

Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

PO Box 6118 - Clifford Gardens, TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

(22 Vacy Street, Toowoomba QLD 4350)

Ph 07 4639 2135; Email: office@hopeaustralia.org.au

Website: http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au

Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/Householders.Options.to.Protect.the.Environment

ABN 48 036 173 161

HOPE E-news Bulletin 2017 #10 --- 1 October 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. Deadline for articles is 15th day of the month.

Editorial

Our newsletter for October, again has a great mix of articles, including a review of ABC TV's story on the Murray-Darling Basin.

I also draw your attention to the news from APEEL (page 2).

Get reading! and think about providing comment or an article of your own for future editions.

Frank Ondrus, acting Office Manager

2017 National/International Events Calendar

- 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development
- 2014-2024 International Decade of Sustainable Energy for All

October

- World Habitat Day
- 4-10 World Space Week
- 6 National Walk to Work Day
- 11-12 <u>All Energy 2017 conference</u>
- 12 National Ride 2 Work Day
- 15-21 National Water Week
- 16 World Food Day
- 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- 23-29 <u>Bird Week</u> and <u>Aussie Backyard Bird Count</u>
- 24 <u>United Nations Day</u>

November

- 5 World Tsunami Awareness Day
- 11 HOPE AGM & 1st Ordinary Meeting of 2017-2018 Committee
- 12-19 <u>Pollinator Week</u>
- 13-19 <u>National Recycling Week</u>
- 21 <u>World Fisheries Day</u>

Beyond Plastic Pollution Conference 2017

Australia's first Conference focused on reducing Marine Plastic Pollution in the Asia-Pacific region and will take place at Darling Harbour in Sydney from October 30th to November 1st 2017. Bringing together business, government, science, academia and community, Beyond Plastic Pollution will seek to find pathways to cleaner oceans learning about the latest research, testing the best solutions and encouraging diverse interests to work together.

If you would like to know more about or if you would like to join us to help map out the pathways to cleaner oceans, visit www.beyondplasticpollutionconference.org.au.

Latest news from Australian Panel of Experts on Environmental Law



http://apeel.org.au/

Dear Friends of the Environment,

The Australian Panel of Experts on Environmental Law (APEEL) has just released their final report, <u>A Blueprint</u> for the Next Generation of Australian Environmental Law.

The blueprint is an accessible summary of a large body of work undertaken by APEEL over the past few years. The APEEL website also has the following detailed technical papers written by APEEL members:

- 1. The foundations of environmental law
- 2. Environmental governance
- 3. Terrestrial natural resources management
- 4. Marine and coastal issues
- Climate law
- 6. Energy regulation
- 7. The private sector, business law and environmental performance
- 8. Democracy and the environment

APEEL is comprised of leading Australian experts in environmental law as well as some leading international experts. Details about Convenor, Adjunct Professor Rob Fowler, and other panel members can be <u>found on the website</u>. I encourage you to draw on their work in your submissions, strategy development and policy engagement.

The release of the Blueprint marks the culmination of secretariat support by the Places You Love alliance for APEEL. It's likely that the Panel will continue in some form and a conference and book publication are under discussion.

Congratulations and thankyou to all of the environmental law experts involved in the APEEL project who have all contributed their time and expertise voluntarily. The great work that APEEL has performed in mapping out the intellectual foundations for substantial reform of environmental law in Australia has already provided much of the intellectual underpinning for proposals to be taken to the next federal election, and I'm sure their work will continue to inspire demands for reform across the environment movement.

Regards,

Brendan Sydes & Samantha Vine on behalf of the Places You Love Management Committee



FOR SALE

HOPE polo shirts - \$30 each

☐ Ladies: sizes 12, 14 and 16

☐ Men's: sizes L, 2XL, 4XL

Contact the office on 4639 2135 to arrange payment and pick-up.

(Photo taken at Ipswich Plant Expo, March 2016)

HOPE News – October 2017

Good morning,

The often-used phrase "life gets in the way of ..." helps explain why regular feedback from our members and friends seems to have dropped off considerably in recent times.

