



## Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

PO Box 6118 – Clifford Gardens, TOOWOOMBA QLD 435

(22 Vacy Street, Toowoomba QLD 4350)

Ph 07 4639 2135; Email: [office@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@hopeaustralia.org.au)

Website: [www.hopeaustralia.org.au](http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Householders.Options.to.Protect.the.Environment](https://www.facebook.com/Householders.Options.to.Protect.the.Environment)

ABN 48 036 173 161

### HOPE E-news Bulletin 2026 #03 --- March 2026

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

#### Editorial

Welcome to the third issue of the newsletter for 2026!

There is a good variety of articles to pique your interest.

First up, is Clem Campbell's personal and historical article on food security. Read about Doctors for the Environment (DEA) Australia and how they, as medical professionals, see how environmental damage affects people's health. Other overview articles include End Food Waste Australia; and Resource Recovery Australia (RRA) - a 'not-for-profit social-enterprise' organisation that through its recycling activities provides job and education opportunities for those needing the support. Then read about the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) which has developed a wide scope of campaigns over the years with high priorities for climate change and leading humanitarian action for those in greatest needs in developing countries. Following on, is an article on Food Standards Australia New Zealand and genetic modification. And finally, we learn about Oceans Harmony's Shark Nets Project, protecting marine ecosystems.

Kind regards,

Nina Stick, Newsletter Editor – HOPE Inc.

---

### 2026 Environmental Observances

#### March

- 1 [Clean Up Australia Day](#)
- 3 [World Wildlife Day | United Nations](#)
- 21 [World Day for Glaciers | United Nations](#)
- 22 [World Water Day | United Nations](#)

#### April

- 22 [International Mother Earth Day | United Nations](#)

#### May

- 20 [World Bee Day \(Australia\) – Helping Protect our Bees](#)
- 22 [International Day for Biological Diversity | United Nations](#)

#### June

- 3 [World Bicycle Day | United Nations](#)
- 5 [World Environment Day | United Nations](#)
- 7 [World Food Safety Day | United Nations](#)
- 8 [World Oceans Day | United Nations](#)
- 17 [World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought | United Nations](#)
- 29 [International Day of the Tropics | 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](#)
-

## President's Message

Good morning,

Happy March everyone! Fingers crossed the cooler weather brings an end to the fires in Victoria and floods in Queensland which are devastating much of our countryside and wildlife.

Climate change crises aside, I hope everyone has had time to relax and enjoy their summer, which has certainly been a busy one for HOPE volunteers. HOPE researchers have published a large number of articles and media releases over the past two months, many of which promoted the work of our partners and alliances. HOPE held its first Ordinary Meeting of the year on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February where we discussed the use of AI in our research, creating a cultural competency checklist and guide for our volunteers who are new to Australia and reviewing our Strategic Plan based on feedback we have received. The next Ordinary Meeting will be held on the second Saturday of June and we welcome all to join.

In December I had the privilege of completing the Not-For-Profit Governance training course at the Australian Institute of Corporate Directors, thanks to a grant received from Queensland Gives. This was a fantastic well-facilitated course which taught me many lessons which I plan to bring forward to the Management Committee. If any of our volunteers are interested in completing this training I would be more than happy to support a grant submission for this course!

Warm regards,

Anna Kula-Kaczmarek, President - HOPE Inc. | [admin@hopeaustralia.org.au](mailto:admin@hopeaustralia.org.au)

Follow us on: [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: C11107170.

**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.**

## General Interest Item

### Food Security – a forgotten resource

By Clem Campbell OAM

My life's journey with food security began when I was very young and progressed when I became an Agricultural Scientist. It is only now that I realise - *Food Security has become a forgotten resource.*

As a very young boy in Brisbane (born in 1948) milk was delivered to our doorstep 5 mornings a week in bottles, with cleaned empty bottles returned, locally baked bread delivered by horse and cart 5 days a week, the butcher, in the next block, delivered meat once a week, eggs collected daily from our hens, and we helped our dad gut and pluck an old hen for a chicken dinner; and when an elderly neighbor could not reach her oranges, she would get myself and a mate to climb the orange tree and one for her, one for me and one orange for my mate.

