

Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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HOPE E-news Bulletin 2025 #09 --- September 2025

The following items have been gathered from various e: newsletters received by HOPE in recent times; and/or prepared specifically by HOPE members and supporters. If you have any news to contribute, please forward to office@hopeaustralia.org.au . Deadline for articles is 15th day of the month.

Editorial

Welcome to the September issue of the newsletter! This month covers a variety of topics. Firstly, we learn about a variety of sustainable practices - Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS), permaculture and the Transition Movement. Then, we read about reBirding the Mount Lofty Ranges in South Australia and for more on conservation; we learn about the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society (ARCS). This month also covers the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) which has been a vital bridge between the Australian public and the global mission of the United Nations, promoting sustainability. Lastly, there is an interesting article on "rethinking urban planning."

Kind regards,

Nina Stick, Newsletter Editor – HOPE Inc.

2025 Environmental Observances

September

13 HOPE quarterly Ordinary Meeting

16 [International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer | United Nations](#)

20 [World Cleanup Day | United Nations](#)

21 [International Day of Peace | United Nations](#)

25 [World Maritime Day | United Nations](#)

26 [International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons | United Nations](#)

October

4-10 [World Space Week | United Nations](#)

7 [World Habitat Day | United Nations](#)

16 [World Food Day | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#)

17 [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty | United Nations](#)

24 [United Nations Day | United Nations](#)

November

10 [World Science Day for Peace and Development - International Week | United Nations](#)

26 [World Sustainable Transport Day | United Nations](#)

More detailed information on 'environmental observances' may be found at:

- [International Days and Weeks | United Nations](#)
 - [International Years | United Nations](#)
 - [International Decades | United Nations](#)
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Message from the President

Happy Spring everyone! I hope the wind and surprise snowfall is behind us as we jump into a warmer time of the year. Here is what HOPE has been up to this past winter...

As always, our volunteers have produced many high-quality feature articles, published numerous media releases and written two reviews on Government policies and the work of Landcare. These can be found [here](#).

Some of our volunteers attended the Logan Eco Action Festival event in June which raised \$345.85 with the sale of SE QLD Weeds Brochure and our raffle. Thank you to Miriam Sharp, Cristina Unsworth and Shweta Karthik for helping 'woman' the stall on the day!

The next HOPE Quarterly Meeting will be held at 10am on Saturday 13th of September in person and via ZOOM. Keep an eye on your inboxes for a meeting invite and we hope to see you there.

Ms Laura Little, Final Year Student, Bachelor of Human Services University of Southern Queensland has successfully completed her student placement with us to produce a "Research Report into ECO-Social Justice in Australia." This insightful critique can be read here- <https://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Research-Report-into-ECO-Social-Justice-in-Australia-5-August-2025.pdf>



Figure 1 HOPE President and Treasurer, LEAF 2025

HOPE has also launched a 'mycause' fund-raiser for two new laptops for our volunteers. We have raised \$175 as of the end of August, some way off our target of \$6,000! Please follow the link to support our work <https://www.mycause.com.au/page/374672/laptops-required-for-volunteer-admin-support-team>.

As always please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or ideas you may have.

Warm regards,

Anna Kula-Kaczmarek, President - HOPE Inc. | admin@hopeaustralia.org.au

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Your financial support is sought! – <https://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/donations/>

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

Currently, our income is derived from project grants, fund-raising, corporate sponsorship and donations, but falls well short of our requirements.

Your financial support, by way of an annual pledge or donation, will considerably help us to achieve better financial viability.

Of course, if you 'cash in your containers', why not donate those monies to **HOPE Inc** | Member number: C1107170.

Please help us to continue our efforts in advocating for responsible stewardship of the environment and supports adopting sustainable long-term solutions to the manifold environmental problems facing hurdles.