Family, work, illness, holidays, etc. all rightly take priority over voluntary work with organisations such as HOPE.

Indeed, with my wife Mary taking long-service leave, I've been spending more time with her in the garden, going for walks and taking the occasional day off to go visiting or take a country drive.

However, as a <u>national</u>, community-based, non-for-profit environment group managed entirely by volunteers, it is important that the executive committee and admin support staff keep in touch regularly; and that our efforts are also reported back to the membership on a regular basis!

For the "health" of our group, it is important that we hear back from you, our members and supporters.

For example, is HOPE doing enough in the advocacy arena – especially at the national level?

What are the issues that concern you the most? Is it climate change, energy policy, creating marine sanctuaries, saving The Great Barrier Reef or supporting the Stope Adani Mine campaign to name a few. And, should HOPE be doing something to address them – directly or in partnership with others?

Regards,

Frank Ondrus, President (& Office Manager) – HOPE Inc., ph 07 4639 2135

Alliances/Partnerships initiative – Forming relationships with international, national, Queensland and Toowoomba regional organisations (http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/about-us/partnershipsalliances-ngos/) provides us with access to a wide range of expertise and resources that complements our strategic aims (see http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/uploads/media/Brochure_HOPE_Charter_2012_07_.pdf).

If you know of other organisations that share our goals, please let the office know so that we can extend an invitation to them to work with us.

Back to Basics – Apart from pursuing our strategic partnerships as noted above, we are still very keen to pursue 'grass-roots' activities such as writing 'letters to the editor' on key environmental issues of interest or concern, distributing literature and talking to people at community events; hosting community forums and workshops; and promoting environmental stewardship through the media, our website and newsletter – as well as social media.

Please lend your support by sharing some of your time and talents to do this vitally important work.

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 Research Assistants, 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.

Feature Articles

Review of ABC's Four Corners Story on the Murray Darling Basin

By Dan Bielich, B.Sc. - Climate Science, Completing M Env. Sc.

Recently, ABC's Four Corners program featured the issue of over-irrigation of the Murray Darling Basin (MDB) for cotton farms in NSW and Qld. The MDB is one of Australia's most relied-upon and fundamental river system for water resource. In locations such as north-western NSW, water is scarce, and the environment is raw. To support the high demand for water to sustain cotton crops, private dams have been constructed. However, large companies such as Webster are not satisfied with the current water pumping restrictions. After extensive lobbying, the introduction of new water rules has caused a negative impact on the river health of the MDB.

Large cotton growing and irrigation companies such as Webster have been lobbying to increase the quantity of water that they can extract from the basin. Following these extensive lobbying attempts the NSW Government passed new legislation in the Barwon-Darling. The introduced legislation permits large extraction companies, such as Webster, to extract additional water from the basin. The legislation also removes any limits on the pump sizes and loosens current water restrictions. The new laws even allow water that has been bought by the NSW Government (with tax payer money) to protect the environment, to be pumped: triggering a major outrage in local communities, as the laws passed undermine the **intent** of basin plan.

Communities that rely on the MDB are distressed as large extractors are benefitting from the scarcity of water. These large companies purchase the water, and sell the water for a profit to farmers who are willing to pay. This triggered an open market for water distribution, making water a more profitable resource than cotton. Even though these extractors were purchasing the water with the intent of utilising it for cotton crops, the water ended up being sold as the primary product for a larger profit margin. Communities are outraged as they see first-hand the negative outcome that this has on their communities and the Australian market.

The large farmers, irrigators and companies utilising the water upstream are not "blaming" *per se* the people downstream, but it's clear they are deflecting any accusations that they are wasting water. Their intended message is that they're not the only ones wasting water. The communities downstream are legitimately worried if they will have enough water to survive. The people who have lived by and rely on the MDB have visual evidence of a gradual degrading of water quantity downstream.