When I was ten, we moved to Redcliffe and I would get the milk daily from the local dairy farmer in a billycan and mom would fill up milk bottles and put in the fridge. *'to me this was food security'*

As a teenager, I would holiday on my grandmother's small rural property and milk the cows (only two), separate the milk and make butter, collect the eggs and once a week help my uncles process a sheep (cut and dress the mutton, feed the scraps to the dogs and 'punch' the fleece) *'to me this was food security'*.

I completed my University of Queensland Agricultural Science degree in 1969 and in 1970 commenced work at the Queensland Department of Primary Industries in the marketing and economics division. I worked with officers managing marketing boards and rural cooperatives and the farm management accounting scheme.

I was later appointed the regional Economist in Roma and through coordinated extension promoted the concept of 'optimizing long term agricultural production' not the maximization of production, now expressed as 'sustainable production'. My work included working with farmer / grazier members of marketing boards and rural cooperatives and these organisations provided stable and secure markets for both the producers and consumers.

I later joined the Bundaberg Canegrowers as an executive and research officer. The Queensland Sugar Industry has a unique place in agricultural history. It was an industry using 'slave labour' to become a successful industry, through legislation of the Queensland Parliament, providing fair wages to workers, fair prices for farmers, fair profits for sugar processors and a fair and stable price for all Australian consumers. By law, not one gram of sugar could be exported overseas until all Australian consumers had a secure supply of sugar at a set annual price. *'to me this was food security.'*

Over the past four decades Federal and State policies have disadvantaged rural cooperatives to promote private enterprise and the 'free market.'

In the 1970's, the 'low tax' Queensland Government stopped the road tax on trucks to reduce costs for rural Queenslanders. As a result,

- within a decade all bread bakeries between Brisbane and Gladstone closed and the bread was baked in Brisbane resulting in hundreds of 'food' kilometers.
- Many Queensland rural towns had "cordial factories" making soft drinks – all disappeared within 15 years, except the Bundaberg ginger beer factory. Subsequently, all soft drinks were manufactured in Brisbane or southern states, resulting in hundreds of 'food' kilometers.
- The container deposit scheme was discontinued as glass bottles were replaced with cans and plastic bottles.
- Many rural town grocery stores closed with the national supermarkets opening throughout country Queensland massively increasing 'food' kilometers and green vegetables etc. delivered in plastic bags.

In 2000, the marketing boards legislation was basically abolished and the free market/corporate company industries flourished with no 'food security' requirements. With climate change, there have been a greater number of natural disasters – cyclones, floods and fires – resulting in road and rail transport unable to deliver food over hundreds / thousands of kilometers reducing 'food security.'

We can do better and the growth of urban agriculture, community gardening and positive Local Government initiatives will be the path to improving 'food security' and significantly reducing food kilometers.

Our Federal and State governments are strongly influenced by the need for economic growth, vested industry organisations and power of the wealthy, so we will need local governments with community groups to lead the way.

Firstly, local government will need to review residential zoning under town plans to accommodate urban agriculture businesses, community gardening initiatives etc. on residential land.

Secondly, local government will need to provide financial grants, rezoning, water and food processing support to initiate local food production and distribution. For example, council may support a local butcher to obtain an abattoir licence to process local stock for district families. Council may provide a large glass house for the local community groups to grow vegetables and fruit for the district families. These are examples of providing 'FOOD SECURITY'

We will only achieve significant food security with a major change in our approach to economic growth models. David Suzuki, Canadian environmental and climate activist stated "*We have failed to address the fundamental truth – Endless growth is impossible in a finite world*" We need to allow all our communities to live within our local ecosystems, provide secure food and shelter for all our citizens and work to achieve a just, sustainable peaceful global society and the joyful celebration of life.

---

## 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/>
-

## National Items

### Doctors for the Environment Australia: A Medical Voice for Climate and Health

By Dr Tennille Winter – HOPE researcher QLD



As environmental harm and climate change increase, Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) stands out in the national discussion about health and the environment. Unlike other groups, the DEA's perspective comes from medical professionals who see how environmental damage affects people's health. Their mission is *to protect human health by caring for the environment*, using both clinical evidence and public health advocacy.

