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HOPE E-news Bulletin 2012 #4 – 19 June 2012

The following items have been gleaned 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.

Hello everyone,

HOPE is moving forward in the world of technology. Work on our new website is almost complete; and we will soon also be on Facebook! Stay tuned.

This edition of the newsletter has contributions from a couple of new HOPE members. Ian Barralet has set out HOPEs support for container deposit legislation. You can find his article in the Office News section. And, Leisa Contarino's feature article is about 'The sustainability and security of Australia's Food Production and Capacity'. Definitely food for thought! What do you think? Share your comments with us via our website, email or facebook.

Miriam Sharp, Editor - office@hopeaustralia.org.au

Calendar of Upcoming Events

June

28-30 – Queensland State Landcare Conference, Brisbane

The theme for this year's [Queensland State Landcare Conference](#) is 'Paddocks, Backyards and Balconies ... Together, making a difference'. The conference aims to take affirmative steps towards the future of landcare. It will be open to community groups outside the landcare sector, to provide fresh insight on how to develop strong, vibrant and sustainable groups.

July

27-29 – National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day

[National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day](#) combine to make Australia's biggest community tree planting and nature care event. In 2011, thousands of Australians planted more than 1 million native trees, shrubs and grasses at over 2,900 Tree Day events across the country. This year, National Tree Day is on Sunday 29 July 2012 and Schools Tree Day is on Friday 27 July 2012.

September

Friday 7 and Saturday 8 September, Talking Wildlife: 50 years with Wildlife Queensland, Brisbane

Wildlife Queensland celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Talking Wildlife: 50 years with Wildlife Queensland commemorates the milestone from 7 – 8 September at the Bardon Conference Centre, Brisbane. We're thrilled to announce that the event will feature Paul Gilding as a keynote speaker, along with 20 other amazing wildlife workers, campaigners and researchers. More information is available online at www.wildlife.org.au/talkingwildlife or by contacting Event Managers, Wombat Creative on 0421 709 519. We'd love you to join our conversation online too: on Twitter @wildlifeQLD and #WQ50 and at www.facebook.com/wildlifequeensland.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING BEHIND THE NEWS IN SUSTAINABILITY? *Become an ECOS subscriber and find out*

For 36 years, ECOS has been presenting the facts on environmental issues and research in the Australasian region. Published six times a year by the CSIRO, each issue takes you on a fascinating journey through different aspects of our fragile surroundings and the factors that affect our sustainability and future. To subscribe, phone 1300 788 000, email publishing.sales@csiro.au or go to <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/nid/208.htm>

Office News

Another busy month for everyone at the HOPE office. Volunteers have been busy staffing information displays in Toowoomba; and at the World Environment Day event (5/6) held at the Goombungee showgrounds. Volunteers also assisted with organising and staffing our Low Carbon Future workshop held on 26 May. A big thanks to ClimateWorks Australia and Excel Solar for their presentations. Another internet/email disruption from 31 May to 4 June caused some headaches and embarrassment. Once the upgrade of our website is complete, we will be changing host providers so our service should be more secure and consistent.

More active volunteers – both local and remote via email – are required to help us keep the machinery of operation going. We are currently looking for a website manager and media officer; as well as on-ground helpers to assist with staffing information displays, and helping out at events. Please contact the office on 07 4639 2135 or email office@hopeaustralia.org.au to offer your assistance.

HOPE's next major event is our annual *Pathways to Sustainability Expo* being held on Saturday 13 October 2012 at the Toowoomba College of TAFE. Major aspects of the expo include -Information displays, trade exhibits, speakers program, demonstrations, farmers market, Geckoes Wildlife exhibit and Reverse Garbage "Recycled Art" workshops. Once again, your support of, and attendance at, the *Pathways to Sustainability Expo* would be much valued. Offers of assistance in helping to organise the event and/or with set-up, staffing and pull-down activities would also be appreciated. Please phone the office on 4639 2135 or email office@hopeaustralia.org.au to volunteer your time and talents.

Frank Ondrus, acting Office Manager

HOPE Reference Library

HOPE has a good collection of library reference material – both hard-copy (books, magazines, reports, DVDs) and electronic reports and newsletters. Topics include biodiversity, climate change, energy, Govt, landcare/NRM, MDB, mining, pest plants and animals, sustainable housing, waste and water. Hard-copy material is available from office; and electronic material is available by email. If you are chasing something specific, why not give us a call on 07 4639 2135 or send an email request to office@hopeaustralia.org.au. By the way, we have a number of outstanding loans at present. Please return materials promptly to us at HOPE Office, PO Box 6118 – Clifford Gardens, Toowoomba QLD 4350 or drop them off at 22 Vacy Street, Toowoomba.