The "man in the grey suit" Phillip Glyde who is the MDB Authority Chief Executive says that "it is in some ways unfair" that water is being taken out of the MDB. He explains the entire basin plans relies on proper accounting of the water usage, and to trust the plan. However, with the current physical outlooks and physical health of the river it is clear people are losing hope. In 2012, amidst a drought, the river disappeared for 8 months. Locals expressed their devastation by calling this a man-made disaster.

There are concerns that the water is indeed not being used "fairly". It was clear the entire river system was seriously lacking in compliance. The largest problem being identified in the Barwon Darling river system. There were multiple properties, such as the Burren Downs, that were found with "broken" meters whilst pumping millions of litres of water into private dams. It was estimated that over 1 billion litres of water were illegally pumped into private dams in contravention of the Water Management Act.

Jamie Morgan, an investigator, evaluated the pumping licences, checked the status of the water metres and ensured compliance. After finding that all of the properties that he evaluated had breached their water licences due to "broken" water metres, he urged for an extensive investigation.

Miralwyn Dam was one of the locations which was found to have a tampered meter. Peter Harris, the owner of the irrigation licence and the property, was questioned by Jamie Morgan. Mr Harris mentioned that he knew about the "broken" meters, but did not do anything about it. In a recorded interview with Mr Harris, he insisted that he had alternatively written down in a specific logbook how much water had been removed from the river over the last year. A few minutes later he confessed that he fabricated the logbook story. He had no logbook showing any evidence of logging how much water was being extracted from the river into his private dam.

It was found that Peter Harris' farm had extracted 5 times the legal limit of water. This was the same year when Broken Hill almost ran out of water, as there was not enough water running down-stream. Mr Harris' negligence is likely to be a contributing factor as to why Broken Hill's community almost ran dry.

Jamie Morgan, the investigator, formulated a report stating that all the properties he checked had meters with cords removed, or unplugged, or were "broken" in some way. There was more than enough evidence for an investigation, however his request was denied. "At this same time, the hierarchy went cold on compliance" Mr

Morgan said. To this day, no one has addressed the issues in this area. So, you must ask yourself, why with such concrete evidence of non-compliance, was nothing done? Why is there such neglect of these communities by the Government and other major authority organisations? What of the Murray Darling Plan, was it just a political stunt to hush the communities?

Personally, I believe that this government's priorities are confused. It is easy to support and introduce legislation. However, to uphold it, keep promises that were made, and ensure compliance is a whole different story. It is times like these where we must evaluate our choice of government. If the government is willing to abandon the inhabitants of the Murray Darling Basin for profit and a "favour" for the lobbyists, how can we trust them to make the right decision for to overcome global warming, or in fact any underlying problem that faces our society today?

Queensland News



Green Harvest - http://greenharvest.com.au

Green Harvest is an Australian organic gardening business whose website acts as helpful resource for all things green and garden-related, from growing food for poultry to tasty recipes for garden-fresh lemons and limes.

As well as the helpful blog full of handy hints and tips, Green Harvest is also your one stop shop for everything you could possibly need to nurture and grow your own garden, including organic seeds for fresh vegies, flowers and other plants to fertilisers.

Organic Seeds - https://greenharvest.com.au/SeedOrganic/OrganicSeedIndex.html

Green Harvest is home to a huge variety of untreated, organic seeds for growing heirloom vegetables, herbs, and flowers suited for Australian soil, available to order online. This extensive range includes everything from popular vegetables like asparagus to carob trees, as well as plenty of shrubs, vines, and native and exotic flora.

Edible Plants - https://greenharvest.com.au/Plants/EdiblePlantIndex.html

As well as unsprouted seeds, Garden Harvest also has many edible plants available for purchase in Spring and Autumn. These include water chestnuts and strawberries, both ordinary and elephant garlic, seed potatoes, and more unusual tubers like the yacon.

Sprouting and Microgreens - https://greenharvest.com.au/SproutingAndMicrogreens/SproutersAndAccessories.html Sprouts and microgreens make a tasty and nutritious addition to salads, sandwiches and smoothies, as well

as an attractive garnish for other dishes. Garden Harvest sells beans and other seeds for sprouting such as chickpeas, buckwheat, and adzuki beans, as well as kits, guides, and everything you need to get started sprouting.