Community Driven Initiatives

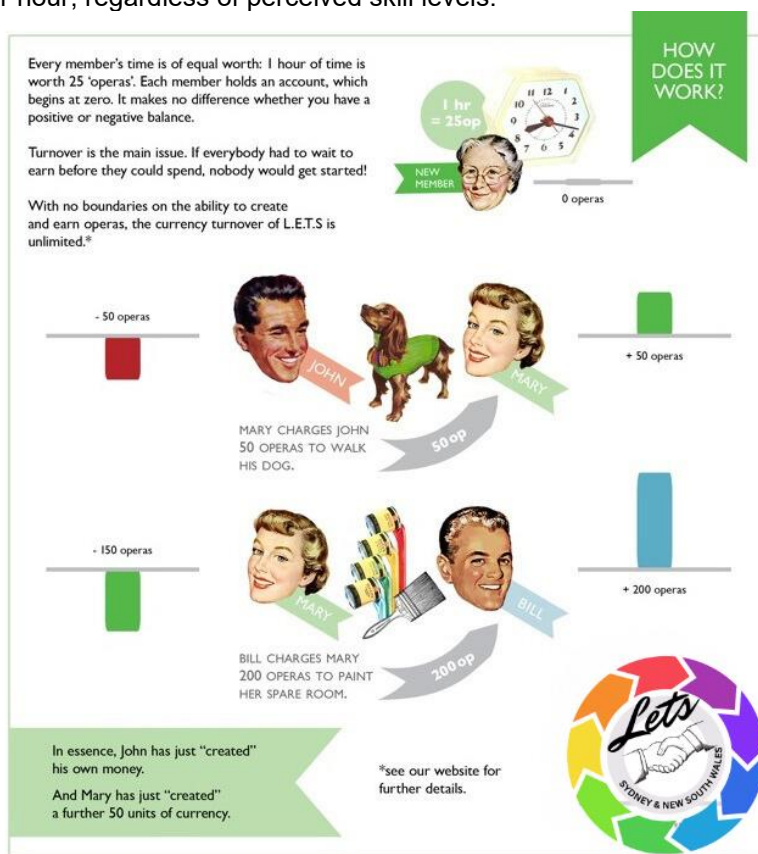
LETS, Community Gardens, Permaculture and the Transition Movement: The benefits of adopting sustainable practices at the householder level

Written by Josie Jarvis - HOPE Media Officer (NSW)

It is as important as ever for us to adopt sustainable practices at the householder level, to support the health of our planet. Not only do these efforts combine to make a significant impact on the environment, but they also benefit individuals and communities in ways such as bringing people together, cultivating skills and easing financial burdens. Four interrelated sustainable practices are LETS, Community Gardens, Permaculture and the Transition Movement.

Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS)

Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS) allow members of a community to exchange their time and skills for goods and services. They are not-for-profit with no actual money involved, affording people that have valuable skills but no access to the job market or money to contribute to their community and receive an equal exchange in return. LETS philosophy values the time and energy of its members equally, as there is no hierarchy. Members can set their own rates. In the case of the [Sydney LETS](#), members are suggested a base rate of 35 “operas” per hour, regardless of perceived skill levels.



“How does it work?” LETS Sydney, Date Unknown

LETS has a type of local currency that keeps resources local and does not have the same power dynamics as physical money does. “People with money exercise power over people without it,” says Sydney LETS. It also keeps the exchange of currency and skills local and sustainable, in that LETS’ currency is not capped, unlike in the case of cash.

The LETS Garden gang of 1993 was a group of individuals from all backgrounds of life, who came together to clear gardens in return for lunch. The primary enjoyment for them was the socialisation that the practice gave them. This sort of community involvement for mutual gain exemplifies the benefits of the LETS system, where the efforts nurture both the community and the individual.

Community Gardens

[Community Gardens Australia \(CGA\)](#) is a networking organisation that connects and informs members of community gardens. It advocates the practice of community gardening for social development and sustainable land-use, highlighting the benefit of growing food locally that affords a more self-sustained community. CGA maintains a map of community gardens, as well as other networking and information resources to support its members.



'Community Gardens Australia supporting community gardens nationwide,' Community Gardens Australia, Date Unknown

CGA collates resources that bring nationwide knowledge to local gardens. It supports existing members with information to allow them to grow better produce, and the social connection of gardening with others from their local community. It also allows prospective members to find a garden near them.



