



## Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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ABN 48 036 173 161

### HOPE E-news Bulletin 2026 #07 --- July 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 July issue of the newsletter for 2026! This month features a diverse range of topics. First, we learn about climate change and, following on from last month's article on coral reefs, we look impacts on the Great Barrier Reef. Next, we meet Alan Hayes – does that name ring any bells?! Then there is reMADE, improving social equity, economic reform and environmental care through a vision for Australia. We also learn about Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc. (AEFI) which saves Australian wildlife by protecting habitats and maintaining natural ecological processes. Read about the Climate Emergency Declaration Petition. We take a fresh look at Community Gardens Australia (CGA). And finally, don't forget to monitor your energy use in winter with Empowering Australian Households Through Smarter Energy Use.

Kind regards,

Nina Stick, Newsletter Editor – HOPE Inc.

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#### 2026 Environmental Observances

July

6 [World Rural Development Day | United Nations](#)

12 [International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms | United Nations](#)

August

19 [World Humanitarian Day | United Nations](#)

27 [World Lake Day | United Nations](#)

29 [International Day against Nuclear Tests | United Nations](#)

September

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

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

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

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

- [International Days and Weeks | United Nations](#)
  - [International Years | United Nations](#)
  - [International Decades | United Nations](#)
-

## A message from the President

In June HOPE Inc. held its third Ordinary Meeting of the year, where we discussed future projects, university student placements and the outcomes of two World Environment Day events - the Logan Eco Action Festival and Toowoomba World Environment Day event. Our ordinary meetings are held once a quarter, with the next date set for Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> of September. All are welcome to attend and share their thoughts and ideas on future, current and past work of HOPE!

Tecnología Medio Ambiente (TMA), a Spain-based company, working in integrated waste management has produced it's [Word Environmental Calendar 2026](#) – with key dates for sustainability, waste management, and the Circular Economy. For example, July 3<sup>rd</sup> celebrates International Plastic Bag Free day and July 7<sup>th</sup> International Soil Conservation Day.

To help spread the good word, we encourage you to 'share' HOPE's messages or perhaps your own stance on such issues, on your social media.

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

## 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.**

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## General

### **Climate Change and the Great Barrier Reef: A Crisis of Warming Oceans and Coral Bleaching** *Written by Nalayini Shiyamasunthar, HOPE researcher NSW*

The **Great Barrier Reef**, one of the world's most diverse and valuable marine ecosystems, is facing an extreme crisis due to climate change. Rising greenhouse gas emissions have led to increasing ocean temperatures, which place immense stress on coral reefs. This stress results in **coral bleaching**, a process where corals lose their vibrant colours and essential symbiotic algae, threatening their survival. As warming ocean currents continue to intensify, the frequency and severity of bleaching events have increased, putting the long-term health of the reef at serious risk.

Climate change is the greatest global threat to coral reef ecosystems. Scientific evidence now clearly indicates that the Earth's atmosphere and ocean are warming, and that these changes are primarily due to greenhouse gases derived from human activities (NOAA, 2024). The **Great Barrier Reef** is the largest coral reef system in the world. Located in the Coral Sea off the coast of Queensland, it stretches over 2,300 kilometres and is made up of thousands of individual reefs and islands. Because of its size and beauty, it is considered one of the natural wonders of the world and is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



The Reef has a global reputation for its crystal-clear waters, kaleidoscopic corals, and more than 900 picturesque islands. This network of marine sanctuaries holds unparalleled ecological importance, serving as a haven for thousands of plants and animals. Sadly, the Great Barrier Reef is under pressure. Climate change, rising temperatures and human interference threaten its survival. We need to take action to protect and preserve this natural wonder for years to come (WWF,2026).

(Source: WWF, Australia)

In addition to warming oceans, climate change also causes ocean acidification and more frequent extreme weather events. These factors damage coral structures, slow reef recovery, and reduce the resilience of marine ecosystems. The combined effects are putting the long-term survival of the reef at risk.

[Biologically, the unique diversity of the GBR reflects the maturity of an ecosystem that has evolved over millennia - evidence exists for the evolution of hard corals and other fauna]. Globally significant marine faunal groups include over 4,000 species of molluscs, over 1,500 species of fish, plus a great diversity of sponges, anemones, marine worms, crustaceans, and many others. The establishment of vegetation on the cays and continental islands exemplifies the important role of birds, such as the Pied Imperial Pigeon, in processes such as seed dispersal and plant colonisation. Human interaction with the natural environment is illustrated by strong ongoing links between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and their sea-country, and includes numerous shell deposits (middens) and fish traps, plus the application of story places and marine totems (UNESCO,2023).