Organic Pest Management - https://greenharvest.com.au/PestControlOrganic/OrganicPestControlIndex.html

Need to get rid of pesky bugs and other animals invading your home and garden - but hesitant about the usual methods? Garden Harvest boasts an extensive range of sprays, oils, and other products made for you in mind, for a clean and safe way to drive away cabbage moths, bed bugs, cockroaches, mosquitoes and other bugs. Humane traps for possums and birds are also available.

Tools & Accessories - https://greenharvest.com.au/tools/index_tool.html

An impressive array of garden tools and accessories can be found at Garden Harvest. Kitchen tools to prepare fresh and nutritious food and beverages such as banana slicers, dehydrators, and nut milk bags can be found here, as well as tools for pruning, plant propagation, and other garden utensils.

Books - https://greenharvest.com.au/books/index_books.html

Garden Harvest also sells a range of books – from poultry care to permaculture, foraging to soils, all the literature you need on livestock, wildlife and eco-friendly gardening is all here.

National News

Boomerang Alliance - http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/

Who We Are

Boomerang Alliance is the peak NGO group on waste in Australia with a mission to create a healthy, pollution free environment for all to enjoy by promoting maximum resource efficiency and zero waste.

We were established in 2003 when Dave West and a group of passionate people began to create alliances among environmental groups to give local communities power and influence in their struggle to stem the massive waste of discarded resources polluting our environments. The Boomerang Alliance has quickly grown from 9 groups and now represents 47 environment groups and local governments across Australia, including one in Indonesia and also New Zealand.

Over the last decade and a half, Boomerang Alliance has been campaigning long and hard to minimise our society's impact on the environment.

Campaigns

Container Deposit Scheme (CDS)

In 2004, the Boomerang Alliance began the national campaign to implement Cash for Containers across each state in Australia. Despite the many set-backs we have been faced with, our campaign began to see success with the Northern Territory (2011), NSW (2016), QLD (2016), WA (2016), and ACT (2016) announcing they would implement state-wide Container Deposit Schemes. However, Tasmania and Victoria are yet to commit to implementing a cash for containers scheme and we are continuing to campaign.

For more information on our Cash for Containers campaign, visit http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/cash for containers

Marine Plastic Pollution

In 2016, the Boomerang Alliance, scientists and community groups presented extensive evidence to the Australian Senate's Inquiry into marine plastic pollution. Our report calculated for the first time the extent of pollution and presented comprehensive solutions.

To that end, Boomerang Alliance is targeting the priority solutions that will achieve a 70% cut by 2020 in the amount of Australian plastic entering our marine environment. For more information on our strategy, read our Threat Abatement Plan (TAP) on marine plastic.

For more information on our Marine Plastic Pollution Campaign, visit http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/marine_plastic_pollution

Plastic Bags

One of our current campaigns is the fight against single use plastic bags. While there is strong momentum and public support in Australia for a ban on plastic bags, three states; WA, NSW & Victoria are still yet to ban the bag. Our campaign will continue until there is a ban across Australia.

For more information on our Plastic Bag Campaign, visit http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/plastic_bags

Communities Taking Control

Our Communities Taking Control campaign is the next step to achieving wide scale change. We will produce a 'how to' guide that can be rolled out to any community looking to comprehensively reduce its plastic footprint. To help provide insight into how this can be achieved, we have initiated two pilot communities – Noosa in Queensland, and Wollongong in NSW. The guide will be released at the end of October 2017.