Members gardening, Community Gardens Australia, Date Unknown

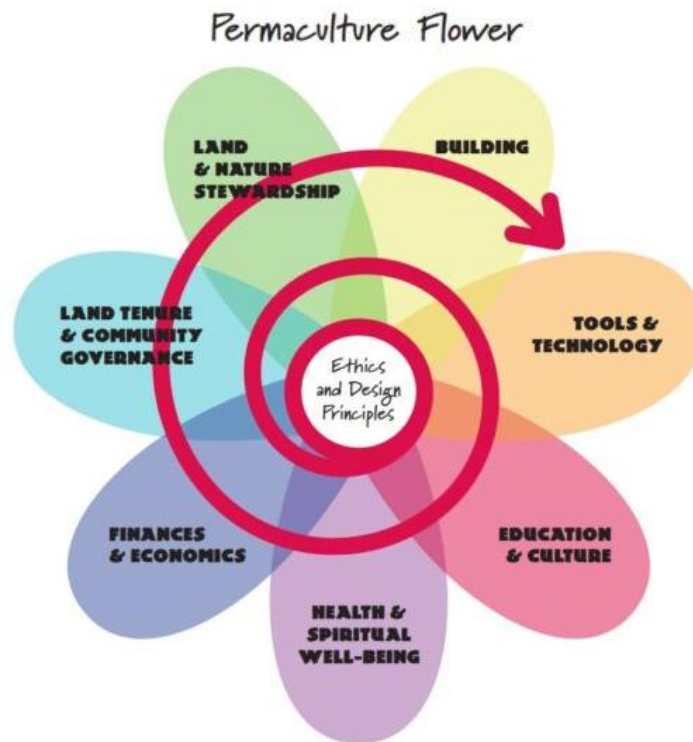
Permaculture

Permaculture “presents an approach to designing environments which have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems,” ([Permaculture College Australia](#)). Combining the words “Permanent” and “Culture,” the term Permaculture encapsulates an approach to sustainable agriculture. Permaculture endeavours to create balance in our environment by meeting the needs of us as humans while working with the natural world and its processes.

Originally founded in the 1970s by two Australians, Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, Permaculture has since been adopted worldwide. Drawing from indigenous and traditional cultural ideas, Permaculture is a conscious approach to designing our environment to best benefit all that inhabits it. In this way, it is a thought-based framework that becomes a way of living.

One of Permaculture’s benefits is described by [David Holmgren](#) as the ability for us to live more aligned with local surpluses and limits, which is most important on a planet with limited resources. Another benefit is that we can shift from being consumers dependent on supply chains, into being directly responsible for producing the food that we need.

[The Permaculture Education Institute](#) is dedicated to educating Permaculture teaches globally. Founded by Morag Gamble and headquartered in an eco-village in Queensland, Australia, the organisation aims to “restore planet and human health.” This organisation ensures the continued passing on of knowledge about how we can design our communities so that individuals can live in alignment with the earth, now and in the future.



Permaculture Flower, Holmgren Design

Transition Movement

Transition towns and the wider Transition movement began in 2006 in a small British town called Totnes, and has continued to grow and develop since then. From the beginning, the aim was to “engage the community to design a practical pathway to a more sustainable society,” ([Transition Australia](#)). The Transition movement is about addressing issues facing society by taking action at a local level, empowering community members to make real contributions in the face of significant challenges.



Town of Totnes, Transition Town Totnes

[Transition Town Totnes](#) is a community continuing the movement by embracing transition towards resilience within, and adaption to, what it calls “an increasingly hostile world,” (Transition Town Totnes). The charity conducts local projects that aim to strengthen its local economy and reduce the community’s environmental impact, and acknowledges the need to do so in the face of a changing climate. Examples of recent Transition Town Totnes projects are pictured below.



Projects, Transition Town Totnes

[Transition Australia](https://transitionaustralia.net/) is a movement that anyone can join, and which helps Transition Groups to support each other. It also helps potential members with either joining an existing group, or starting their own. Its primary focus is connecting groups to build a sustainable future on a local level, acknowledging the greater impact that can be made when individuals' efforts are combined.



A Transition Group from Bondi, Transition Australia, Date Unknown

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National articles

ReBirding the Mount Lofty Ranges: How over 20 organisations are working together to restore habitat at scale for the recovery of our unique birdlife

(Provided by ReBird the Ranges, Mob: 0497 683 240 | Cnr Mann & Walker Streets, Mount Barker, SA, 5251 | rebirdtheranges.org/)

The Mount Lofty Ranges is a unique and beautiful region of South Australia with rich biodiversity. While only representing 1% of South Australia, this region is home to over half the state's bird species.