Office Hours

HOPE's office is open every Monday from 9am to 5pm; with the library resources available at the same time; or at other times by appointment.

Advertisement



The advertisement is a horizontal banner with a green background and a red border. On the left, there is a logo for 'copylam services' where the 'o' is a green grid pattern. In the center, contact information is listed: 'Ph (07) 4638 3052 Fax (07) 4638 1615', 'Email: services@copylam.com.au', and '20 Hill Street Toowoomba Q 4350'. On the right, there is a cartoon character wearing a yellow hard hat and a red shirt, with the text 'Weeee Can Dooo It!' below it.

Volunteers needed

HOPE is looking for extra volunteers who can help in the following areas:

Admin assistance; literature review and follow-up internet research; promotion and marketing; planning and preparing for events and activities; preparing media releases; and developing publications such as information sheets, guides and booklets.

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.

Note: If we can enlist a team of 3 or 4 media officers, then their individual contribution may be as little as one item every 3-4 months.

National Container Deposit System supported

(Written by Ian Barralet for HOPE Australia)

HOPE and other environment groups welcome the recent progress in moves to establish a national Container Deposit System (CDS) in Australia. This system would help to reduce the massive number of bottles and cans that are thrown away every year.

As Clean Up Australia says, a properly implemented CDS program will benefit the community and the environment in many ways. It will reduce landfill and pollution, avoid resource extraction, and lower Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, there will be new jobs created, and cash generated for participants of the program.

According to The Boomerang Alliance, although recycling collections are carried out in most Australian states, only about 40% of used containers are recycled nationally. Un-recycled containers make up a substantial part of our litter and landfill.

However, CDS programs have been in place overseas and in South Australia for many years, and have proved to be an effective way to increase collection and recycling of containers. South Australia currently recycles between 75-85% of its cans and bottles - if other states achieved a similar recovery rate, about 6 billion extra containers would be recycled.

The CDS process involves drink containers being collected in a number of ways (for instance, as part of an existing waste or recycling collection system), and collectors will receive a cash refund for the each return. According to The Boomerang Alliance, the last three government supported studies have shown that a kerbside collection will actually benefit local councils, in contrast to concerns that industry has put forward. The Total Environment Centre says Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke has thrown his support behind the system, and he sees goodwill amongst state environment ministers. The minister is pushing the ministers to join SA and the Northern Territory (which introduced a CDS in January this year).

HOPE has encouraged the setup of a CDS program for some time, and supports legislation that would help enable a national system. Federal and state ministers are due to meet and make a decision in August this year.

Advertisement

2012 National Environmental Grants Guide Now Available

Hot of the press! Yarramine Environmental's annual directory lists grant and funding opportunities available from the Australian and State Governments, corporate giving programs as well as the major Australian philanthropic funds and trusts. The handy glove box sized (A5) Guide will prove to be a convenient resource for community environment and Landcare groups as well as regional NRM bodies, Councils and others when seeking funds to assist with a variety of their environmental improvement and natural resource management projects. Designed to present grant information to readers in an easy to access manner, the Guide includes information on how much funding is available for each grant opportunity, how to apply and who is eligible. Website links are also provided along with useful contact details (where available) to help readers obtain further information. A sample listing from the 2012 edition - which contains over 200 listings - as well as a mail/fax order form is available for download from the consultancy's website -

www.yarramine.com.au. Guides cost \$39.95 each and this includes postage and handling.

For general information about Yarramine Environmental's Grants Guide please contact the office on (07) 4638 2442 or at grantsguide@yarramine.com.au.

Feature Article

The sustainability and security of Australia's Food Production and Capacity

(Written by Leisa Contarino for HOPE Australia)

This article presents some models and information about how community groups, institutions and Governments are tackling food security issues. Food security refers to our ability to “feed our nation and others”. The CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), a research institution, takes a broad, macro look at food security and sustainability, working with industry and developing countries. However, there are alternative, micro models which engage local communities in food production and distribution through collaboratives and community gardening.

The goal for the CSIRO and local Queensland community initiatives, such as Food Connect and Grow Local, is to develop ecologically sustainable systems of food production and consumption. Local programs are often supported by Government and larger not-for-profit organisations. However, in contrast, in New Zealand, the ideals of food security are allegedly being compromised by new legislation (the NZ Food Bill) and it is claimed to impact on local producers of fruit and vegetables.

