



Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.  
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## HOPE E-news Bulletin 2013 #3 --- 10 April 2013

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](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au) . Deadline for articles is 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

Hello,

*Electricity costs in Australia seem to keep rising and people are searching for alternative energy sources, such as solar. Are you interested in getting solar panels, but are unsure about what kind to get? You'll find a great piece about photo voltaic (PV) systems in the Feature Article section. If you are an owner of a PV system already, how do you like it? Would you encourage others to install one? Please share your thoughts and concerns with us, for example on our Facebook page.*

*The next event that HOPE will be participating in is 'Gardenfest' in Toowoomba. For those who live locally, please come and see us anytime on **3-5 May** at the Queensland TAFE on Bridge Street. Or, if you can spare a little time to help, please contact the office.*

*HOPE has now commenced a series of 'Kitchen Conversations'. A great opportunity to have a cuppa with likeminded people and discuss an environmental topic (PV systems perhaps). You can share experiences and knowledge about living more sustainably over a cup of tea or coffee. Please contact the office if you would like to participate or host a 'Kitchen Conversation'.*

*Before I let you get stuck into this enews bulletin, I want to encourage you to have a look at an entertaining little video entitled 'The price of carbon' by the Climate Reality Project about paying for pollution. You'll find it in the General section.*

Miriam Sharp, [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au)

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### April

- 13-21 [Australian Heritage Week](#)
- 14 Felton Food Festival (Qld) – [www.feltonfoodfestival.org.au](http://www.feltonfoodfestival.org.au)
- 18 [World Heritage Day](#)
- 22 [International Mother Earth Day](#)
- 26 Free [Governance Training Workshop](#) – Dalby RSL, 9am -12noon

### May

- 3-5 Gardenfest 2013, Toowoomba, Qld - [www.gardenfest.com.au/](http://www.gardenfest.com.au/)
- 11-12 [World Migratory Bird Day](#)
- 13-19 [National Volunteer Week](#)
- 24 [Walk Safely to School Day](#)
- 22 [International Day for Biological Diversity](#)

### Office Hours

HOPE's office is open every Monday from 9am to 5pm; with the library resources available at the same time. Other times can be arranged through the office.

## Office News Report – 10 April 2013

### Overview:

Most of our efforts in recent weeks have been spent on local “outreach” activities – especially, preparing for Gardenfest (3-5 May) and Celebrating Queensland’s Environment (3-7 June). Lots of volunteers are required for both events. Please register your interest by contacting the office on 4639 2135 or email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au).

Nationally and state-wide, our continuing focus is to support and promote - Container Deposit Scheme ([www.boomerangalliance.org.au/](http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/)), “Protecting the Laws that Protect the Places You Love” ([www.placesyoulove.org](http://www.placesyoulove.org)); “Plastic Bag Free Queensland” ([www.qccqld.org.au](http://www.qccqld.org.au)); and the Qld Protect the Bush Alliance ([www.ptba.org.au](http://www.ptba.org.au)).

Apart from needing more volunteers to help with projects, events and display activities, we urgently require assistance with our media activities. We invite members and supporters to step up and volunteer some of your time and talents to help share the workload! (see Volunteers Required item later in this report)

Thanks to all who have made contributions – especially members of the management committee, office admin staff and the many local and online volunteers. Your efforts are appreciated.

### Other matters:

#### HOPE present at Gardenfest 2013, 3-5 May, Toowoomba

Come and visit *Householders’ Options to Protect the Environment’s* information and demonstration activities (site 40) at *Gardenfest 2013*, 3-5 May at the Toowoomba College of TAFE, corner of Campbell and Lindsay Sts, Toowoomba.

Information available “matches” our demonstration activities of:

- organic / permaculture and waterwise gardening
- how to build a chook tractor; and basic acre of chooks
- square foot / container gardening
- composting using a tumbler
- management of urban weeds

A fund-raising raffle will also be conducted.

Lots of volunteers will be required to staff our display and demonstration area over this 3 day event. Please register your interest by contacting the office on 4639 2135 or email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au).

**Kitchen Conversations** - Isn’t it a good feeling, when you’ve had a great get-together with family and/or friends, and you’ve “solved some problems”? This the aim behind “kitchen conversations” – talk about issues, over a cuppa ... specifically, issues relating to sustainable living on an every-day basis. Feedback on outcomes is encouraged as your issues and solutions will be of interest to others.