DEA is a registered charity and independent not-for-profit. It is the only group in Australia composed mainly of doctors and medical students focused on how environmental damage affects health. As an ACNC-registered charity, DEA meets legal standards and can receive tax-deductible donations of \$2 or more.

### The Health Case for Environmental Action

DEA's central message is that *human health relies on a healthy environment*. Problems like pollution, deforestation, carbon emissions, extreme weather, and new disease patterns are evident in clinics and emergency rooms. Health professionals are seeing more heat-related illnesses, heart attacks, breathing problems, infectious diseases, mental health issues, and other conditions linked to climate change and pollution. The DEA makes environmental science a medical priority, showing how health suffers when nature is disrupted. Looking at ecological harm through a medical lens is powerful because it turns environmental issues into urgent public health concerns. An open letter to the Federal Government in 2025 can be read here:

[https://www.dea.org.au/open\\_letter\\_australian\\_doctors\\_call\\_for\\_federal\\_election\\_candidates\\_to\\_take\\_climate\\_action\\_to\\_protect\\_health?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.dea.org.au/open_letter_australian_doctors_call_for_federal_election_candidates_to_take_climate_action_to_protect_health?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

### Education, Advocacy and Policy Engagement

The DEA's activities span public education, professional engagement, advocacy, and policy influence. The organisation produces accessible resources that help doctors, medical students, allied health practitioners, and the wider community understand the environmental determinants of health. They partner with major medical bodies, such as the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and several medical colleges, to call for systemic change within the health sector, including net-zero targets for healthcare emissions and the integration of climate resilience into public health policy. Their resources and actions are numerous, definitely worth a read and support if you can.

<https://www.dea.org.au/resources>

### Taking Climate Action to Court

In 2025, DEA went beyond advocacy and education by initiating legal action in the Federal Court of Australia. In April, they challenged the National Offshore Oil and Gas Regulator (NOPSEMA) for accepting Woodside Energy's environmental plan for the Scarborough Gas Project, a large fossil fuel project off Western Australia. DEA argued that NOPSEMA did not correctly assess the project's environmental and climate impacts, focusing on paperwork rather than actual climate protection.

With help from Environmental Defenders Office lawyers, DEA asked the court to review and overturn the approval. The Federal Court set a limit on potential legal costs, allowing DEA to continue the case. This rare decision could help other groups bring important environmental cases to court.

Even though the DEA noted that the project would emit hundreds of millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases and cause health problems, the Federal Court still approved NOPSEMA's decision in August 2025. The DEA said they were disappointed and stressed that expanding fossil fuel production would worsen health and climate problems. Although the challenge was unsuccessful, the DEA's legal engagement underscored the

### 2026 ins & outs

**In**

- Caring for our planet's health 🌱
- Eating more plants 🥗
- Renewable Energy ☀️
- Active Transport 🚲
- Circular Economy ♻️
- Connecting with nature 🌳
- Protecting/restoring Biodiversity 🦋

**Out**

- Coal, Oil and Gas 🔥
- Ignoring scope 3 emissions 🌫️
- Fossil Fuel Subsidies 💰
- Single-Use Plastics 🗑️
- Fast Fashion 👕
- Greenwashing 🗨️
- Deforestation 🪓



organisation's commitment to accountability and highlighted the legal dimensions of climate governance, particularly.

### Call to Action: Protect Health by Protecting the Planet



The health of Australians and the resilience of our communities depend on urgent, effective action. You can support Doctors for the Environment Australia in several ways:

- **Donate:** Your contribution helps DEA continue its work in education, advocacy, research, and legal action to protect health from environmental harm. Donations are tax-deductible and support ongoing impact.
- **Join as a medical professional or student:** Your involvement strengthens the push for climate-health solutions in healthcare.
- **Stay informed and share:** Follow the DEA on social media and share their resources to help raise awareness about environmental health risks. <https://www.facebook.com/DocsEnvAus>
- **Advocate for policy change:** Talk to policymakers and urge them to prioritise climate action for public health and future generations.