This article explores the initiatives and programs promoted by the CSIRO, Food Connect and Grow Local and their macro and micro impact and goals as a food security issue. Additionally, the NZ Food Bill is discussed by exploring the role of national legislation on food safety as a potential deterrent for these kinds of initiatives.

On a national and global front CSIRO, Australia's leading scientific research organisation, has recognised the role that Australia plays in global food security. The CSIRO sees food security as the ability to access food, as well as to increase food production to meet demand.¹ CSIRO claims the two primary drivers that have highlighted the issue of food security are population growth and dietary changes which have resulted in increases in food demand. The CSIRO estimates that the world faces a nearly 70% increase in food demand between 2010 and 2050.² Other related factors are increase in competition for land and water, climate change, economic development and use of food crops for biofuels and other similar, non-food purposes.³

Within Australia the CSIRO's solution to address food production is to link across industries and communities to raise productivity, preserve land, ensure water and biodiversity longevity and improve rural communities. Globally, the CSIRO recognises the role Australia plays as a food exporter, becoming part of the international context in achieving food security. The CSIRO suggests that the global challenge during this time is to increase agricultural output while decreasing environmental impact.

The CSIRO solution is to work with Australian farmers to increase crop productivity and develop innovative management practices, as well as to work in supporting developing countries food production through research partnerships. In particular the CSIRO provides technical assistance to Africa and Asia to help develop technologies and strategies to diversify and increase food yield. It has been recognised that one of the benefits of these international collaborations is that the research outcomes can be reciprocated back to influence natural resource management in Australia.

The areas of research include crop breeding to maximise resources; developing highly nutritious foods and reducing the environmental impact of food processing; reducing pests, weeds and diseases; increasing livestock productivity and decrease the impact on the environment; improvements in sustainability in aquaculture and fisheries operations; and adaptability strategies in the face of climate variability and change. The Director of CSIRO's Agricultural Sustainable Initiative, Dr Brian Keating, also highlights increasing food waste as a growing trend affecting food security. With Australia contributing 1.1% of the world's food and exporting about 2 thirds of the food we grow, Dr Keating promotes the core attributes of producing food with the least environmental impact as well as to stay connected to global knowledge networks.

However, while the CSIRO look at the macro picture of mass food production systems, there are other alternatives that build on collaboration and connectedness. These alternatives are Community Supported Agriculture and grow local initiatives which include backyard cultivation and community farms.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has been developed as an alternative model for food production and distribution. It began in Germany, Switzerland and Japan in the 1960s as a response to food safety concerns. The basic premise of CSA is a close reciprocal farmer-to-consumer relationship; the consumer

¹ <http://www.csiro.au/en/Outcomes/Food-and-Agriculture/food-security.aspx>

² <http://www.csiro.au/Organisation-Structure/Divisions/Plant-Industry/Food-security-explained.aspx>

³ <http://www.csiro.au/en/Outcomes/Food-and-Agriculture/food-security.aspx>

buys “shares” in the farmer’s produce and with that shares the risk of production with the farmer.⁴ In effect the consumer pledges their support to the farmer for an entire season. The farmer and the consumers share the risks and benefits of food production.

In Australia there is a CSA organisation called Food Connect which delivers fruit and vegetables to local “Homesteads” in Brisbane and Sydney (<http://www.foodconnect.com.au/>). The Food Connect model is to provide local packaging and distribution points for fruit and vegetables for subscribers (the consumers). The farmers deliver in bulk to the Homestead where the food is packaged in boxes. It is then delivered to a local “City Cousins”, who provide a place for local pickup. Food Connect promote the ideal of being sustainable through reduction of food miles with this CSA-based model. They also believe that the network formed encourages people to join a like-minded community. CSA and organisations like Food Connect promote the ideal of enabling local communities by reconstructing and reinvigorating connections between people and the land.⁵

Other initiatives, such as the Grow Local programme started by Queensland Conservation, has similar objectives as CSIRO and CSA.⁶ Queensland Conservation is a peak NGO environment group and their objectives are to improve profitability and sustainability of food production while at the same time protecting soil, air, water and land health. Grow Local, focussed in Southeast Queensland, promotes growing food in gardens and local streets in every suburb, as well as establishing networks of community gardens. Their goals are to establish a Queensland Department of Healthy Food which will coordinate policy regulation and future strategic direction in the development of ecologically sustainable and healthy food standards.