For more information on our Communities Taking Control Campaign, visit http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/communities_taking_control

Toxic Tyres

Boomerang Alliance undertook an intensive campaign during 2013-15 by undercover investigations, applying market pressure and lobbying ministers and regulators. We uncovered numerous examples of illegal activity, in particular breaching of fire safety rules and planning consents. To end this, we worked with the Australian Tyre Recyclers Association to clean up their members and adopt independent, monthly auditing. We have also produced "Tyre Life, a comprehensive guide to managing Australian tyres', (you can find it at www.tyrelife.org.au). For more information on our Toxic Tyres Campaign, visit https://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/toxic_tyres

E-Waste

The Total Environment Centre and other members of the Boomerang Alliance ran a campaign for over seven years which resulted in the introduction of a new national scheme in 2012. This requires all producers or importers of TVs and computers to fund and meet ever increasing recycling targets. For more information on our E-Waste Campaign, visit http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/e_waste

Mattress Recycling

Concerned about whether the current practice of mattress recycling met the community's expectations, Boomerang Alliance commenced a review of the sector in Victoria in September 2015. For more information about our Mattress Recycling Campaign and report, visit http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/mattress_recycling



Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) www.geca.eco

What is third-party certification and how can it help?

By Emma Berthold, Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA)

We've all been there – staring at a supermarket aisle full of products, trying to choose which one to buy. Those of us with an environmental conscience have an additional challenge in trying to choose what's best for the planet, as well as deciding which product will do the best job, and is the best value for money.

There are products labelled 'eco-friendly', or 'all-natural', or some might have a symbol of a green leaf on the packaging – but do you really know what's in those products? How can you tell the difference between the genuine environmental leaders and those who are simply "greenwashing" you?

This is where third-party certification comes in. You've probably seen it before: the FairTrade symbol, or the Heart Foundation tick, for example. These are signs that indicate a product has been independently assessed and meets criteria that have been established by a trusted third party, rather than a manufacturer making up their own claims in order to sell products.

Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) is one such third-party certification scheme, which demonstrates that any environmental or health claims made about a product are true. The GECA ecolabel on a product also means the product has gone through a robust auditing process to make sure it meets all the environmental, health and social impact criteria of the relevant GECA standard.

Most of GECA's certified products and services fall within the 'built environment' category: furniture, plasterboard, paints, insulation, carpets, flooring materials, adhesives, and so on. There is also a wide range of certified cleaning products available, personal care products, tissue paper products, and other new standards are under development.

Each standard considers the biggest impacts that a product may have over its entire life cycle, from sourcing the raw materials right down to disposal of the final product and its packaging. GECA certified cleaning products, for example, contain fewer harmful chemicals, have a minimised VOC content and only use sustainably sourced palm oils. Understanding which issues are really important and deciphering what is on the packet can be difficult and GECA's standards take the hard work out of it.

Seeing that a product is GECA certified gives assurance to consumers that the product's claims are real and that the product really is a better choice, not just for the environment but also for your health. Consumers can have confidence that the product has addressed all the important environmental, social and health issues relevant for the product – not just one or two.

For more information and to see the full range of GECA certified products and services available, go to www.geca.eco to find out.

Climate Action Network Australia - http://www.cana.net.au/

CANA's was formed to take actions to protect people at home and abroad from climate change, to safeguard our natural environment, and to build a fair, clean, healthy Australia for everyone.

Koalas...are we killing our Aussie icon?

By Penelope Webster

Habitat destruction, disease and development are just a few daily threats faced by the koala, one of Australia's most iconic marsupials. These threats have contributed to one of the severest population declines on record, largely impacting Queensland and Northern New South Wales.

The Koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, is an endemic species found mainly in patchy distributions along eastern Australia. They are habitat specialists and are mainly restricted to Eucalypt forest and woodlands. Currently the population extends from far North Queensland to Victoria and across to South Australia. In the past 10 years Koala experts say populations in South-East QLD and Northern NSW have declined at alarming rates.

A study published in 2015 for the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, monitored populations along the South-East Qld Coast and Pine Rivers indicating significant declines since 1996. There is an estimated 80.3% decline in coastal sites and 54.3% in Pine Rivers. Conversely in Victoria and South Australia, populations are experiencing issues of overabundance.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists Australia's Koala populations as being of least concern, however in 2012 the koala was recognized as a threatened species in Qld, NSW and the ACT under the *Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. In 2013, a dark period loomed for koala populations when an amendment to land management legislation allowed clearing of remnant vegetation on high-value agricultural land. It has been estimated that more than 300,000 hectares of land was cleared, triple the rates of 2010.