**HOPE information display at PCYC Market** – We are looking for volunteers to staff a regular monthly information display at the Toowoomba PCYC market. HOPE will cover the cost of the site and provide the equipment and literature. Please register your interest by contacting the office on 4639 2135 or email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au).

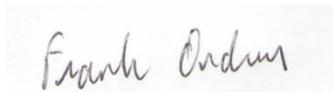
**Annual Pledge Day** - We invite members and supporters to consider making an annual financial contribution to HOPE to help cover our operating costs (which amount to approx. \$15,500 p.a.). Currently, our income is derived from project grants, fund-raising, corporate sponsorship and donations, but falls well short of our requirements.

Your financial support, by way of an annual pledge, will help us to achieve better financial viability. Please contact the office on 07 4639 2135 or email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au) to discuss payment options.

**Facebook** – We’re keen to build our facebook following. Why not sign on today! Also, please invite your contacts to do likewise.

**Letters to the Editor** – We need your help to raise awareness and interest of environmental issues and concerns in your local area. Please consider writing a *letter to the editor* of your local newspaper.

**Volunteers Required** - More active volunteers – both local and remote (i.e. online) – are required to help us maintain our high levels of activity. We are currently looking for people to assist with admin tasks; internet research and article writing; and media and marketing activities. We are also seeking expert comment from academics and the like to assist in critiquing government and industry policy reports. On-ground helpers are also required 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](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.



Frank Ondrus, acting Office Manger and President – HOPE Inc., ph 07 4639 2135

#### Advertisements



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Call Now! (07) 4638 7344

## Letter to the Editor

Hi HOPE team,

This year is the **International Year of Water Cooperation** and is a good opportunity to reflect on the essential nature of water to life on Earth and how we must look after such a finite resource. Australia is known as the driest continent on the planet and this is predicted to get worse as climate change gathers momentum. No doubt many Queenslanders consider we have had too much water in the last couple of years with the destructive floods that followed 10 years of drought.

Despite the lessons of recent droughts our Governments at both State and Federal levels seem incapable of adequately protecting our precious water supplies. The Murray Darling Basin water strategy is a pathetic compromise that satisfies neither farmer nor conservationist- who knows what will happen as the climate dries. In all the coal seam gas/ coal mining areas water is abused, made toxic with chemicals and salt and wasted in the fracking process and expansion of these industries is allowed to continue unabated while the impacts on ancient artesian water supplies are unknown and may well lead to contamination of the only water supply for many food producers. In the driest western reaches of Queensland the State Government is promoting the idea of irrigation and probably allowing coal seam gas fracking.

In south-east Queensland the Government promotes use of more domestic water rather than encouraging maintenance of the excellent water conservation habits of the drought years. Do we want to end up like sub Saharan Africa suffering decades of drought as climate change bites? Not much water cooperation happening between the governments and the community yet, so it is up to you and me to keep on telling our governments we expect them to conserve and protect our water supplies.

Yours for the Earth,

Lois Levy, [president@gecko.org.au](mailto:president@gecko.org.au)  
Gold Coast & Hinterland Environment Council (Gecko)

## Feature Articles

### Household Energy and PV

*By Bill Parker, Australian Solar Council*



It's become a common aspiration to install a PV (photo-voltaic) system. The rise in costs of electricity is the major motivation but the other is the contribution to the reduction air pollution caused by coal fired power stations.

If you are contemplating an investment in a PV system then the best thing you can do is an audit of your energy consumption. The size of a PV system depends closely on what you use. What can you do to reduce your consumption? First things first! A large portion of the energy budget in most homes is consumed by the hot water heater. The worst offender is an electric storage water heater; notoriously energy consumptive and now banned in some places. The best option is a gas-boosted solar system. That may not be true cost wise if you use gas supplied in large cylinders, but it depends on where you live. Next in line might be that old drinks fridge on the patio. Consign to the recycling area at the rubbish tip and consider getting something more modern and less consumptive, or better still, just make room in the regular fridge. Take a walk through every room and inspect everything that runs on electricity. If you have one or two of those old "wallbanger" air-conditioners, consider upgrading. Lighting can be a drain. Floodlights are especially consumptive; the old screw-in globe 150 watt versions can easily be replaced by a 10watt LED fitting and provide as much light.