(Black-chinned honeyeater (*Melithreptus gularis gularis*). Credit Martin Stokes)

Unfortunately, this biodiversity hotspot is now becoming an extinction hotspot. Small native birds like wrens, honeyeaters and firetails are increasingly at risk, relying on specific plants, food sources and habitats that are rapidly disappearing. Today, 78 woodland bird species in the Mount Lofty Ranges are in decline, with some facing a risk of imminent extinction.

The causes of these declines are complex and cumulative, but widespread habitat clearance and fragmentation has had the biggest impact. Invasive weeds, pest species, overgrazing by both livestock and overabundant kangaroos, and a dramatic reduction in insect populations also play a part in driving woodland birds to extinction.

"Around 90% of the original woodland habitats of the Mt Lofty region were cleared by 1980," says Assoc Prof. David Paton AM, Director of habitat restoration organisation Bio·R, and a member of the ReBird the Ranges alliance. "The birds that survive in the remaining habitat have continued to decline over the last 40 years... Many will disappear from the region unless substantial and appropriate action is taken."

To address this crisis, an alliance of over 20 organisations has launched ReBird the Ranges. By uniting government agencies, conservation organisations, researchers, landholders and community groups, this exciting initiative aims to access new nature financing opportunities and work together to achieve large-scale, habitat restoration.

ReBird the Ranges has created an Action Plan outlining strategies to halt and reverse the decline of woodland bird species in the Mount Lofty Ranges over the next 75 years. The main objectives of this Action Plan are to protect existing remnant habitats and reconstruct habitat at scale to reach the global target of 30% habitat coverage. Current research recommends that at least 30% of each ecosystem type needs to be retained to ensure viable populations and functioning ecosystem processes. For the Mount Lofty Ranges, this is an ambitious but necessary target. Achieving it will require large-scale restoration, especially of grassy woodlands and grasslands, which are the most depleted ecosystems in the region.

Some of the key projects already underway by ReBird the Ranges partner organisations include Bio·R's Frahns Farm woodland reconstruction project, Second Nature Conservancy's Kanmantoo Grassy Woodland Project and Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu's Deep Creek heathland revegetation.



(Bio·R's Frahns Farm people planting. Credit Tom Hunt)

Landholders in the region are critical to this work. ReBird the Ranges is working closely with private and public landholders to scale up revegetation and restoration efforts and connect landscapes. The work goes further than just planting trees, it aims to rebuild whole ecosystems and bring back the structural and species diversity that birds need to survive. This includes retaining fallen timber and dead trees, which support natural nesting hollows and are vital for insects, a major food source for many woodland birds.

The vision of ReBird the Ranges is long-term, but the urgency is immediate. *"We've been monitoring these declines for over 20 years,"* says Dr Wendy Telfer, the ReBird the Ranges Coordinator. *"Now it's time to act. We have the knowledge, the partnerships and the community support. We need to give it a real go."*

ReBird the Ranges needs your support to ensure that threatened bird species have a future in the Mount Lofty Ranges. To get involved as a landholder, partner, investor or volunteer, or to read the Action Plan, visit rebirdtheranges.org or email info@rebirdtheranges.org.

> Find us on social media @rebirdtheranges

ReBird the Ranges is an alliance of partner organisations with a shared passion and commitment to reversing the decline of woodland birds in the Mount Lofty Ranges. Partners include Trees For Life, Second Nature Conservancy, Bio·R, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Nature Conservation Society of South Australia, Greening Australia, Birds SA, Birdlife Australia, Nature Foundation, Landscape Boards of South Australia, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry SA, SA Water, the University of Adelaide, the Government of South Australia, Adelaide Hills Council, Mount Barker District Council, Alexandrina Council, City of Onkaparinga, Zoos SA, Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia, Greencollar and Seeding Natives.



(Heathland revegetation. Credit Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu)



(Grassy Woodland. Credit Bryan Haywood)



Australian Rainforest Conservation Society (ARCS)

Overview written by Maggie Ng, HOPE volunteer VIC

Link: <https://rainforest.org.au/people.html>

News: <https://rainforestaustralia.blog/>

Who are they?