The Grow Local enterprise was funded in part by the Queensland Government’s “Low Carbon Diet” program, a policy initiative which supports and promotes individual and community involvement in a low carbon lifestyle. The “diet” is a 30-day program that engages community groups to support people to make changes to their everyday actions to reduce household CO₂ emissions.⁷ However, since the change of State Government, the Low Carbon Diet initiative has been retracted.⁸

Across the Tasman, advocacy groups are concerned about the introduction of a Food Bill to NZ parliament which will replace the old Food Act 1981. The NZ Food Bill has been created to introduce some fundamental changes to the NZ domestic food regulatory regime in response to food safety concerns. Advocacy groups, such as NZ Food Security, claim the NZ Food Bill effectively makes it illegal for individuals to prepare, share or administer anything made from plants, or minerals without government permission.⁹

Generally the Food Bill covers production and sale of food and does away with local bylaws. According to the FAQ page, the Food Bill does not cover food grown at home or made for personal consumption or any food given away or shared with anyone.¹⁰ Additionally, recent amendments to the as yet unpassed Food Bill have addressed concerns people had with food producing plants, plant material, seeds and providing food to WWOOFers, which is now not covered in the Bill. However, bartering of food is considered as selling in the legislation’s definition.

Some of the concerns raised include how much compliance will cost small producers¹¹, and how authorities can enforce compliance with allegedly extreme entry and search rights.¹² Community farming models, such as those espoused in Food Connect, are not clearly defined within the legislation. And although selling from farmer to consumer via a roadside stall does not require registration or checking, any distribution of food or sale to another business entity does. This may also include selling food at farmers markets.

Other concerns are that the new bill causes more bureaucratic headaches, rather than streamlining them. The impact of this means that small producers who supply to local community shops and farmers markets

⁴ <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>

⁵ HOPE Information sheet about Community Supported Agriculture prepared by Victor Skowronski, HOPE, April 2011

⁶ <http://www.grow-local.com.au/about-us>

⁷ http://www.climatesmart.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/29610/lcd-guide.pdf

⁸ <http://pan.search.qld.gov.au/search/search.cgi?query=low+carbon+diet&searchsubmit=Search&profile=climatesmart&collection=qld-gov>

⁹ http://www.naturalnews.com/034337_New_Zealand_food_freedom_human_rights.html

<http://nzfoodsecurity.org/>

¹⁰ <http://www.foodsafety.govt.nz/policy-law/reform-nz-food-regulations/food-bill/questions-answers.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/politics/6259507/Is-bellyaching-over-Food-Bill-valid>

¹² <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/opinion/perspective/6352409/Overkill-bedevelopment-in-Food-Bill>

<http://nzfoodsecurity.org/2011/07/19/food-a-controlled-substance-not-in-my-back-yard/>

will need to have their gardens inspected and to pay for registration and so on.¹³ Community and not-for-profit organisations who sell food at “sausage stalls” more than 20 times a year would have to be regulated. Additionally, there are concerns that this Bill does not encompass issues such as poor food quality of imported food, or issues such as pesticides residue or genetically modified organisms (GMOs).¹⁴ The knock-on effect is that some New Zealanders believe the Government is not supporting home and local community industry.¹⁵ This puts a grave question over the ability and confidence communities have in setting up sustainable and alternative food distribution and sale networks.

In Australia, food safety is governed by Food Standards under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. Although the Standards are legally enforceable, compliance with the Code is monitored by authorities in states and territories, such as Health Departments and Local Governments. This distributed governance model leaves decisions up to local community councils about the application and compliance of the Code.¹⁶ The CSIRO as a research institution takes a broad macro approach on food security by providing technical assistance and support for local industries and breeding programs, as well as forging links with international organisations to ensure the flow of knowledge across borders. At a micro level community organisations share knowledge from farmer-to-consumer across local food networks where people are engaged with production, whether it is on a farm, or in a community garden, or even in your own backyard. Collective activities and learning networks in local areas are encouraged by grass roots organisations and larger not-for-profits. However, these kinds of initiatives need clear Government support, which includes addressing food safety concerns. In New Zealand food safety concerns have brought about new national legislation that potentially encroaches on these kinds of initiatives. Food security in the form of access to healthy nutritious food may also be potentially affected. When people rely on others to provide food, it is vital that policy reflect the needs of local communities, as well as recognizing global implications.