**A healthy environment is the basis for a healthy life. Support the DEA to help protect both while there is still time - <https://www.dea.org.au>**

---

### EcoBatt- Closing the Loop on Australia's Battery Waste

While more than 400 million batteries are used by Australians each year, only 5% of them are recycled- EcoBatt is here to change that, aiming to provide Australians with safe, convenient means of battery recycling.

EcoBatt is Australia's leading battery recycling plant, specialising in the storage, collection, processing, and recycling of battery products.

**Why battery recycling matters:** Battery exposure can have detrimental impacts on the natural environment, having the capacity to leak toxic substances such as lead, mercury, and cadmium into the environment. These substances can lead to soil pollution, reduced crop yields, and bioaccumulation through the food chain, ultimately impacting human and animal health through cellular function interference, causing issues to brain, kidney, and liver functioning. Further, a survey done by ACOR (Australian Council of Recycling) in 2024, found that between 10 and 12,000 battery related fires had occurred across waste and recycling streams in the 12 months preceding June 21<sup>st</sup> 2024- which poses an immediate environmental, safety, and financial risk, thus highlighting the necessity for safe, accessible battery recycling.

#### How it works:

1. **Collection:** Batteries are collected from drop off locations at local businesses, offices, schools, and retailers. They are then transported in sealed, fireproof containers to be sorted.
2. **Sorting:** Following collection, batteries are moved to local depots where they are consolidated into deliveries, and sent to EcoBatt's automated sorting plant, where they are sorted by material and battery type.
3. **Recycling:** Batteries are recycled at EcoBatt's state of the art Campbellfield facility, and usable materials are extracted.
4. **Material Use:** Metals such as copper, aluminum, and steel are used as raw material inputs for the group's Castings Tasmania manufacturing business. Further, extracted materials such as manganese, zinc, lithium, cobalt, and nickel are used in the fertiliser and chemical industries. EcoBatt's laboratory facilitates purity checks and testing on site to ensure the most effective outcomes for recycled materials and metals, guaranteeing a quality and quick turnaround.

What makes EcoBatt different is the ease and accessibility that they have created within the battery recycling industry- providing over 5000 batteries drop off sites to Australian supermarkets. **Want to find your nearest drop off bin?** Use this link to see where you can recycle your batteries:



## End Food Waste Australia (EFWA) – An Australia Without Food Waste

Written by Gloria Mutesi – HOPE researcher (Int – Uganda)

Food waste is one of Australia's most costly and overlooked environmental challenges, with more than 7.6 million tonnes lost each year much of which is still perfectly edible. This waste represents not only lost food, but also the water, labour, energy, land, and wasted resources that went into producing it. In response to this urgent national challenge, End Food Waste Australia (EFWA) formerly known as the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) in 2018 is leading a coordinated, research-driven effort to halve Australia's food waste by 2030.

**Aims & Objectives:** EFWA's work centres on three pillars: reducing avoidable food waste, transforming unavoidable waste into valuable products, and engaging Australians in behaviour change. The organisation builds on national research to strengthen industry practices, influence policy, support households, and help ensure surplus food reaches communities experiencing insecurity while reducing environmental impacts across the supply chain.

**Major Achievements:** Since 2018, EFWA has delivered over 70 research projects supported by AU\$120 million, creating nationally used tools like the Household Food Waste Reduction Toolkit and launching the SME Solutions Centre. Its breakthroughs include repurposing leafy-green waste, extracting plant-based proteins, developing new by-product uses, training emerging professionals, and demonstrating Australia's major economic and environmental gains from large-scale food-waste reduction.

**Current Projects & Campaigns:** EFWA and its partners drives a range of national programs focused on reducing food waste across households, industries, and government. Key initiatives include the Australian Food Pact, which brings major food businesses together to implement shared waste-reduction solutions; SME Solutions Centre projects that support innovation in upcycling, packaging, and supply-chain efficiency; and community rollouts of household waste-reduction toolkits.