The Australian Rainforest Conservation Society (ARCS) are a passionate team of volunteers who form a national, non-government, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to preserving Australia's unique and biodiverse rainforests. Founded in 1982, the organisation is headquartered in Brisbane, incorporated in Queensland under the Associations Incorporation Act 1991, and registered as a tax-deductible gift recipient on the Federal Register of Environmental Organisations. The ARCS mission is to protect, repair and restore Australian rainforests through research, advocacy, public education on-ground ecological restoration, and grassroots support through connecting with relevant stakeholders.

What do they do?

ARCS keeps up to date on the latest scientific reports and findings, seek out expert knowledge locally and internationally, and conduct their own research and investigations. The organisation publishes independent, peer-reviewed reports. The organisation also advocates for necessary changes to laws and policies, as well as long-term plans and strategies to implement them. Other areas in which ARCS carry out their mission is educating the public through websites, blogs, social media, books, articles, newsletter and media engagement, and grassroots support through networking with many different organisations. They achieve this through a variety of campaigns and ecological restoration.

History of ARCS

- ARCS was established in 1982 as the Rainforest Conservation Society of Queensland.
- In 1984, the organisation was commissioned by the Australian Heritage Commission to prepare a report on the conservation values of the rainforests of North-East Queensland. After positive reviews by Australian and international scientists, the report was published by the Commission and became the foundation for a campaign to protect the area. This national campaign led to a World Heritage Listing of 900,000 hectares of rainforest and other forests as the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area in 1988.
- ARCS successfully campaigned against rainforest logging in other parts of Queensland, which contain most Australia's rainforests. In 1994, the Queensland Government put an end to all rainforest logging on public land in the State.
- ARCS prepared the World Heritage nomination for Fraser Island (K'gari), which is the largest sand island in the world. The organisation also prepared the nomination for the Central Rainforest Reserves of Australia World Heritage area (now known as Gondwana Rainforests of Australia).
- In the late 1990s, ARCS led negotiations resulting in the historic and widely acclaimed South-East Queensland Forests Agreement (SEQFA) between the QLD Government, the timber industry, and conservation groups, resulting in protection of 425,000 hectares of forest and a commitment to phase out all native forest logging on public land by 2024 and transition to a plantation-based industry.
- The Statewide Forests Process was initiated by ARCS as a cooperative stakeholder approach to resolving logging and other issues associated with the remaining native forests in the state.
- In 2007, the Delbessie Agreement was formed through a collaborative effort between ARCS, the Queensland Government and the rural industry association, AgForce Queensland.
- ARCS has undertaken an initiative with the prior Queensland Government to assess conservation values of properties for sale at Springbrook. The result was a \$40 million acquisition program which aims to improve the chances of long-term survival of the area's World Heritage values. Most of these lands are now in National Park or National Park (Recovery). ARCS has taken responsibility for restoring cleared land on the purchased properties. This project is known as the Springbrook Rescue Project.

- ARCS has prepared the “Principles and Guidelines towards development of a Queensland Biodiversity Strategy: A Working Document,” available on the publications section of the ARCS website. The Strategy was launched in 2011.

The People behind ARCS

The Australian Rainforest Conservation Society is managed by a small, but dedicated, team of passionate people with loads of credentials and achievements for the organisation. Detailed profiles of the management committee may be found at [Australian Rainforest Conservation Society — its people](https://arcs.org.au/people).

Events

ARCS offer romantic holiday accommodation to help support their Springbrook Rescue project at the Springbrook Lyrebird Retreat (<https://lyrebirdspringbrook.com/>) and offer accommodation and activities for groups at their Koonjewarre Accommodation and Activities Centre (<https://koonjewarre.com/>). You can also become a volunteer for the Springbrook Rescue project here (<https://springbrookrescue.org.au/VolunteerOpportunities.html>).

The Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering is of great benefit to the community; it also benefits you personally in a range of ways:



- ☐ **Gain work experience and develop new skills** – Boost your career prospects. Update your resume with a whole new skill set.
- ☐ **Make new friendships and connections** – Meet like-minded people. Create professional networks.
- ☐ **Enjoy new social & cultural experiences** – be immersed in all kinds of environments, people and causes.
- ☐ **Be a part of your community** – Discover, connect, make an impact and have fun.
- ☐ **Enjoy better physical and mental health** – Studies show volunteering makes us healthier and happier.
- ☐ **Develop personally and build confidence** – Expand yourself. Enjoy a sense of achievement and fulfilment.
- ☐ **Act on your values** – Try something new. Follow your passions and interests.
- ☐ **Step out of your comfort zone** – Challenge yourself in a supportive environment.
- ☐ **Stand up for what matters** – Be inspired and be an inspiration.
- ☐ **Make a difference** – The feel-good factor of supporting Queensland communities.

