

## Office News Report --- March 2017

Good morning folks,

What a busy, productive month it has been for us here at the office!

The planning, preparation and execution of our Ordinary Meeting (11/02), 1<sup>st</sup> Community Forum (18/2) and trip to Somerset Regional Gallery at Toogoolawah to view the "Bimblebox art-science-nature Exhibition" (22/2) were all pleasing. Individual reports on these activities are noted below.

On the downside, Sue Higgins, our Secretary/Treasurer, has resigned (effective 24/2). This leaves a big gap on our Management Committee. So, if you can help with either of these two vacant positions, please contact the office on 07 4639 2135 or by email to [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au).

Regards,

Frank Ondrus, Office Manager – HOPE Inc., ph 07 4639 2135

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### Volunteers needed

More active volunteers – both local and remote (i.e. online) – are required to help us maintain our high levels of activity. Volunteers are needed to help with projects, events and display activities, as well as general admin duties and media/publications work. We invite members and supporters to step up and volunteer some time and talents to help share the workload. Current vacancies include Secretary, Treasurer, Media Officers and Publication Team members.

A fair portion of the above work would ideally be done by locals (i.e. in the Toowoomba area) because the HOPE office is in Toowoomba. However, quite a bit of the literature review, research, media and publications activity can be done via email. If you have a little bit of time to help us in any way, then contact the HOPE office on email [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au) or phone (07) 4639 2135.

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### Report on Ordinary Meeting of 11 February 2017



Our quarterly Ordinary Meeting was held at the home of Frank and Mary Ondrus – which also hosts the HOPE office.

The main agenda items of the meeting were grant applications; the Community Forum program and proposed social activities for the year.

#### Status of Grant applications

- Unsuccessful:
  - Qld Gambling Community Benefit Fund (GCBF) for "new and replacement office computers and equipment"
- Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Qld's re: *Queensland Women's Week* – "Acknowledging the Contribution of Women of the Darling Downs to the Environment" publication
- Successful:
  - Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) Qld re National Youth Week event – *Open Day at Redwood Park, Toowoomba* on Saturday 8 April 2017 –Theme: *Volunteering for the Environment*; with the sub-theme *Youth Engagement in Landcare*"
- Submitted:
  - Application to federal Volunteer Grants Program to fund a workshop on Good Governance Practices for NGOs
  - Application to Qld Gambling Community Benefit Fund (GCBF) to fund a series of Going Solar Seminars
- Pending:
  - Collaboration with Arts Council Toowoomba Inc on an Art-Science proposal as suggested by Andrew Nicholson (HOPE member)

## Community Forum program

HOPE has organised a series of community forums to be held at the new Toowoomba City Library on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday afternoon of the month (where available), from 1pm to 4pm.

DATE	THEME	SPEAKER(S)
18 Feb	1) An Introduction to Organic Gardening 2) Organic Pest Control - Non-toxic preparations for insect & disease control 3) Healthy soils, healthy plants ... it's that simple!	1) Mike Wells, TAFE Horticulture 2) Peter Macqueen, TAFE Horticulture 3) Colin Johnson for Earthlife Pty Ltd
22 Apr	The Value of Heritage to Queensland (and the Darling Downs)	Stephanie Keays and others
17 June	Going Solar – On/Off Grid with battery storage	To be confirmed
19 Aug	An Overview of Condamine Alliance (NRM / Landcare) - beginnings, current achievements and future plans	Various staff
21 Oct	An afternoon with Jerry Coleby-Williams	Jerry Coleby-Williams

## Social activities

The committee has suggested that HOPE members and supporters get-together for either a lunch-time picnic social; and/or and a night-out, at the Toowoomba Repertory Theatre.

Proposed dates and venues for the picnic socials are:

- 18 Mar, 12noon Queens Park, East Toowoomba (entrance off Margaret St)
- 17 May, 12noon Highfields Pioneer Village & Museum, 73 Wirraglen Rd, Highfields
- 15 July, 11am start Peacehaven Botanic Park & Nursery, 56 Kuhls Road, Highfields
- 16 Sept, 12noon Japanese Gardens, USQ precinct (entrance of West St, Toowoomba)
- 18 Nov, 12noon Laurel Bank Park, Herries St, Toowoomba

We would love to see you there! Please BYO picnic and chair.

## Toowoomba Repertory Theatre 2017 program

Dates	Title	Author	Genre
April 25 - May 13	<i><a href="#">"The One Day of the Year"</a></i>	Alan Seymour	Drama
July 12 - 29	<i>"The Visitors"</i>	Barney Norris	Comedy
Sept 18 - 23	<i>Festival of One-Act Plays</i> Play Writing Competition Performances	TBA	TBA
Nov 8 - 25	<i>"Don't Dress for Dinner"</i>	Marc Camoletti	Comedy

We are keen to organise group bookings (of 10 or more people) to attend one or more of the Toowoomba Repertory Theatre productions scheduled for 2017.