The reef is home to an incredible variety of marine species, different types of coral, and many other organisms such as turtles, sharks, and sea birds. This rich biodiversity makes the reef an important ecosystem that supports both marine life and human livelihoods, especially tourism and fishing industries.

The 2022 joint mission by UNESCO and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) highlights the growing global concern over the condition of the Great Barrier Reef. The mission aimed to assess the reef's status and engage with key stakeholders, including government authorities, scientists, and non-governmental organizations. The findings revealed that the reef's outlook is worrying due to multiple threats such as pollution, overfishing, and rising sea temperatures. Importantly, the report emphasized that the situation is not irreversible and identified ten specific corrective measures that could significantly improve the reef's conservation status.

The involvement of UNESCO's Director-General and the Australian Prime Minister further underscore the political urgency of the issue. These discussions led to efforts to develop a clear implementation plan, including timelines and costs, demonstrating that coordinated action, strong governance, and international cooperation are essential to protect and restore the Great Barrier Reef.



(Source: Sailing whitsundays.com, 2025)

From the perspective of Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE) Inc. values, this issue highlights the importance of sustainability, responsibility, and community action. Protecting the Great Barrier Reef is not only an environmental issue but also a social responsibility. Sustainable practices, such as reducing carbon emissions, conserving energy, and protecting natural resources, are essential steps toward safeguarding the reef.

Community awareness and collective action are equally important. Governments, organizations, and individuals must work together to address climate change and protect vulnerable ecosystems. Supporting

conservation efforts, spreading awareness, and making environmentally responsible choices can contribute to positive change.

In conclusion, climate change is a serious threat to the Great Barrier Reef, with warming oceans and coral bleaching causing significant damage. However, by embracing the values of sustainability, responsibility, and community engagement, there is still hope for the future. Protecting the reef requires urgent action and a shared commitment to preserving this unique ecosystem for generations to come.

References:

- <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/coralreef-climate.html>
- <https://coralvita.co/coral-cafe/great-barrier-reef-bleaching/>
- <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2570/>
- <https://www.barrierreef.org/the-reef/threats/climate-change>

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## Alan Hayes: Author of the *It's So Natural* Book Series | Educator in Sustainable Living | Advocate of Natural Home Systems



There is a particular feeling that settles in while reading the books of Alan Hayes. It is the feeling of stepping into a home where nothing is wasted, where herbs dry beside the kitchen window, where rainwater matters, where the garden is both pantry and medicine cabinet, and where everyday life moves with care rather than excess.

The *It's So Natural* books do not read like modern lifestyle trends packaged for a market suddenly fascinated by sustainability. They feel grounded, practical, and deeply lived. Hayes writes like someone who has spent years testing these ideas with his own hands, not merely researching them from behind a desk. Perhaps that is why the books linger long after they are finished and laid down.

Across titles such as *It's So Natural*, *More of It's So Natural*, *Healing From the Garden*, *Home Made Best Made*, *The It's So Natural House*, *The Essential It's So Natural*, and *It's So Natural: Toward a Sustainable Future*, Hayes quietly builds an entire philosophy around the home - one rooted in simplicity, self-sufficiency, environmental respect, and practical natural living. Throughout the series, he returns repeatedly to the idea that **sustainable living should not be expensive, complicated, or reserved for a privileged few**. It should be practical, affordable, and achievable for ordinary people everywhere.

What makes these books remarkable is their attention to the ordinary details modern life has taught people to overlook. Hayes writes about cleaning windows with vinegar instead of harsh chemicals, using bicarbonate of soda throughout the home, preserving food naturally, growing chemical-free vegetables, recycling water, and making homemade alternatives to commercial products. These are not presented as grand environmental gestures, but as sensible habits that quietly reshape the way a household functions.



In *Healing From the Garden*, herbs are treated with quiet reverence not as decorative plants or fashionable wellness accessories, but as practical household medicine once trusted across generations. The writing carries a deep respect for traditional knowledge without romanticizing it. One of the strongest qualities of Hayes' work is restraint. He never writes with panic, guilt, or superiority. Instead, the books move with calm certainty, offering practical alternatives through everyday

experience rather than ideology. There is no pressure to become perfect overnight, only a steady encouragement to live more thoughtfully and waste less.

And somewhere between the pages on herbs, homemade cleaners, sustainable homes, preserved foods, and self-reliance, readers begin to realize that these books are offering something larger than environmental advice. They are offering a different way of living - one that feels calmer, wiser, more resourceful, and profoundly human. Perhaps that is why the books continue to resonate. In a world shaped by speed, convenience, and endless consumption, the *It's So Natural* series quietly reminds readers that another way of living is still possible.