Enjoy the benefits of being a volunteer today!

To find out about volunteering opportunities in your area, please visit:

- Volunteering Australia - <http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/>
- Volunteering Queensland - <https://www.volunteeringqld.org.au/>
- Householders' Options to Protect the Environment - <http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/membership/volunteer-form/>

United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA)



Building a Better World: The Work of the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA)

Since its founding in 1946, the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) has been a vital bridge between the Australian public and the global mission of the United Nations. As a non-governmental organisation with offices in every state and territory, the UNAA works tirelessly to promote the values, goals, and initiatives of the UN, aiming to create a safer, fairer, and more sustainable world.

Aims and Mission

The UNAA's official mission is to "inform, inspire and engage all Australians regarding the work, goals and values of the UN." This includes raising awareness about international issues such as climate change, gender equality, Indigenous reconciliation, refugee rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through education, advocacy, and community engagement, the UNAA empowers Australians to take action on global challenges at the local level.

Major Achievements

Over the decades, the UNAA has made significant contributions to Australian civil society. Notably, it helped establish Greening Australia in 1982 during the International Year of the Tree, a major environmental initiative that continues to protect and restore native vegetation across the country.

The UNAA also launched the Media Peace Awards and World Environment Day Awards, recognising outstanding contributions to peace, sustainability, and public awareness. These awards have become key platforms for celebrating Australian leadership in global citizenship.

Current Projects and Campaigns

In its 2023/2024 Annual Report, the UNAA highlighted a wide range of impactful programs:

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): National campaigns and educational events focused on achieving the 2030 Agenda.
- Peace and Security Programs: Forums and workshops addressing global conflict resolution and peacebuilding.
- Climate Action: Events like the UN Day Gala Dinner spotlighting ocean and water conservation, with WWF Australia receiving the UN Day Honour for their work.
- First Nations Engagement: Initiatives promoting reconciliation and amplifying Indigenous voices in alignment with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Youth and Young Professionals Networks: Empowering the next generation of leaders through mentorship, networking, and advocacy opportunities.

The UNAA also maintains strong ties with the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) and collaborates with Australian government bodies such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Stay Connected: Subscribe to the UNAA Newsletter

For those passionate about global issues and eager to make a difference, subscribing to the UNAA newsletter is a great way to stay informed. The newsletter features updates on upcoming events, campaign highlights, volunteer opportunities, and insights into the UN's work both globally and in Australia.

To subscribe, visit the UNAA website and join a growing community of Australians committed to positive global change: <https://www.unaa.org.au/news/the-unaa-newsletter/>

(Written by Samy Leyton – HOPE Researcher NT)

Report on citizen science and the impact of conservation effort

Written by Nishara Abdeen - HOPE researcher NSW

Introduction

Across the world, numerous research initiatives are involving millions of people, many of whom lack formal scientific training, in tasks such as gathering, sorting, transcribing, or examining scientific data. These initiatives, referred to as citizen science, span a wide range of subjects, such as tracking the movements of various bird species and measuring pollution levels in different areas. Citizen science data collected through various platform and traditional surveys that can include text, photos, videos and images which can be analysed and modelled for informed decision making (see Figure 1).

Spotlight on Local Citizen Science Projects

Tracking Australia's Frogs by Sound (FrogID)

FrogID, is an effort is led by the Australian Museum, to track and record frog call using a mobile app. This recording assists scientists to monitor the frog population to understand and conserve Australian frogs. Overall, 805, 983 frogs call has been submitted, 1,307, 692 verified frogs and 230 species has been found (Frogid, 2025).

Observing Nature's Seasonal Changes (ClimateWatch)

ClimateWatch is an initiative of Earthwatch Australia in partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology and University of Melbourne (Climatewatch, 2025). This platform is developed to understand how the changes on temperature and rainfall affect the seasonal behaviour of plants and animals in Australia. Volunteers can use ClimateWatch App or webpage to record and update species data such as behaviour of species in particularly different to what you would normally see or recording and observing species every couple of weeks to get an understanding of changes throughout the year.