Lastly, what is your daily electricity consumption? Anything over 20 units (kilowatt hours) a day and it's going to be difficult for a lower priced PV system to meet that demand, so your electricity bill not going vanish.

So that's a starting point in managing what you use. Installing PV – solar panels – will change things in one positive direction. You will reduce your demand for "purchased" electricity and that in turn means the need for fossil fuel, especially coal, will diminish. And that is already happening as demand continues to fall. All around Australia the annual cumulative figures for installed solar panels is now at the magnitude of some conventional power stations.

But where does one start the purchasing process? There's no shortage of offers coming at you from all quarters. You may be able to find reputable installers through your state government energy agencies; or by recommendation from friends or neighbours. But what to look for? Reputation, testimonials, branded well-made product and above all proper accreditation. You can contact the Australia Solar Council for installers in your area. The essentials start with site visit, (a must!), and a discussion with the installer as to the orientation of your roof and any immovable shadows. All is not lost if you do have shaded areas but without some areas of north or west facing rooftop the ultimate performance of your system may be less than expected. A simple system will not work as well in partial shade as a system with individual "strings" of panels with their own mini inverters that switch individual parts of the system on and off instead of all or nothing.

But what of output claims? This is where the confusing terminology comes into play. Your electricity account talks of "units"; and many energy retailers provide charts to show historically what you have consumed. They usually never mention "kilowatt hours" or "kWh" for short. Plain language translation: the kilowatt hour is the measure of how much electricity an appliance will consume if running for one hour, and on the bill it is expressed as the "units" the whole premises consumes in the billing period. Confused? It gets worse because the solar companies also talk about "kilowatts" and that is *not* the same as kilowatt hours. You'll hear about a 3kilowatt system or 3kW for short, but that's only part of the story; that's only talking about the size of the system – not how much electricity it will generate. Taking that the other way around, a standard electric kettle will have a rating statement on its base indicating say 2200 – 2400 Watts (2.2 – 2.4 kilowatts). That's telling you the size or the rating of the element, but not how much electricity it consumes every day – that's up to you, and it up to how much sunlight you get as to how your PV system performs.

So far I have thrown one challenge out – to get the audit done and know exactly what is costing what. Here comes another.

How big should your solar system be? A good retailer and installer can only give a good estimate because solar panels have different performance characteristics depending on the climate where you are located, and the different types of panels available. So what can you expect a system to do? How many “units” a day is possible? A small domestic system would be about 1.5kW and in most cities, except Melbourne and Hobart, that would theoretically produce about 6kWh (“units”) a day.

City	1.5 kW system	2.0 kW system	3.0 kW system	4.0 kW system
Adelaide	6.3 kWh	8.4 kWh	12.6 kWh	16.8 kWh
Alice Springs	7.5 kWh	10.0 kWh	15.0 kWh	20.0 kWh
Brisbane	6.3 kWh	8.4 kWh	12.6 kWh	16.8 kWh
Cairns	6.3 kWh	8.4 kWh	12.6 kWh	16.8 kWh
Canberra	6.45 kWh	8.6 kWh	12.9 kWh	17.2 kWh
Darwin	6.6 kWh	8.8 kWh	13.2 kWh	17.6 kWh
Hobart	5.25 kWh	7.0 kWh	10.5 kWh	14.0 kWh
Melbourne	5.4 kWh	7.2 kWh	10.8 kWh	14.4 kWh
Perth	6.6 kWh	8.8 kWh	13.2 kWh	17.6 kWh
Sydney	5.85 kWh	7.8 kWh	11.7 kWh	15.6 kWh

But the average domestic residence in Australia uses about three times that. So for many people, a solar PV system on the roof is only an offset. However, as electricity prices rise, the power coming from your solar investment still keeps on coming – free of charge and with little maintenance.

Use your solar panels wisely. Most homes are unoccupied in the middle of the day. That is the time when your system uses most electricity, so unless you have the benefit of a feed-in-tariff, it might be prudent to run items that use a lot of electricity during that period via time switches. Pool pumps, electric boosted hot water systems and so on.

Unlike long established consumer products, solar systems are relatively new to the market and the consumer can be confused by a range of claims and counter claims. I have provided a list of websites to visit for more comprehensive information.

