early 2012, [RenewEconomy.com.au](http://RenewEconomy.com.au) has quickly emerged as Australia's best informed and most read web-site focusing on clean energy news and analysis, as well as climate policy.

It is read widely among the industry and policy-makers, and others with a strong interest in the transition to a low carbon economy. It has a strong international readership because it also focuses on global trends.

In September, 2015, the RenewEconomy website recorded unique visitors of 245,000, and page views of more than 560,000.

There seems little doubt that the Australian economy – indeed the world's – is starting the journey through one of the most dramatic transformations since the industrial revolution.

Like the first, this new industrial revolution will be led by changes in technology, this time driven by the need to act on climate change, energy security and resource scarcity. Much of the way the world does business – particularly in the multi-trillion-dollar energy and transport sectors, but also in many other sectors – will change profoundly in the decades to come.

How this unfolds, and at what cost or benefit, is impossible to forecast. But it's going to be fascinating to watch, to report on, and to analyse. That's the goal of the website – to discuss the ideas, analyse the trends, the new technologies and the policies that will drive this transformation.

RenewEconomy is an independent website founded and owned by **Giles Parkinson**, a journalist of 30 years experience, a former Business Editor and Deputy Editor of the Australian Financial Review, a former columnist for The Bulletin magazine and The Australian, and the founder and former editor of Climate Spectator.

Giles is joined by Deputy Editor **Sophie Vorrath**, who also worked with Business Spectator and Climate Spectator. Also contributing regularly to the website is **Paul Gilding**, an independent writer and corporate advisor on climate change and sustainability, and recognized as a global authority and thought leader on sustainability and business. He is the author of "The Great Disruption" published in 2011 to wide acclaim.

RenewEconomy is updated daily and produces a free daily newsletter, so sign up to receive information into your inbox. The site operates on an advertising revenue model and contributed articles are also invited.



### OPEN SCIENCE FOR PUBLIC GOOD

A mission-driven, non-profit collaborative, [Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene](http://Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene) is a trans-disciplinary, open-access journal committed to the facilitation of collaborative, peer-reviewed research.

With the ultimate objective of accelerating scientific solutions to the challenges presented by this era of human impact, it is uniquely structured into six distinct knowledge domains, and gives authors the opportunity to publish in one or multiple domains, helping them to present their research and commentary to interested readers from disciplines related to their own.

*Elementa* strives to expertly publish timely, peer-reviewed articles and help authors present their work in a particularly engaging way, offering the opportunity to display additional materials such as slideshows and videos alongside their research; and making all articles available in multiple formats such as PDF, HTML, EPUB and Mobipocket.

*Elementa's* subtitle embraces the concept of the Anthropocene, a term widely used since its coining by Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer in 2000\* to denote the present time interval, in which many geologically significant conditions and processes are profoundly altered by human activities.

The title, "*Elementa*," is from [Empedocles](http://Empedocles) (ca. 490–430 BCE), the pre-Socratic philosopher credited with the invention of the four-element theory of matter (earth, air, water, fire), one of the earliest theories of particle physics. Empedocles' four "roots" (ρίζωματα, rhizōmata) was translated in Latin as *elementa*, the essential components of which all that exists or ever might come to exist are composed. The knowledge domains represent what is believed to be the minimal components necessary to address the grand-challenge issues facing all conscious beings on Earth in this time of environmental change.

A new open-access scientific journal, *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene* publishes original research reporting on new knowledge of the Earth's physical, chemical, and biological systems; interactions between human and natural systems; and steps that can be taken to mitigate and adapt to global change. *Elementa* reports on fundamental advancements in research organized initially into six knowledge domains, embracing the concept that basic knowledge can foster sustainable solutions for society. *Elementa* is published on an open-access, public-good basis—available freely and immediately to the world.

*Elementa* welcomes the following types of manuscripts, all of which are peer reviewed:

- **Research Article**, presenting the results of primary scientific research and typically following the format of a traditional research paper;
- **Review**, presenting conceptual advances, syntheses, and integration of a field or topic;
- **Policy Bridge**, articles focused on bridging scientific knowledge with policy issues, policy options, or policy analysis;
- **Practice Bridge**, articles focused on bridging scientific knowledge with analysis of, challenges with, or opportunities for specific practices;
- **Commentary**, explanatory essays, treatises, and opinion papers, typically invited by the Editors-in-Chief;
- **Comment & Reply**, items of correspondence relating to *Elementa* articles and promoting discussion of relevant research, accompanied by author responses; and
- **Book Reviews**, critical reviews of books relevant to *Elementa*, invited by the Editors-in-Chief.

*Elementa* also welcomes **Special Features**, a set of related articles addressing themes or projects of broad interest, typically 4–10 articles in each group, usually including a synthesizing Commentary. Special Features may fall within a single knowledge domain or be cross-listed under two or more domains; in either case, a single Editor-in-Chief will be responsible for the entire Special Feature. For more details, see the [Special Features informational page](#).



## **Sunulator - Solar Feasibility Calculator by Alternative Technology Association (ATA)**

The ATA's new tool for calculating the economics of solar installations can use half-hourly consumption and insolation data to give a much more accurate view of the benefits.

If you're trying to get a community solar project off the ground, a major issue is economics. How much electricity would the system generate? What kind of deal might you offer the host site? What rate of return can investors expect, if any? To answer such questions, you need to do some homework.

This is where you can use [Sunulator](#), ATA's free tool, which estimates the economic feasibility of a grid-connected solar photovoltaic system.

### **How it works**

Sunulator uses a simulation approach. You provide information on the host site's current electricity consumption, ideally for a full year. You also tell Sunulator some details on the proposed solar system, electricity tariffs and costs. Sunulator then simulates a year in half-hourly intervals.

For each interval, it determines the position of the sun in the sky and estimates electricity generation, based on sunlight intensity and the angle at which it hits the solar panels. It then compares this generation to on-site electricity consumption to estimate the amount of electricity imported from the grid and/or exported to the grid. Finally, it applies the tariffs to calculate the interval's contribution to the annual electricity bill.

### **Community investment options**

Although most solar installations in Australia are owned directly by the electricity consumer, Sunulator is designed to assist community organisations to install solar systems via additional investment options. For example, it might be used by a community organisation planning to install a system and sell electricity to the host site, or to install a system through a loan, or for a community organisation acting as an electricity retailer. There's more info on the different ways it could be used on the Sunulator page, in the presentation links.

### **Can a homeowner use Sunulator?**

Sunulator is very suitable for estimating economic feasibility of a grid-connected home solar system. However, it does require some persistence and prior knowledge to use it effectively. It also requires a computer with Microsoft Excel 2003 or later.

For more information, go to the [Alternative Technology Association Sunulator Information page](#).

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