Readers do not need to be engineers, environmentalists, or experts to begin. Small choices still matter: reducing waste, growing food, rethinking household habits, supporting clean energy, and sharing knowledge within communities. Hayes' work ultimately leaves readers with a simple but powerful understanding that sustainability begins at home, in the ordinary decisions made every day.

**How to engage:** Readers interested in exploring Alan Hayes' work further can access the *It's So Natural* books and related resources through [Its So Natural Home](#), where they can discover practical guides, sustainable living ideas, and ways to become part of a growing community committed to thoughtful, natural living.

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

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## National items

### Australia reMADE – Reimagining the Australia we want

Written by Allan Fong – HOPE researcher NSW

We often hear people say we live in the luckiest country in the world, and it is with good reason when you consider our high standard of living, freedom and liberties and stable political government. But as a nation there are things we can surely do better, policies which could be improved to further advance social equity, economic reform and environmental care. But how do we get to that “next level”? A good place to start is to develop a vision of future Australia.



Australia reMADE is an independent, not for profit alliance of people from diverse backgrounds dedicated to creating a hopeful and cohesive vision for the future of Australia. They regard themselves as “the architects of hope and possibility,” and work to unpack the system changes needed to create a better nation. With no underlying political or business agenda, they interviewed hundreds of everyday Australians from 2020 to 2021 about what was sustaining them and what they wanted more of and came away realising people had remarkably similar hopes and dreams for the future. Not surprisingly, many spoke about the need for basic goods and services such as housing, healthcare, and education. But as the conversation continued, people began to

really open up about their dreams for a better Australia...

“[My mum works] at the local pub which has a gaming room and there’s an old guy who would show up every week or so and give my mum a big tip and basically come to the gaming room just to socialise with people. I want people like him to have a space where they don’t have to spend money to be

“We need common spaces and places... We need common spaces to be in community, neighbourhoods, etc. Libraries do some of this.”

“Belonging is when we can take our whole self, the magnitude of who we are to spaces, knowing we are accepted and we matter when it’s safe to be ourselves without compromising.”

“People are looking for story, to have their lives reflected back at them and we do that through art.”

Australia reMADE have since taken this feedback and established the following nine guiding pillars which lay the foundation for creating a better Australia:

Pillar:	Description:
<b>ONE - a first peoples’ heart</b>	As the oldest continuing civilisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures are celebrated at the very heart of what it means to be Australian.
<b>TWO – a natural world for now and the future</b>	We respect our land and take care of it, and power our country with clean renewable energy. We are a part of and connected to our land.
<b>THREE – an economy for the people</b>	Our government makes decisions that put people first, decisions which are good for nature and prevent poverty. Our economy serves our people and the planet.
<b>FOUR – a society where all contributions count and every job has dignity</b>	Whatever we do, whether in paid work or looking after children or the elderly, our contribution to society is recognised and valued.
<b>FIVE – a diversity of people living side by side</b>	We are a compassionate nation where all people are made to feel safe and welcome. We may disagree on politics, religion, or taste in music, we do so with respect, peacefully getting on with our lives.
<b>SIX – a country of flourishing communities</b>	We connect with each other in our communities, building relationships and fostering a keen sense of community spirit. We have time to enjoy our families and friendships.
<b>SEVEN – a new dawn for women</b>	Women are visible, valued, and celebrated. We are proud that violence and harassment towards women is never tolerated.
<b>EIGHT – a thriving democracy</b>	We are engaged and thoughtful citizens. Our parliament is as diverse as our population, and our governments exists for the people.
<b>NINE – a proud contributor to a just world</b>	We are active in creating a safer, more peaceful and united globe, upholding international laws and conventions that make our world fairer and more secure for all people.

### So where to from here?

Now that a vision for future Australia has been defined, how do we embark on the journey of national transformation? The Australia reMADE movement have identified the need to work through the following phases to achieve its goals:

- Root cause analysis – rather than treating issues in isolation (e.g. poverty), we need to dig deeper to identify systemic causes (e.g. move towards an economy which prioritises the public good over private profit).
- Asking “Why” - Questioning existing policies by asking who benefits from them?
- Remaking the state - Shifting the role of government from a vehicle focused on enhancing private wealth and power to a vehicle for democratic power and which serves the public.
- Supercharging the citizenry – ensuring the people have a voice in how governments are run.
- The Public Good framework – replacing the existing neoliberal framework and its focus on competition, which a new framework centred on:
  - Care – social and environment health should be at the centre of all decision making.
  - Connection – ensuring people continue to have the opportunity to connect with others in a meaningful way.
  - Contribution – meeting people’s need to contribute to our community and nation.
- Creating a national narrative – a national story emphasising solidarity over division.
- Connecting the silos – bringing together people from diverse groups (e.g. academics, politicians, everyday citizens) to work through the pillars collectively rather than in isolation.