Going solar or not? I prefer to think of solar as an investment, it will certainly enhance the value of your property and it will remain in good functional order for decades. Even if you decide not to invest, your audit will have saved you money and had an effect on air pollution.

**Where to go for more information.**

You can get information about rebates, feed in tariffs and more at:

<http://www.livinggreener.gov.au/energy/renewable-energy/install-solar-power>

And here is a “must read” guide: "[Solar Electricity Consumer Guide](#)" Trevor Berrill’s excellent and inexpensive book is about the most thorough guide for the consumer as can be found. All your questions are answered here. And the [Australian Solar Council](#) has a lot of information about solar PV including its "[Solar Best Practice](#)" program.

*(Dr Bill Parker is editor of the Australian Solar Council’s magazine “Solar Progress”. The magazine can be viewed online at the society’s website [www.solar.org.au/](http://www.solar.org.au/) .)*

## **Organics: more than a halo effect**

(sourced from Australian Organic - <http://www.bfa.com.au/> or <http://www.austorganic.com/>)

Australia's largest organic group [Australian Organic](#) welcomes findings that consumers perceive products labeled as organic to be better for them, because it is. Organic food is not only better because it has been produced without harmful synthetic chemicals; it's also much better for the environment and the welfare of animals. United States Cornell University researchers labeled identical organic biscuits, potato chips and plain yoghurt, as organic and non-organic. When it asked 144 people to rate the products based on taste, perception and fat content the participants favoured those labeled as organic. Researchers call this a halo effect.

Australian Organic's Manager Holly Vyner says, "The fact that organics is better for us isn't just a false belief in our heads. "This study looked at peoples' perceptions of the word organic; it wasn't about the integrity of the product.' When it comes to integrity, snacks or not, certified organic foods have it in loads. Organic snacks don't contain harmful artificial additives like colours and preservatives, making them healthier for you. The way organic ingredients are grown and the way organic products are manufactured make organic snack foods a more ethical and healthier choice.

This doesn't mean that quality ingredients have less calories and fats than non-organic ingredients. All foods should be eaten in moderation and the nutritional panels still play an important role in food choices. Organic sugar will have the same calories as non-organic sugar but because it's grown according to healthy farming guidelines without synthetic chemicals it means it will be better for you and better for the environment.

Holly says, "The *Australian Organic Market Report 2012*, commissioned by Australian Organic, found the number one perceived benefit of buying organic food is that it is chemical-free, followed by additive-free, environmentally friendly, hormone and antibiotic-free, and finally, has no GMOs." Holly says the definition of organic is well understood internationally and Australia is fortunate to have some of the world's most stringent organic standards.

### **10 reasons to choose organic:**

- **It's good for you**  
The average Australian consumes 2kg of food additives each year, many of which are associated with food intolerances, behaviour and learning difficulties for children and illness. Eat organic and you will reduce this significantly. Organic food averages 25% more nutritional value and contains about one-third more cancer-fighting antioxidants than non-organic foods.
- **It's good for your children**  
From the womb to adolescence, your child will benefit from organics. Exposure to insecticides and herbicides during pregnancy and infancy can impact on a child's foetal and cognitive development. Exposure to pesticides can also interfere with normal hormone development, potentially causing low sperm count in boys and an early onset of puberty in girls.
- **It's good for farm animals**  
Buy organic and you are saying 'yes' to a more humane treatment of farm animals and saying 'no' to the use of growth hormones, antibiotics and drugs/foods that genetically modify livestock.
- **It's good for agriculture**  
Emissions from the agricultural sector (fertilisers and crop residues) are the second-highest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Australia. Organic standards prohibit the use of nitrogen fertilisers, which lowers emissions and provides economic and environmental benefits. Land that is organically farmed is also more resilient to drought.
- **It's good for the environment**  
Over 29,500 tonnes of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and plant growth regulators are used each year in Australia; buying organics will reduce this and help the environment. If only 1000 medium-sized farms converted to organic production, the carbon stored in the soil would be equivalent to taking 117,440 cars off the road each year.
- **It's good for native habitats**  
Organic farming significantly supports biodiversity, with up to 50% more plant, insect and bird life found on organic farms. This helps to protect native habitats and endangered flora and fauna.
- **It's good for the industry**  
When you buy organic products, you are placing a demand on the industry and community to support the growth of the organic industry from growers through to retailers. And if you insist on only purchasing products with organic certification (the Bud logo), you will be encouraging more producers to promote the integrity of organic certification.