¹³ <http://vegetablevagabond.blogspot.com.au/2012/03/nz-food-bill.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.3news.co.nz/The-Food-Bill-explained-and-debunked---blog/tabid/1341/articleID/243163/Default.aspx>

¹⁵ <http://vegetablevagabond.blogspot.com.au/2012/03/nz-food-bill.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/scienceandeducation/factsheets/foodsafetyfactsheets/>

Mutual Support Partners News

[Let's Build Big Solar! Presentation – a 100% Renewable campaign](#)

100% Renewable is a national not-for-profit organisation born from a common vision shared between community groups at the Community Climate Summit in 2009. Their vision for an Australia built on 100% renewable energy is built on a community organising strategy; which refers to empowering local communities already interested in a shared, common goal.

This *Let's Build Big Solar* presentation reveals their 2012 strategy as a national campaigner and voice for 100% renewable energy solutions in Australia. The strategy focuses on three main areas:

1. Influence the Government so that it stays firm on its promise of 100% renewable energy
2. Lobby the people who oppose Government policy on renewable energy and carbon pricing
3. Raise awareness and gain public support

The presentation outlines the specific tactics and people targeted in this campaign and asks community organisations to help by sharing the powerpoint, putting the tactics in motion and providing creative ideas to help boost the campaign. The powerpoint also acts as a recruitment drive to help build support for 100% renewable energy in Australia.

A main goal of the Big Energy campaign is to further develop their distributed network community model by providing local communities the skills and tools to engage in lobbying the Government. The campaign, launched in February 2012 has a timetable with an overview of the tactics and policy implementations by Government covering all of this year. Big Energy is active in all social media. For further information about 100% Renewables and the Big Solar Campaign visit <http://100percent.org.au/big solar>

(Written by Leisa Contarino for HOPE Australia)

[Here comes the Eco Hero](#)

The world needs an Eco Hero, and Eddie Dowd is the man to give us one. His Eco Hero books engage children from 3 – 8 years old in exciting stories with an important message. Dowd's books teach that a sustainable local and global environment can only be achieved if each of us takes responsibility for our individual actions, and makes the effort to work cooperatively with others: the Eco Hero is each one of us. Luckily we have Witty and Timmy, two young Eco Heroes from Moneyberrybush to guide us on our way. They inspire us to care for our environment in ways that are fun and effective.

The books are illustrated in a pacey colourful style by Michaela Blassnig, and Dowd has undertaken extensive pedagogic and market research to make sure they capture the imaginations of his readers. The first book in the series, The 100th Tree is available now, and further titles are in production.

For more information go to www.EcoHero.com.au

[Beyond Zero Emissions: it's all in the name](#)

Beyond Zero Emissions doesn't do half measures. The real prospect of catastrophic climate change calls for a bold response – we don't need to cut our emissions by 20%, or even 95%. We need to cut them out entirely. Sounds difficult, right?

The good news is, Australia can do this in just ten years, using existing technology, without breaking the bank. Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE) is a team of engineers, economists and scientists that have figured out how to get fossil fuels out of our stationary energy mix quickly and affordably. Using solar thermal plants and wind farms, we can have reliable, squeaky-clean energy powering Australia faster than you can say 'Kyoto Protocol'.

Going 100% renewable was the big idea underlying the Beyond Zero Emissions Stationary Energy Plan. However, there are other areas we can make big cuts in our emissions – like in transport (petrol's getting a bit expensive anyway) and in our buildings (which are currently pretty good at wasting energy). These are the plans our research specialists are working on now. Keep an eye out for the release of the second plan, the Buildings Plan which will be released mid-2012.

Beyond Zero also lobbies to turn plans into action. The Repower Port Augusta campaign aims to persuade the South Australian government to replace two of Australia's dirtiest coal power plants with solar and wind. If BZE's detailed blueprint is implemented, we'll see Australia's first solar thermal power plant, as well as the creation of hundreds of jobs. Get on board with this campaign [here](#), or check out our site at beyondzeroemissions.org

Queensland News

Welcome to Grow Local

Jerry Coleby-Williams - Former Executive Board Member, Queensland Conservation and current TV presenter with Gardening Australia



There isn't a single way to sustainability, we all know that, but sometimes our governments miss the simple and obvious. In Queensland, as in other parts of Australia and around the world, ordinary people can see that our food security is under threat from Global Warming and Peak Oil.

Instead of waiting for action from above many people are already working, individually, in groups and networks, to lower their greenhouse emissions, lessen their dependence on oil and to secure their food supply.