Diving for Reef Health (Reef Check Australia)

Reef Check Australia aims to engage communities in reef monitoring, education, and conservation activities to enhance the health and protection of coral reefs (Reef Check, 2025). Through a citizen science approach, volunteers are trained and equipped to gather data, disseminate knowledge, and promote reef conservation.

Birds in Your Backyard (Aussie Backyard Bird Count)

The Aussie Backyard Bird Count is an annual, nationwide citizen science event organized by BirdLife Australia (Birdlife Australia, 2025). Its main goal is to collect data on bird populations and their distribution, enhancing the understanding of Australian birdlife and its conservation needs. Participants spend 20 minutes observing and recording the birds in their chosen location, such as a backyard or park. This information is then submitted to BirdLife Australia, aiding in the tracking of bird populations, migration patterns, and overall species health.

How Citizen Science Reconnects Us with Nature

Increased levels of nature connectedness

An experimental research by (Pocock et al., 2023) demonstrated that participants engaged in nature-based activities experienced significant increases in nature connectedness, well-being, and pro-nature conservation behaviour scores. This underscores the effectiveness of nature-based activities in enhancing individuals' connection to nature, overall well-being, and commitment to conservation efforts.

Enhance knowledge on local environment

Repeated observations of nature significantly enhance individual knowledge and beliefs (Cosquer et al., 2012). This conclusion was derived from the French Garden Butterflies Watch program, which involved non-scientifically literate participants observing and counting butterflies in their gardens. By analysing the data collected from these observations it was found that regular engagement with nature led to increased knowledge about biodiversity and strengthened beliefs regarding its importance.

"From the moment I started to watch butterflies, I was learning, getting to know them and it's true, I didn't know there was such diversity. And I think this is an extraordinary experience" (Cosquer et al., 2012, P.6).

Pro-nature conservation behaviour

Individuals who feel a strong connection to nature are more likely to engage in behaviours that support environmental conservation. The common construct of connection to nature, derived from various measures such as emotional affinity and connectedness, is a significant predictor of pro-nature conservation behaviour (Tam, 2013). Fostering a deeper emotional connection to nature can play a crucial role in encouraging individuals to take actions that benefit the environment.

Ethical issues on citizen science projects

While citizen science offers significant advantages to both scientists and society, it also presents ethical challenges that must be addressed both prior to and during the scientific investigation. These ethical issues can be broadly identified under 4 categories (Resnik et al., 2015).

Data Quality and Integrity

Issue: Data collected by citizens may not meet scientific standards due to lack of training, leading to systematic errors or even data fabrication.

Solution: Provide citizens with appropriate training on data collection, use of scientific instruments, and responsible conduct of research. Regularly review and audit the data to ensure it meets scientific standards.

Data Sharing and Intellectual Property

Issue: Premature release of data can compromise research validity. There may also be disputes over data ownership and intellectual property, especially with traditional knowledge.

Solution: Set clear expectations for data sharing, ensuring data is reviewed and de-identified before sharing. Discuss data ownership and intellectual property issues at the beginning of the project and negotiate agreements that recognize all stakeholders' interests.

Conflict of Interest

Issue: Citizens may have personal or political interests that could bias the research, such as involvement with advocacy groups or lawsuits.

Solution: Disclose all financial and non-financial conflicts of interest. Make data publicly available after publication for independent evaluation. In some cases, avoid conflicts altogether by prohibiting participation in certain studies.

Exploitation

Issue: Citizens may be exploited if they do not receive a fair share of the benefits from the research, such as recognition or financial compensation.

Solution: Offer citizens a fair share of the benefits, including authorship, formal recognition, education, or monetary compensation. Ensure citizens are comfortable with their roles and not unduly burdened.

Conclusions

Citizen science projects have seen a steady increase in application worldwide, significantly aiding conservation efforts. For instance, the eBird project allows bird watchers to record their sightings, contributing to a global database that helps track bird populations and migration patterns. The advancement of current technologies and crowdsourcing platforms, such as iNaturalist, has enabled a wide range of applications for citizen science projects and relevant data analysis methods to derive insights.

While citizen science offers an opportunity to gather valuable data, it also provides society with more chances to interact with nature, understand biodiversity, and relate to the experience of being in nature. For example, the Great Backyard Bird Count encourages people to spend time outdoors, observing and recording bird species, which fosters a deeper connection with the environment. However, these projects can encounter ethical issues related to data gathering and handling, necessitating appropriate precautions.