The Repertory Theatre is located at 94 Margaret St, Toowoomba and tickets may be purchased from the booking office Friday – Sunday, 11am to 3pm.

Phone 07 4632 8058 or go to [www.toowoombarepertytheatre.com.au/html/box\\_office.html](http://www.toowoombarepertytheatre.com.au/html/box_office.html)

Cost: Adults \$22.00 | Concession \$16.00

Ticket includes a light supper and a complementary pre-show wine.

Doors open from 7pm, curtain is at 7.30 pm sharp!

### **Wanted – Photocopy paper**

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

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

## Report on 1<sup>st</sup> Community Forum, 18 February 2017



HOPE's 1<sup>st</sup> community forum for 2017 entitled "Gardening – the natural, organic way" was held at the Toowoomba City Library on Saturday, 18 February 2017.

Fifty home gardeners were treated to a gardening master class at a community forum in Toowoomba on Saturday, 18 February. Forum convenors, Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE) Inc. provided opportunities for audience participation through a question and answer session at the conclusion of each speaker's presentation.

TAFE horticulture teacher and newspaper garden columnist Mike Wells spoke first with an overview of organic gardening principles of working closely with nature and avoiding the use of harmful toxic chemicals. Mike explained the importance of developing healthy garden soils as a key ingredient for growing strong plants and for the creation of attractive and healthy gardens. The use of compost for the recycling of organic material for use in improving garden soil was recommended and mention was made of a growing number of certified organic fertilisers and soil improvers that are now available to gardeners. Regular observation of the garden was another important, AND pleasant task for the conscientious gardener to adopt, for detecting early signs of potential problems. It may be the appearance of weeds, some scale starting to take hold or a shrub that needs a trim. Early intervention will make it easier to get on top of the problem before it takes hold.

Peter McQueen, another experienced TAFE horticulturist and teacher took us on another interesting journey through the world of garden insects and other life forms, many of which are the gardeners' friends; and play a crucial role in controlling the proliferation of pest species. Peter correctly pointed out that toxic pesticides that destroy pests also kill our beneficial helpers that feed on or parasitise the pests. Without the bees and other insects to pollinate our food and ornamental plants we would be in big trouble so the message is to protect the beneficial ladybirds, dragon flies, small predatory wasps and beetles, lacewings and myriad of other insects needed to maintain a natural balance; not to mention our friendly mantids, stick insects, spiders, lizards and frogs. So the message was clear - toxic insecticides and other harmful garden products do more harm than good. Let the buyer beware.

Copies of Mike & Peter's powerpoint presentations will be available shortly on the HOPE website at <http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/resources/sundry-external/>.

The final community consultation session involved two representatives of the local firm Earthlife Pty Ltd, founder and general manager Colin Purcell and sales manager Colin Johnson. Earthlife produces a range of soil conditioners in the form of crushed rock minerals blended with beneficial microbe and fungal strains, enzymes and organic acids. Colin Johnson explained how their products remineralise soils, a process that greatly benefits Australian soils which generally mineral deficient. Johnson continued the theme that healthy soils produce healthy plants which are less prone to attack by insects that tend to focus on weaker plants. Johnson explained that he is himself a keen gardener and plantsman. His six acre garden consisted of compacted clay based soil which was remineralised prior to planting, a process which he claims was highly successful and made it unnecessary to add gypsum to the soil to counter its heavy clay nature. On questioning him after the meeting of his claim to successfully grow a range of Australian native plants, I was assured that his garden includes a range of Banksias and Grevilleas, many species of which do not favour clay based soils. For more information on Earthlife mineral products go to [www.earthlife.com.au](http://www.earthlife.com.au) or free call 1800 819 003.



Mike Wells  
TAFE Horticulture



Peter Macqueen  
TAFE Horticulture



Colin Johnson  
Sales – Earthlife P/L



Colin Purnell  
Owner – Earthlife P/L

## Report on Bimblebox art-science-nature Exhibition, Toogoolawah

On Wednesday 22 February, a party of 4 HOPE members visited the Somerset Regional Art Gallery – The Condensery in Toogoolawah to view the *Bimblebox art-science-nature Exhibition*.

Each of us came away with a huge appreciation of the artworks and the stories behind those works.

A worthwhile adventure – both the exhibition and the enjoyable drive, with sociable conversation.



*The Condensery, Toogoolawah*



*Andrew and Frank sharing their thoughts on the exhibition.*

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For information on the Bimblebox Nature Refuge visit <http://bimblebox.org/>

For more information about Bimblebox art-science-nature Exhibition visit [www.bimbleboxexhibition.com](http://www.bimbleboxexhibition.com)

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