- **It's good for our water**
- Organic farming reduces the amount of chemical runoff and residues which are currently going into our drinking water, waterways and coastal areas.
- **It's good for our earth**
- Organic farming is based on land regeneration and will reduce the acidity levels present in top-soils on many agricultural properties. This will then create more productive cropping land.
- **It's good for your taste buds**
- When you bite into something organic you can be sure the flavour is nothing but natural. It will look the way nature has designed it and taste the way it should – what can be better than that?

### **Grow Me Instead – Educating Australians About Invasive Plants.**

*Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA)*

We have many plants in Australia that were formerly grown and sold to gardeners and have since 'jumped the garden fence' and become invasive in the natural environment, and you can help prevent them from spreading further.

Through the National Grow Me Instead program, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) is taking a significant step in tackling one of the nation's most serious environment problems – the spread of invasive plants.

Grow Me Instead promotes a positive change in the attitude of both the Australian nursery industry and consumers with regards to invasive plants. The aim of the Grow Me Instead program is to educate and help all Australians recognise and remove common invasive garden plants and provide them with knowledge about superior, suitable non-invasive alternatives.

Originally starting in NSW as 'Discovering Alternatives to Garden Escapes' the Grow Me Instead program now covers the whole of Australia. As part of the program, each state and territory has a Grow Me Instead booklet which contains a list of invasive plants that consumers should avoid growing as they were identified by experts as plants which could become invasive in the natural environment. For each invasive plant listed in the booklet, several alternative non-invasive plants are listed that can be grown instead. These plants are readily available from local garden centres. The development of these booklets was through funding from the Australian Government.

Although these booklets are now unavailable in hard copy, an electronic copy of each booklet can be downloaded from the national Grow Me Instead website [www.growmeinstead.com.au](http://www.growmeinstead.com.au). You can also utilise this website to search for invasive plants and their recommended non-invasive alternatives. The development of this website was also supported by the Australian Government.

This important education resource is a pivotal step in preventing the spread of invasive plants and is a vital public education program. For more information on the Grow Me Instead program and NGIA, phone Dr Anthony Kachenko on 02 8861 5106 or email him at [anthony.kachenko@ngia.com.au](mailto:anthony.kachenko@ngia.com.au)

*"Traditional agriculture was labour intensive, industrial agriculture is energy intensive, and permaculture designed systems are information and design intensive."*

David Holmgren, Co-founder of Permaculture

### ***What is Sustainability?***

*The best-known definition of sustainability or sustainable development is attributed to Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway, and Chairperson of the World Commission on Environment and Development. The Commission was established by the Secretary General of the UN in 1983, and reported in 1987 ("Our Common Future", 1987).the World Commission on Environment and Development. The definition suggests that sustainability is defined as **"forms of progress that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."***

*Since 1983, the standard and most generally used definition of "sustainability is: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".*

## General

### [Survey: Who's tackling invasive species in Australia?](#)

Every year across Australia tens of thousands of people give up their time to battle weeds, feral animals and other invasive threats to the environment, very often without payment. The Invasive Species Council wants to build a picture of the work these people carry out, and the organisations they work for, through a national survey. The information collected will be used to create an Australian database of groups working on these issues, and will help us better share information on current invasive species threats. If you are part of an organisation tackling invasive species in Australia, please take five minutes to fill in our survey.

### **Good Fish Project launched**

Top chefs across Australia are jumping on board our recently launched [Good Fish Project](#)! The project aims to provide the tools to enable chefs and food businesses to make seafood choices that are best for their restaurant and best for the sea. Hear from leading chefs Tom Kime, Simon Bryant, Anna Gare and Ryan Squires on [why sustainable seafood matters...](#) For those cooking at home or eating out, check out the online version of [Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide](#) to choose your Easter seafood wisely, or [download our free iPhone app](#) (Android in development!).

### [The Price of Carbon](#)

Carbon pollution is not only disrupting our lives, it's hitting our wallets. Comedian and musician Reggie Watts shows how, laying out the billion-dollar connection between fossil-fuel energy and dirty weather events like Superstorm Sandy caused by carbon pollution. We've all been paying the bill for years, but now it's got to stop and you can help. Share this with your friends and tell our leaders it's time to put a price on carbon and make the polluters pay.