**Partnerships & Collaboration:** EFWA works with major food companies such as Woolworths, Coles, and Nestlé through the Australian Food Pact to reduce waste across the supply chain. It partners with universities like RMIT and the University of Sydney on research into food-byproduct innovation, and with local councils in Victoria and Queensland to implement the Household Food Waste Reduction Toolkit

**Why EFWA's Work Matters:** Food waste affects every Australian household. It is the uneaten leftovers, the forgotten produce, and the surplus crops left on farms. Reducing food waste is a way to improve sustainability, reduce emissions, and strengthen food security. End Food Waste Australia's blend of research, industry collaboration, and household education offers a practical and national path to change. Their work transforms food waste from

a national problem into practical solutions that protect people, the planet, and the economy



### Ways to Get Involved:

➤ **Volunteer:** Help reduce food waste in your community through programs like the household toolkit rollouts, community workshops, or local food redistribution initiatives. <https://endfoodwaste.com.au/get-involved/>

➤ **Attend Events:** Explore and connect with nature through guided bushwalks, birdwatching, canoeing, and our monthly *Park of the Month* activities – [Upcoming Events – EFWA](#)

### ➤ Stay connected:

- [facebook.com/EndFoodWasteAustralia](https://facebook.com/EndFoodWasteAustralia):
- [instagram.com/EndFoodWasteAustralia](https://instagram.com/EndFoodWasteAustralia)
- [linkedin.com/company/endfoodwasteaustralia](https://linkedin.com/company/endfoodwasteaustralia):

- Website <https://endfoodwaste.com.au/>
-

## Behind the Transformation of Waste Treatment

Written by Jessica Keegan, HOPE researcher Vic

In 2024, the Australian Government's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCEEW) created a report depicting the trends of waste generation and disposal over the financial years of 2016-2023. Over that 7–8-year period over 500 million tonnes of waste was generated in Australia and just over 190 million tonnes of waste was disposed of. With those numbers, it's understandable to ask where the remaining 310 million tonnes have gone.

That's where charities like Resource Recovery Australia come in.

Resource Recovery Australia (RRA) is a 'not-for-profit social enterprise' that specialises in a mission of offering a job and education to those needing the support. They value a vision of creating communities that 'value people, planet and the Traditional Owners of the land'. To achieve these goals, the charity specialises in waste management and have done so for over 34 years. Just in the financial year of 2025: they have diverted 12,525 tonnes of waste from landfill, employed over 200 people and provided 4,069 training and development outcomes for their communities.



Figure 1. Resource Recovery Australia

RRA runs an outstanding number of operations that fit into their missions. From waste management services like community recycling centres, and the mobile community recycling service (MCRS), to conducting feasibility studies for waste management sites and recommending optimal operational models. One of their biggest recent achievements was taking on the operations of the Lakes Creek Road Waste Management Facility in Rockhampton.



Figure 2. Site Manager and Depot Hand of Lakes Creek Road Waste Management Facility

Rockhampton Regional Council had set up a Resource Recovery Strategy, aiming to divert 90% of waste by 2040. RRA took on the challenge of managing the facilities, aiming to improve environment outcomes, strengthen community engagement and provide meaningful jobs for the local community. Within the first six weeks of operation, 62 tonnes of waste diverted, and then by the time FY2025 came around, the total had reached 4,266.57 tonnes diverted from landfill. The first steps RRA took to improve facilities was recruiting a brand-new local workforce and transforming the former tip shop into the Reviva Ibis Reuse Shop, a project they perform across a variety of their managed waste sites. It's an organised retail space that provides second-hand items a second chance of use, even the outside of it was revamped to display salvaged building materials, and other large and outdoor items. They've changed the operational standards of

the site to the point of easier community engagement through access, signage and programs like The Tinkering, a creative program to teach community practical skills for repair, reuse and upcycling their waste.

To further deliver for their purpose of repairing, reusing and upcycling, the RRA holds a Reviva Reuse competition that provides incentives to collect second-hand items from their store and then turn the 'trash into treasure'. For example, past winners featured from intricate mosaic art made from broken tiles to mud kitchens, made from upcycled materials. For 2025, there was a \$300 visa card prize for the national winner, and a \$200 visa card for the local winner of the host community.

Resource Recovery Australia is a reliable charity that has had a profound impact on waste management in a range of communities across Australian states. They have provided the groundworks for employment and training opportunities for those in need. They educate and advocate on repairing, reusing and upcycling materials that otherwise would be taken straight to landfill. They achieve their aims of valuing people and planet every day.