For almost forty years Queensland Conservation has helped to bring together the disparate strands of the environment movement in Queensland. We consult with our member groups and other conservation organisations helping to coordinate our individual efforts and to present a united face to governments and

other decision makers.

We want to see the transformation in our city, our region, our greenhouse emissions and our health that can be made by drawing together the backyard gardener, the community supported farmer, the urban farm, the conservationist, local councils and everyone who appreciates good food. We want to make our leaders aware of the great work being done for all our futures and to get support for more. That's what Grow Local is about.

I hope you can join us. Register your interest at www.grow-local.com.au.

Reverse Garbage

Reverse Garbage is a worker-run co-operative that collects unwanted discards from industry and businesses, diverting these high quality materials from landfill to make them available at low cost to the community. We currently pick up materials from more than 300 suppliers around Brisbane. With a truckload of materials coming in most weekdays, there's always something new and interesting in the warehouse to check out. We divert around two tonnes of materials from landfill every week. We run creative workshops at schools, festivals and on-site, host talks for visiting students about sustainability issues and what we do, and send mail orders to rural and regional areas. Reverse Garbage is located at 20 Burke Street, Woolloongabba. Our phone number is 07 3891 9744 and e-mail info@reversegarbage.com.au

Friends of the Earth - Brisbane

Reverse Garbage was set up in 1998 to help support the work of Friends of the Earth (FoE) - Brisbane. FoE is a social change organisation working towards an ecologically sustainable and socially just future through community action. Friends of the Earth believes everyone has a part to play in the protection of the environment and the creation of a socially just society that welcomes the support and involvement of a broad cross section of the community. To find out more about FoE, what campaigns they are working on or how you can get involved, call 07 3846 5793, email office@brisbane.foe.org.au or check out the website at www.brisbane.foe.org.au.

The Bicycle Revolution

The Bicycle Revolution Co-operative is a small, non-profit business that repairs, recycles and rejuvenates bicycles, in addition to providing access to a workshop space and tools for subscribers. By redirecting bicycles from the scrap heap, Bicycle Revolution provides low-cost, reliable bicycles to encourage cycling. All rebuilt bicycles are fully serviced, have a free first service and a six-month warranty.

Other services Bicycle Revolution offer to the community include repairs, new bicycles, new and used spare parts, accessories, professional wheel building and suspension services. Low-cost bicycle maintenance workshops empower people to repair and care for their own bikes. Bicycle Revolution continues to operate at 294 Montague Road, West End. To book in a bike service, make a donation or to find out more, call 07 3342 7829.

National News

[Coal Seam Gas comprehensive interactive map](#)

A national movement is coming together to take action against coal seam gas. As more local groups and individuals share knowledge and experience to build a well-informed and coordinated platform, new tools are needed to collect and interpret the overwhelming amount of information and the wealth of stories. GetUp! has developed an interactive map to bring together CSG data, stories and knowledge right across the nation.

The map identifies all the CSG wells and the companies responsible for each one, based on State Government information. It also shows the aquifers and extent of coal seam gas through the country. Onto this base information, local groups and individuals are invited to add their stories and further information to build a comprehensive reference point for action and education on the issue. This map has the potential to become a powerful tool for education and for action, both at the grassroots, and at state and federal levels. If you have any information to share about CSG, or if you want to understand the issue better, do check out this valuable resource.

[Free e-waste recycling for ACT](#)

The ACT will become the first state or territory to implement a new e-waste recycling scheme from May 15.

OzGREEN is looking for local, regional, national and global partners for [Youth Leading the World 2012](#).

Imagine thousands of young people coming together in multiple locations simultaneously, to focus their attention on global sustainability challenges such as energy, food, climate change and water and plan together how they can create fairer futures. Youth Leading the World (YLTW) is a bold initiative from OzGREEN that seeks to accelerate the shift to fair futures by building a movement of inspired leaders.

[E-waste scheme opens for business](#)

The ACT is the first jurisdiction to launch a national free recycling service for unwanted televisions and computers.

Responses to Professor Ian Plimer's 101 climate questions

In late 2011, Professor Ian Plimer, a geology professor and expert mineralogist with no background in climate science, released his latest book *How to get expelled from school: a guide to climate change for pupils, parents and punters*. In response to Professor Ian Plimer's 101 questions on climate change science, the Federal Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency provides [Accurate Answers \(PDF 1.4 MB\)](#). The answers and comments provided are intended to give clear and accurate responses to Professor Plimer's questions. The answers are based on up-to-date peer-reviewed science and have been reviewed by a number of Australian climate scientists.