### [Earth Repair Foundation](#)

The **Earth Repair Foundation (ERF)** is an independent, privately funded through voluntary donations, non-government organisation (NGO) comprising a team of people who communicate and co-operate to advance the earth repair solution strategies. ERF was incorporated in Sydney Australia in May 1987. We hope that you find the ideas presented on [www.earthrepair.net](http://www.earthrepair.net) to be informative, inspirational and motivational.

Since its inception, ERF, among other things, has coordinated production of a world-vision Earth Repair Charter Solution Strategy. The Charter and related initiatives offer self-evident achievable solutions to help bring about a sustainable future for all. The goal is to help the maximum number of people to achieve the greatest benefits that will last for the longest time. ERF has closely liaised with the Environment Program of the United Nations Association of Australia (NSW) Inc in developing the Earth Repair Charter.

**The Charter** has been intensively researched and carefully defined in consultation with educators, indigenous councils, scientists, environmentalists, spiritual leaders, and others committed to world improvement. It has been produced as a concise, long-term global action plan for a future without war, and the people of Earth united in peace. It is a Charter from the people, for the people, and for all governments to adopt its objectives and the world's best practices to minimise our consumption of Earth's finite resources. It is supported and endorsed by many prominent leaders and organisations. The Earth Repair Foundation invites you to be part of this solution strategy to help make inner and world peace a reality for present and future generations.

### [Human Development and the Ecological Footprint](#)

*Global Footprint Network*

Despite over \$150 billion being spent annually in development globally, virtually nobody is tracking whether the achieved progress can last, or whether it is becoming increasingly fragile without the necessary access to nature's resources. But this is changing. The United Nations Development Programme's latest flagship publication, its [Human Development Report 2013](#), prominently features countries' performance as proposed by Global Footprint Network: how much human well-being do countries generate (as measured by the UNDP's Human Development Index) at what level of resource demand (as measured by the Ecological Footprint).

## Local News



**AMAROO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE** is an Education Queensland facility that conducts environmental education programs with schools. It is staffed by qualified principal, teachers and support personnel. Amaroo is located 22kms north of Toowoomba at the site of the former Kleinton State School.

Programs are offered for classes from prep, primary, secondary and special schools and are conducted at the centre and a variety of locations.

- **Kleinton**

The main campus of Amaroo EEC is situated at the former Kleinton State School approximately 22 kilometres from the centre of Toowoomba. The Centre grounds have been landscaped with native plants and vegetable gardens.

- **Cooby Dam**

Cooby Dam is located 30 kilometres northeast of Toowoomba. Activities take place at the *Loveday Cove* which is located on the southern shore of the lake. This site is used for programs that include bird watching, freshwater studies and basic orienteering skills.

- **Toowoomba Creeks**

Water quality and macro-invertebrate studies are conducted at Murray Clewett Park and the Water Bird Bicentennial Park.

- **Ravensbourne National Park**

Ravensbourne National Park is situated 16 kilometres east of Hampton on the Hampton-Esk Road. The park is largely temperate rainforest with remaining areas of eucalypt. Ravensbourne has constructed walking tracks and picnic facilities.

- **Peacehaven Botanic Park**

Peacehaven Botanic Park is located near Highfields and has 8 individual showpiece gardens including; sclerophyll, rainforest and prehistoric corner. Indigenous plant usage and adaptation programs are conducted. This location is also used for our Eco Art programs.

- **Gummingurru**

Gummingurru is a Jarowair ceremonial site located on 4 hectares north of Gowrie. The stone arrangements, bora rings and totems are dated between 3,000 and 6,000 years old. In conjunction with local custodians, cultural programs are conducted on this ancient initiation site.

- **Crow's Nest - Bullocky's Rest & Hartman Park**

Some of our programs, e.g. Sundrops for Preps can be delivered in schools, which avoids the need for student transport to the centre.

Teachers from visiting schools, select programs from a range Amaroo has developed and support the Australian Curriculum and Queensland Essential Learnings. Examples of program contents include: investigating freshwater streams; energy efficiency; waste minimisation; rainforest habitats; Indigenous Culture; sensory experiences in the natural environment; mini beast studies or a one day hands-on camping experience.