Figure 3. Reviva Reuse Competition 2024 Winner's

If you would like to keep up to date or learn more about Resource Recovery Australia, you can access their website [here](#) for more information and to sign up for their newsletter.

## To Lead Action for a Just, Equitable and Sustainable World

Written by Jessica Keegan, HOPE researcher Vic



Unfortunately, each day there are people fighting to live sustainably in developing countries. Some Australians have created non-government organisations (NGOs) involved in international development and humanitarian action. For a while there was no peak body to represent Australian NGOs in this regard.

In 1965 however, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) was founded and now currently has 130 full members and 22 affiliates operating in more than 90 developing countries. They represent members from international federations to smaller community-based groups, and lots more in between. ACFID had a 2020-2025 Strategic Plan that has outlined some of their aims during those years. The main goals were about championing inclusive and sustainable development policy and practice in response to the emerging drivers of poverty and instability and wanting to lead and support adaptive international development and humanitarian organisations for the future.

To be an 'influential policy voice, a catalyst for change and a standard bearer for good practice in international development and humanitarian response' is the overall aim of ACFID. Their common practices for achieving these goals involves connecting and engaging members, joining with others to influence those in political positions without bias, leading the discussion on critical issues, and promoting relevant knowledge with high regards to evidence-based learning.

ACFID has developed a wide scope of campaigns over the years with high priorities for climate change and leading humanitarian action for those in greatest needs. Within their 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, they have developed a Climate Action Framework to support Australian international development NGOs to increase engagement and action on climate. As they suggest on their website; 'a common challenge for many actors wanting to engage in climate change issues is to understand the role they can play and where they can be most effective'. In addition to the framework, ACFID has published the 'Integrating Climate Change Action' series of publications, that are designed to 'provide practice-based guidance for integrating climate change action', through a research partnership with University of Technology, Sydney. They are publicly available on the ACFID website, which you can find [here](#). This is just one example of the projects undertaken by ACFID.



Figure 1. A Panel about Climate Justice at an ACFID 2024 Panel

In December 2025, ACFID welcomed a 50 million dollars investment to assist people in the Indo-Pacific region with disability rights and inclusion in partnership with local organisations. The main concentration is to support organisations led by people with disability to enable their participation in decision-making at national, regional and global levels. It's planned to nurture collaboration and peer-to-peer learning within a range of communities so that a more resilient and connected disability rights movement can be built. In November 2025, they also accepted another donation from the Australian Government of 48 million dollars to support Pacific governments in fighting and responding to rising HIV rates across the region. In the light of cuts to global aid and health funding for the Pacific, ACFID's advocacy and efforts are highlighted in being able to obtain this funding and to support NGOs and Pacific-based communities strengthen the responses to HIV with the guides of local leadership and expertise.

The Australian Council for International Development has had a past and current transformative effect on the status of developing countries and the NGOs that support them. There doesn't seem to be anything currently stopping from continuing to achieve goals regarding their mission, especially with the continuous support of the Australian Government and such a wide cast of partners and staff under their belt. ACFID isn't trading lives for resources but providing resources for lives.

## International Items

### Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ): Protecting the food on our tables setting the bar and keeping you safe

Written by Sue Elliott – HOPE researcher Qld

---

When you pick up food at the supermarket, you want to know it's safe, clearly labelled, and trustworthy. That's where **Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)** comes in.

FSANZ is the independent agency that develops and manages the *Australia-New Zealand Food Standards Code* — the rulebook that guides everything from what additives can be used, how allergens are labelled, to how new food technologies like gene-edited crops are regulated. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) plays a vital role in making sure the food we eat is safe, clearly labelled, and meets modern scientific standards.



Recently, FSANZ updated the definition of **genetically modified (GM) food, what has changed?** Prior to the recent updates, certain lab methods resulted in automatic GM labelling, now FSANZ looks at the end result instead, under the new approach if the genetic change in a food could also occur naturally through traditional breeding or a random mutation, it may no longer need to be labelled as GM. If it is found that the modification creates something that could not happen in nature it still falls under the GM rules and is carefully assessed. This outcome-based system helps keep the standards fair, clear, and up-to-date with the latest science.