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A new urban narrative for sustainable development

A summary by Karyne Maurmann, HOPE researcher Qld

In this article, the researchers propose that as cities rapidly urbanize, global policy needs to evolve by adopting a more integrated and politically grounded vision for sustainable urban development. For Australia—home to dynamic cities like Brisbane and Sydney—this means rethinking urban planning to address social equity, climate resilience, and ecological integrity in light of this evolving narrative. Embracing such a framework could help Australian urban centers lead the way in crafting globally relevant, future-ready city policies.

Our planet is rapidly urbanizing, but global political frameworks have yet to fully respond to this transformation. While research highlights the complexity of urban dynamics, there is an urgent need for sustainable urban development to become a central theme in global policymaking. Almost all population growth in this century will occur in cities, which led to increased political attention and the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 in the 2030 Agenda, aiming to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

Before 2015, urban issues received limited international focus, mostly through sporadic conferences such as UN Habitat gatherings.

The adoption of SDG 11 gave urban actors a stronger voice and a place in global policy discussions. Complementary efforts like the Habitat III conference and the harmonized global definition of urban settlements in 2020 have helped shape a Global Urban Agenda. This agenda is also gaining traction in scientific and climate change forums, including the IPCC's commitment to a special report on cities. Despite this progress, recent global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have exposed the financial and structural vulnerabilities of cities.

Major global summits like the G20 have largely overlooked urban concerns, even as cities faced disproportionate burdens during the pandemic. Although some UN initiatives have acknowledged the role of local governments, stronger political commitment and resources are still needed to ensure cities can effectively address future social, economic, and environmental risks.

Creating a new urban narrative

To maintain political momentum and effectively manage complex urban challenges, urban stakeholders must come together as a unified epistemic community with strong, strategic political messaging. Strengthening alliances—particularly with long-term public and private investors—is essential to mitigate the risks of geopolitical fragmentation. The urban community has already shown the power of coordinated efforts, especially between 2012 and 2015, when it successfully advocated for an Urban Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) through campaigns like #UrbanSDG. Clear, unified messaging that resonates with decision-makers remains vital for continued influence.

However, success in urban governance cannot rely solely on better lobbying. It also requires adapting to a shifting political landscape. While traditional global governance centers like New York, Geneva, and Washington DC remain important, regional platforms such as UNESCAP, ECLAC, UNECA, and UNECE, along with economic and political groups like the G20, African Union, and ASEAN, are increasingly relevant. These regional bodies offer opportunities for more localized and context-specific engagement on urban development.

According to the UN Deputy Secretary-General, regional entities should act as both think tanks and partnership hubs, helping nations implement their sustainable development goals. This regional approach is particularly important, as urban governance and challenges often vary greatly by region. Building a new urban narrative that acknowledges and leverages this political geography is essential for meaningful progress in global urban policy.

Cities as sites of international decision-making

The global push to prioritize cities in sustainable development led to the creation of a dedicated Urban SDG and a commitment to place-based development, but recent global crises have weakened that focus. As sustainable development becomes increasingly complex, urban stakeholders must reunite to build a strong,

unified narrative that repositions cities as central to international decision-making. Moving forward requires more than recalling past achievements—it demands collective action to reconnect urbanization with social progress while staying within planetary limits, and to expand the political space cities need to drive global solutions.

Researcher's comment

Recent data highlight Australia's rapidly urbanizing landscape: approximately 86.8% of the population now lives in urban areas, with urban population growth reaching around 2.5% in 2023—nearly double the national average (Trading Economics). Between mid-2023 and mid-2024, Australia's capital cities grew by roughly 2.4%, adding nearly 428,000 residents—Melbourne (+142,600), Sydney (+107,500), Brisbane (+72,900), and Perth (+72,700) (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

In response to these trends, the Australian Government launched a formal National Urban Policy in November 2024, aiming to foster liveable, equitable, productive, sustainable, and resilient urban environments through cross-portfolio coordination and shared planning principles (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts).

While this official initiative reflects some alignment with the article's call for globally integrated, politically grounded urban policies, it remains a preliminary step—Australia still has significant progress to make in fully embracing and implementing the comprehensive vision proposed by the researchers.

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