[The Climate Commission](#)

The Climate Commission was established in 2011 to provide Australians with an independent and reliable source of information about climate change. In the Commission's first year, the Commissioners have met with business and industry leaders, local and state governments, and held community forums and public presentations for thousands of Australians. Through media coverage, social media interaction and the website, the Commission has connected with millions across the country.

ABC Environment (www.abc.net.au/environment) is the portal to all environment stories generated by Australia's ABC. As a government-funded, independent news source, with a legislated responsibility for balance, the ABC is the most trusted news organisation in Australia. ABC Environment aggregates all its environment-related content in one convenient location. The front page is curated by an editor (me) and the pages behind stream the river of Australian environment news, features and opinion as they break. In addition there is a Twitter account at @ABCEnvironment (<https://twitter.com/#!/ABCEnvironment>) which tweets the most interesting stories of the day. For example, today you may have missed the state of Queensland's environment minister stating that he is doubtful about the extent of human influence on climate change.

National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme launched

Safe disposal of e-waste is an issue for a number of government departments and agencies, but help is on the way. The [National Television and Computer Recycling scheme](#) began this month in the ACT. The scheme aims to boost the recycling rate of these products from 17 per cent in 2010 to 80 per cent by 2021-22.

World News

[Solar PV will do for grids what mobiles did for telephony](#)

A leading US utility chief predicts that solar PV will have a transformational impact on electricity grids. Throw in smart meters and EVs, and there are big changes afoot.

[Australians world's seventh biggest polluters: global report](#)

Australia's carbon emissions are the top contributor to its new ranking as the world's seventh biggest user and polluter of natural resources, according to a biennial report which measures the impact of human demands on nature. WWF's 2012 Living Planet Report, produced with the European Space Agency, the Zoological Society of London and the Global Footprint Network, reveals that humans are using 50 per cent more resources than the Earth can provide, and will need two planets by 2030 to support current rates of consumption and pollution. Read more: [Living Planet Report 2012](#)

[A new plan to save the planet](#)

G8 leaders released a statement calling for a phase out of inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies over the medium term -- but they failed to take strong action. Help grow the call by forwarding this campaign to your friends!

[IEA World Energy Outlook special report "Golden Rules for a Golden Age of Gas"](#)

The International Energy Agency has released its World Energy Outlook special report on unconventional gas entitled "Golden Rules for a Golden Age of Gas". Exploiting the world's vast resources of unconventional natural gas holds the key to a golden age of gas, but for that to happen governments, industry and other stakeholders must work together to address legitimate public concerns about the associated environmental and social impacts. The IEA World Energy Outlook special report presents a set of "Golden Rules" to meet those concerns and the report also:

- Describes the unconventional gas resource and what is involved in exploiting it
- Identifies the key environmental and social risks and how they can be addressed
- Spells out the implications of compliance with the Golden Rules for governments and industry, including on development costs
- Assesses the impact of two cases on international gas trade patterns and pricing, energy security and climate change.

The report is available for download at www.worldenergyoutlook.org/goldenrules/.

[Plastic Bags to be Banned in the City of Angels](#)

Plastic bags are perhaps the largest source of waste from our modern consumer culture. Stores give them out without question for all products big and small. Later, they can be found littered on the sides of roads and highways, hanging from tree branches, floating in rivers and clogging up our landfills. Now, a new plastic bag ban is set to be imposed by the largest US city to date to do so. This week, the Los Angeles City Council approved plans to phase out plastic bags at about 7,500 stores within the next 16 months.

The **NGO/CSO Global Common Statement for a Toxics-Free Future** was developed to create greater awareness of the increasing amounts of toxic chemicals in the environment, our food, communities and children. The endorsers of this statement have not forgotten the commitments made at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. Twenty years later, Rio+20 offers little or nothing to ensure these rights. Today we call on governments worldwide to take action to protect the public and ensure everyone the right to safe and secure communities and workplaces, free from toxic threats.

And we ask all civil society organizations across the planet to join us in support of this Common Statement-- join us and work together in solidarity for a toxics-free future for all.

Visit: <http://ipen.org/toxics-free-2012>



[Rio Earth Summit Conference 2012](#)

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as the Rio Earth Summit or Rio+20, in Brazil on 20-22 June 2012 will mark the 20th anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

As part of the first phase of the Global Transition 2012, leading thinkers were invited to author 11 [Challenge Papers](#). These topic areas address critical issues that affect all humanity and the environment. The papers identify the current issues and propose a way to progress the essential systemic change required to value and respect the interconnectedness of the living systems that sustain life.