The work FSANZ does may be behind the scenes, but it directly affects us all. From handling food recalls to setting labelling rules, FSANZ helps give consumers confidence while supporting fair trade and a strong food industry. With changing technology, shifting consumer expectations, and global trade, the work of FSANZ is more important than ever: balancing innovation with safety, transparency with simplicity. Stay tuned for further updates on proposed changes, food labelling rules, and definitions that affect both producers and consumers



As our diets evolve and new technologies appear, FSANZ will continue to play a vital role in keeping food safe, standards consistent, and choices clear.

For more information or check on updates/recalls visit their website at <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>

Or <https://www.foodregulation.gov.au/about-the-system/standards>

Or to make a donation towards research:

<https://www.isaaa.org/kc/cropbiotechupdate/article/default.asp?ID=21397>

---



## Rethinking Shark Nets – A Sustainable Future for Ocean Safety

For decades, shark nets have been promoted as a reliable safeguard for swimmers and surfers along Australia's coastline. Yet beneath the surface, these nets tell a very different story, one of unintended ecological harm, outdated thinking, and preventable loss of marine life. Oceans Harmony, a non-profit organisation dedicated to protecting marine ecosystems, is challenging this long-held status quo through its Shark Nets Project. The initiative seeks to raise awareness about the devastating environmental costs of traditional shark control methods, while advocating for sustainable, non-lethal alternatives that protect both people and wildlife.

While often perceived as protective barriers, shark nets are not enclosures; they do not prevent sharks from reaching coastal areas. Instead, they act as indiscriminate traps. Research reported by Oceans Harmony shows that up to 94% of animals caught in shark nets are non-target species. This staggering figure includes dolphins, turtles, rays, harmless fish, and even endangered species such as the grey nurse shark. What was designed to protect humans is instead placing immense pressure on fragile marine ecosystems, threatening biodiversity and upsetting the delicate balance that sustains life in our oceans.

Oceans Harmony's Shark Nets Project calls for a complete rethink of how we manage shark-human interactions. Rather than relying on outdated, lethal control measures, the organisation promotes science-based, ethical alternatives that prioritise coexistence over conflict. One such innovation is the Shark Spotters Program, a successful model that originated in South Africa and has since been trialled in parts of Australia. The program employs trained observers who monitor coastlines from elevated vantage points. When a shark is sighted, visual signals such as flags and real-time communications alert beachgoers and lifeguards. This allows the public to make informed decisions about entering the water without harming marine life. By combining community engagement, technology, and education, this approach restores public confidence in ocean safety while fostering empathy and understanding for the vital ecological role sharks play.

*Why It Matters:* This project speaks directly to the core principles of sustainability: balance, coexistence, and respect for natural systems. Oceans Harmony reminds us that true ocean safety isn't about domination or fear, but about knowledge and shared responsibility. Protecting marine biodiversity ultimately protects us, too, by maintaining the resilience and health of the ecosystems that regulate our planet. As global awareness grows, more regions are adopting evidence based, eco-friendly shark mitigation methods. From drone surveillance and acoustic tracking to advanced alert systems and AI-assisted monitoring, innovation is paving the way for a future where conservation and recreation can thrive together.

*Why support them:* Oceans Harmony's advocacy forms part of a broader movement toward rethinking our relationship with the ocean. Rather than viewing marine environments as spaces to control or exploit, this project champions a vision of partnership, where communities, governments, and conservationists collaborate toward safeguarding our planet. Through education campaigns, public outreach, and partnerships with environmental organisations, Oceans Harmony is driving meaningful change. Each conversation, petition, and pilot program brings us one step closer to replacing outdated shark nets with sustainable, humane alternatives.

HOPE stands in full support of Oceans Harmony's mission to protect marine biodiversity and create safer, smarter coastal environments. We encourage readers to learn more about their incredible work and discover ways to contribute to a more compassionate future for our oceans.

 Learn more: [oceansharmony.org/projects/shark-nets](https://oceansharmony.org/projects/shark-nets)

Take action: Support sustainable ocean safety initiatives and help protect marine biodiversity.

---