A number of studies conclude that population declines in QLD and NSW are highest in urbanised coastal regions where habitat continues to be destroyed and there is high mortality caused by chlamydia, dog attacks and vehicle strikes. Chlamydia infection is especially problematic as it affects the fertility of female koalas and is easily transmitted sexually. These declines will most likely increase as development rapidly encroaches on remnant forest. In western regions clearing of native vegetation for agriculture, open-cut coal mines and coal seam gas development remains a great threat on populations.

The various levels of government and other stakeholders hold the key to the survival of our unique fauna and flora. Quick fix solutions are often initiated, but they rarely provide a chance for long term population recovery. For example, revegetation only works if disease treatment is carried out at the same time. Proper management and protection methods must be implemented on remnant vegetation or conservation efforts may be outweighed by habitat loss.

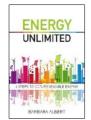
Multi-generational management plans are necessary to maintain healthy koala populations throughout southeast Qld and Northern NSW. These must encompass an intergovernmental approach between local authorities, state and federal governments. There is no short-term solution or quick fix.

The koala's high public profile can be used to promote its intricate ecological and economical value. This public profile has been elevated even further in the led up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast with the selection of Borobi the blue Surfing Koala as the mascot. If we can't protect our Aussie icon and Queensland's fauna emblem, then what hope is left for the future of Australia's unique fauna and flora?

What to learn more about the Great Barrier Reef?

If your answer is YES, visit the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website at: http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/resources-and-publications

Resources - Book Review



Title: 'Energy Unlimited – Four Steps to 100% Renewable Energy'

Author: Barbara Albert

With rising prices for conventional energy and falling prices for renewables, more and more organisations are making the switch to renewables. It is good timing that earlier this year a book by an Australian author was released with a detailed step-by-step method on how businesses can best transition to a more sustainable energy future.

Albert's book shows a way to cost-effectively change to renewables. She argues that any organisation could be fully renewable from their next energy bill, simply by deciding to purchase all of their electricity from renewable sources. However, buying GreenPower® from the retailer is just a straight cost to the business and does not deliver benefits like reduced energy expenditure, staff engagement, the satisfaction of producing electricity on site or reducing the underlying energy demand. It also does not give greater control over a business' energy use or allow a company to innovate.

Albert says that common sticking points that prevent organisations from transitioning to renewable energy are the following:

- They are not aware of their renewable energy opportunities and have no in-house experience in developing a pathway
- They worry about the technical and financial feasibility of an ambitious goal
- They lack senior management leadership and commitment

To overcome these sticking points, Albert guides her readers through a four-step process to transition to 100% renewable energy that addresses all these problems. By implementing her method, organisations can power their operations with renewable energy and energy efficiency options that are technically and financially feasible and will have the buy-in of key organisational stakeholders.

In Albert's book, readers can learn about:

- Drivers for renewable energy targets
- Renewable energy technologies
- How to improve energy efficiency
- How to analyse an energy situation and project it into the future
- How to evaluate energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities
- Renewable energy certificates (RECs) and how they relate to energy and carbon targets
- The difference of behind-the-meter and in-front-of-the-meter renewable energy installations and why
 this matters
- How to develop long term sustainable energy plans
- How to finance and deliver energy projects
- How to engage stakeholders
- How to manage organisational change
- · How to manage energy project risks

Book details:

Title: Energy Unlimited – Four Steps to 100% Renewable Energy

Print length: 272 pages Published in 2017 RRP Paperback: \$34.95 RRP eBook: \$11.99

This book is available from reputable bookstores, in print and as an eBook. Author-signed copies can be obtained from http://barbaraalbert.com.au/shop/energy-unlimited/