For further information contact the Principal, Cam Mackenzie by email at [the.principal@amarooeec.qld.edu.au](mailto:the.principal@amarooeec.qld.edu.au) or phone on (07) 4696 7140 or visit our website at [www.amarooeec.qld.edu.au](http://www.amarooeec.qld.edu.au)

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### Community Exchange project – for organisations with volunteers

The Condamine Catchment Community Exchange is a cashless, community focused, not-for-profit trading system. It aims to build community and keep wealth where it is created. Community exchange systems like this have been increasing in popularity around the world. The exchanges offer workable economic options for individuals, families, businesses and community organisations. People report they feel more generous when they trade using the local exchange. They free up hard earned dollars for the essentials like fuel and electricity bills. And people feel more secure by having this extra trading option in their community.

An innovation is being tested in our region: A trial to explore how our Community Exchange System can assist community organisations and their volunteers. The main idea is - so many volunteers work very hard and generously donate time, supplies and money – they are not expecting any reward except the satisfaction of helping the community. Yet it would be really great if this community exchange system could make it possible to offer some kind of recognition to the volunteers for their contribution. The NSW government has introduced a community exchange system for their volunteer centres in the Hunter Valley and Central Coast.

We invite expressions of interest from community organisations in the Darling Downs region who would like to take part in the local trial. We are looking for about 16 organisations to take part. Phone Janet Bishop 0428 891 277 or go to [www.communityexchange.net.au](http://www.communityexchange.net.au)

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## Queensland News

### Landcare L.I.F.E. Campaign



The Landcare Is For Everyone – L.I.F.E program promotes the cause that land care is for everyone. This fun approach shows how activities that promote sustainable land management practices *are* 'Landcare'. From citizen science, community plantings, sustainable agriculture to innovative land management practices, the time has come for everyone to help maintain the balance of life by becoming involved and thinking about their actions every day and what impact they have. View the ad on YouTube and visit the website. [Read more](#)

## National News

### [Mid-level carbon price could deliver 100% renewables, undercut fossil fuels](#)

A carbon price of between \$50 and \$100 per tonne would make Australia's coal- and gas-fired electricity less economical than renewable electricity, according to a new study out of the University of New South Wales.

### ['Efficient' bottle plan pitched to councils](#)

With federal and state environment ministers meeting this month to discuss a 10-cent refund on bottles and cans, Total Environment Centre executive director Jeff Angel has spelt out what a container deposit scheme (CDS) might look like to councils.

### [Rooftop solar could power all households, slash electricity prices](#)

Study finds that installing solar PV on every suitable rooftop could supply 134.8% of Australia's residential electricity needs, cut prices to 7c/kWh.

### [Opportunities in recycled plastic](#)

According to PACIA's National Plastics Recycling Survey, 1,433,046 tonnes of plastics were produced and consumed in Australia in 2010-11, while only 287,360 tonnes were recycled (20%). That leaves over 1 million tonnes of plastic going to a landfill or into the environment, a huge waste of resources requiring more crude oil to be extracted to feed our ongoing needs. As Australia looks to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, plastic is a great place to start.



## Helpful Hints

### Practical Sustainability in the Home - Using alternatives will change your life:

by *The Self Sufficiency Shoppe*, [www.theshoppe.com.au/](http://www.theshoppe.com.au/)

- **Vinegar**

**Uses:** White: cleaning, disinfecting, deodorising, anti-bacterial agent, culinary, insect repellent, preservative. Cider: hair conditioner, skin astringent, personal deodorant, therapeutic uses

**Source:** Supermarket

- **Bicarb Soda**

**Uses:** Abrasive cleaner, deodoriser, whitener, stain removal

**Source:** Supermarket

- **Soap** (A simple bar of soap has a multitude of uses)

**Uses:** environmentally friendly alternative to detergents. Cleaning/cleaning products, personal cleaning, garden spray (insect repellent), deodorising, general household use

**Source:** Supermarket (any bar of soap will do - choose what best suites you)

- **Oatmeal**

**Uses:** Mild abrasive cleaner, skin care cleanser, natural water softener, culinary, hair-care, chemical free soap alternative

**Source:** Health-food Shop (or grind rolled oats in processor)

- **Herbs**

**Uses:** Skin care, hair care, personal deodorant, general deodorising, oral care, cleaning, mild disinfectant, insect repellent