Two decades after the Earth Summit in 1992, attempts to govern, sustainably, the global environment and manage the world economy without destabilising crises, are hopelessly disconnected. Since the original Earth Summit conference we have lived with an economic model based on debt-fuelled overconsumption that co-exists with vast levels of poverty and inequality. Comparable dynamics are visible in most economic sectors. Many working in the fields of environment and development now find that systematic problems require a systemic solution.

For decades governments have allowed a single indicator, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), to assume dominance as the critical measure of a nation's progress. It is now widely recognised by politicians and officials across the world that we must move beyond GDP and recognise it for what it is – a measure of economic exchange, which is itself a means to an end; the 'end' being the achievement of high well-being for all within environmental limits ('sustainable well-being').

The following Challenge Papers are available:

1. [The Green Economy](#)
2. [Beyond GDP](#)
3. [Global Inequality](#)
4. [One Planet Living](#)
5. [The Blue Economy](#)
6. [Energy Resources and Services](#)
7. [Food Security](#)
8. [Managing Natural Capital](#)
9. [Global Finance and Banking](#)
10. [Green Jobs and skills](#)
11. [Trade](#)

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2012 National Environmental Grants Guide Now Available

Hot of the press! Yarramine Environmental's annual directory lists grant and funding opportunities available from the Australian and State Governments, corporate giving programs as well as the major Australian philanthropic funds and trusts. The handy glove box sized (A5) Guide will prove to be a convenient resource for community environment and Landcare groups as well as regional NRM bodies, Councils and others when seeking funds to assist with a variety of their environmental improvement and natural resource management projects. Designed to present grant information to readers in an easy to access manner, the Guide includes information on how much funding is available for each grant opportunity, how to apply and who is eligible. Website links are also provided along with useful contact details (where available) to help readers obtain further information. A sample listing from the 2012 edition - which contains over 200 listings - as well as a mail/fax order form is available for download from the consultancy's website - www.yarramine.com.au. Guides cost \$39.95 each and this includes postage and handling.

For general information about Yarramine Environmental's Grants Guide please contact the office on (07) 4638 2442 or at grantsguide@yarramine.com.au .

Resources

Web Resources

[ATA partners with new liveability website](#)

The ATA are a knowledge partner of a new website launched by LJ Hooker called liveability.com.au. The liveability website helps inform consumers of ways that they can potentially save themselves money through energy and water efficiency.

The **ARIES** team have put together a [selection of online videos](#) from around the world to educate, engage, inspire, perplex, enlighten, delight and stimulate debate about all things to do with sustainable development.

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[Alfcon's Aquaponics](#)

Alfcon's Aquaponics is new Victorian small business that provides training, services and systems in backyard aquaponics. Alfio and Leisa, a husband and wife team believe wholeheartedly in aquaponics being the future of food production. This simple solution provides sustainable practices for self-sufficiency.

Aquaponics is about growing fish and vegetables together. The fish waste produced provides nutrients for the growing vegetables. The genius of an aquaponics system is that the vegetables clean the water for the fish and so it passes back to tank cleaned in the closed system. The only water lost in an aquaponics system is through evaporation. Alfcon's Aquaponics promotes the use of native freshwater fish species and encourages the use of solar for pumps to ensure the system has the lowest possible impact on the environment.

Based in Ballarat, Alfio and Leisa run beginners courses every month over a weekend, as well as sell backyard systems and provide professional advice and services on ensuring quality fish and vegetables. Alfio's personal goal is to educate communities locally and across the globe in how to create sustainable food production systems anywhere in the world using local resources.

Book Reviews

[State of the Climate - 2012](#)

This State of the Climate is the second paper produced by CSIRO and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. It provides a summary of observations of Australia's climate and analysis of the factors that influence it.

The Gaia Foundation: Report Launch - Opening Pandora's Box

Our NEW REPORT - Opening Pandora's Box: The New Wave of Land Grabbing by Extractive Industries and the Devastating Impact on Earth, was launched in Westminster on Wednesday 29th February. Download the [Pandora's Box Report here](#) and the [Executive Summary here](#).

Remember, you CAN make a difference!

Think before you print! 1 ream of paper = 6% of a tree and 5.4 kg CO2 in the atmosphere; 3 sheets of A4 paper = 1 litre of water

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