**Sources:** Rosemary, thyme, sage, parsley, lavender - from the garden, Supermarket, Greengrocer

- **Eucalyptus oil**

**Uses:** Stain removal, deodorising, disinfecting, cleaning, therapeutic, insect repellent

**Source:** Supermarket

- **Lemons**

**Uses:** Mild bleach, cleaning, deodorising, skin care, hair care, disinfectant, culinary, insect repellent, therapeutic

**Source:** Backyard, supermarket, green-grocer

- **Rice-flour**

**Uses:** Personal care products, safe, environmentally friendly talc alternative

**Source:** Supermarket

- **Honey/Beeswax**

**Uses:** Emulsifying/healing agent (for skin creams and similar products), sealant, preservative, polish. therapeutic uses.

**Source:** Honey: Supermarket. Beeswax: Beekeepers or Specialty shops



### What to sow now - in warmer (frost-free), subtropical and tropical areas (April)

by Green Harvest, [www.greenharvest.com.au/](http://www.greenharvest.com.au/)

Best time to sow peas; Asian greens; broccoli; cabbage; carrots; celery; kale; kohlrabi; mustard; parsnips; radish; rocket; silver beet; spinach; turnips; continue sowing the onion family. Broad beans can be sown until May. Garlic can be planted until the end of April; planting after this date reduces the size of the bulbs. [Buy seeds now](#). Want more details? [Autumn Green Notes newsletter](#)

### Office Hours

HOPE's office is open every Monday from 9am to 5pm; with the library resources available at the same time. Other times can be arranged through the office.

## Resources

### Websites

#### **Australian Marine Conservation Council has a new website**

After months of salty sweat and toil, AMCS has a new website! Brimming with under-sea beauties, useful information and user friendly applications, we invite you to check it out at [www.marineconservation.org.au](http://www.marineconservation.org.au)  
Like the new site? Share it with your friends on Facebook or Twitter!

### Book Reviews and Reports

#### **From vision to action: Policy Recommendations for 100% Renewable Energies in European Regions**

It is a fact that non-renewable energies will, by definition, deplete. It is also a fact that in the meantime, dependence on these energy sources is causing multiple existential global crises. If human beings are to preserve planetary habitability, we must soon shift to **100% RE in all sectors**. The **new report** of the [World Future Council](#) provides an in-depth policy analysis of renewable energy frontrunner countries Germany, Denmark and Austria and identifies **successful policy elements and instruments**. It builds on a [parliamentary hearing](#) that the World Future Council hosted together with [Climate Service Center](#) in the [Nordic Folkecenter](#) last October and outlines solutions as well as **implementation strategies for a fossil free society**. The overall goal of this publication is to educate and inspire a broader range of stakeholders who must engage, if we are to advance the goal of 100% RE in European Regions. Download the full report [here](#).

### Other



Beyond Zero Emissions - Broadcasting in Melbourne on 3CR 855AM and streaming on the internet [here](#). Tune in live Monday's 5-6pm and Friday's 8.30-9am (Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time). Sometimes you can't always get to the BZE radio show so retrieve those missed programs by going to the [podcast site](#). Recent interviews now available include: permafrost expert Dr. Vladimir Romanovsky, Nick Carson on community responses to Hurricane Sandy, and an update on the Buildings Plan.

#### **Climate Commission report: 'The Critical Decade: Extreme Weather'**

When extreme weather events occur the Climate Commission is consistently asked questions about the link to climate change. The new report **The Critical Decade: Extreme Weather** unpacks current knowledge about different types of extreme weather events: extreme temperatures, rainfall, drought, bushfires, storm surges, cyclones and storms. **Key facts** from the report are:

- Climate change is already increasing the intensity and frequency of many extreme weather events, adversely affecting Australians.
- Climate change is making many extreme events worse in terms of their impacts on people, property, communities and the environment.
- The climate system has shifted, and is continuing to shift, changing the conditions for all weather, including extreme weather events.
- There is a high risk that extreme weather events like heatwaves, heavy rainfall, bushfires and cyclones will become even more intense in Australia over the coming decades.
- Only strong preventive action now and in the coming years can stabilise the climate and halt the trend of increasing extreme weather for our children and grandchildren.

*Remember, you CAN make a difference!*

*Think before you print! 1 ream of paper = 6% of a tree and 5.4 kg CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere; 3 sheets of A4 paper = 1 litre of water*

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