### Want to know more?

Listen to “The reMAKERS” podcast series with Lily Spencer, originally from the US but has been living in Australia for more than 2 decades. Lily says, “*I enjoy bringing our listeners conversations that ask, ‘why not?’, highlight solutions and embrace uncertainty and nuance. I enjoy assuming the best of each other, even when we disagree. I also like to unpack ideas Millie and I are working on, narrating our learning as we go rather than only sharing the ‘ta-dah’ at the end.*”

Link: [Podcast — Australia ReMADE](#)

Follow the Australia reMADE blog with a wide range of topics ranging from supporting communities, to the public good, to the roadmap to wellbeing. [Blog — Australia ReMADE](#)  
Or visit their website [Australia reMADE](#)

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## Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc (AEFI) – Saving Australia’s threatened wildlife

*Written by Allan Fong - HOPE researcher NSW*

As a registered not-for-profit environmental organisation, Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc. (AEFI) saves Australian wildlife by protecting habitats and maintaining natural ecological processes.

### Core Mission:

AEFI’s core mission is to restore and conserve Australia’s native ecosystems and biodiversity. This is achieved by managing or assisting in the management of specific habitats to ensure the wildlife within is protected and maintained. AEFI currently manage over 3000 hectares of land, many of which have been identified as being of high conservation value due to the number of threatened species of flora and fauna present, in addition to conducting research and breeding programs on endangered species.



in addition to conducting research and breeding programs on endangered species.

### Management Committee:

Their management committee is diverse and includes conservation biologists, research scientists, indigenous teachers, farmers and business executives, allowing AEFI to manage its reserves and wildlife with a broad range of experiences, skills and knowledge. They also work with a wide range of partners including government agencies, universities, and volunteer and community groups, sharing expertise and resources to maximise objectives and outcomes.

### A Case Study – Eastern Quoll



While AEFI have multiple concurrent projects at a given time ranging from species conservation to public education and engagement through the creation of cultural visitor centres, the Eastern Quoll Breeding and Species Recovery Program is a prime example of their endangered species work. This near-extinct Australian marsupial predator has been bred at AEFI’s prime site at Secret Creek Sanctuary since 2003. Here are some interesting facts on the Eastern Quoll:

- They are almost extinct on mainland Australia, and in recent decades have only thrived in Tasmania
- Despite this, there is now evidence of a ten-year decline in population numbers in Tasmania, resulting in their current classification as threatened.
- The red fox is considered to be the main driver behind mainland extinction because the Eastern Quoll is within the critical weight range (0.5 to 5kg) of mammals susceptible to predator foxes.
- Feral cats remain the biggest threat to Eastern Quolls in Tasmania as they compete for the same food sources.
- The aim of the breeding program is to return the Eastern Quoll to protected reserves on mainland Australia.
- Their chocolate brown coats with white spots provide perfect camouflage as they move through the bush feeding mainly on insects as well as small prey and fruit.
- They are part of the Dasyurid family and are related to the Tasmanian Devil and the now extinct Tasmanian Tiger.

Read about other AEFI projects at this link [Projects | ausecosystems](#)  
To find out more, visit the AEFI website here [Home | ausecosystems](#)

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## Climate Emergency Declaration Petition – Australian Context Overview

Written by Nalayini Shiyamasunthar - HOPE researcher NSW

The 'Climate Emergency Declaration' petition represents a rising movement across Australia, that urges governments to acknowledge climate change as an immediate national emergency. In Australia climate change is directly associated with a surge in bushfires, extended droughts, heatwaves and risks to biodiversity, emphasizing its extensive social, economic, and environmental consequences. According to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, the 2019–2020 bushfire season, known as Black Summer, resulted in over 18 million hectares burned and an estimated loss of more than one billion animals, highlighting the severe environmental impact of recent climate events (Bureau of Meteorology, 2021). Additionally, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has reported that Australia is experiencing more frequent and intense heatwaves and droughts, further threatening local ecosystems and communities (IPCC, 2023).

The petition argues that current policy responses remain insufficient given the scale and urgency of the crisis. It therefore advocates for the formal declaration of a climate emergency to justify rapid and large-scale interventions. These include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy, and implementing sustainable environmental practices (Climate Emergency Declaration, 2024).

From a sociological perspective, this initiative reflects the increasing importance of civic engagement and the role of collective action in shaping environmental governance. Drawing on collective action theory (Olson, 1965), which examines how individuals and groups coordinate efforts to pursue common interests, the rise of climate emergency declarations in Australia demonstrates how grassroots mobilization can influence both policy and public discourse. Local councils and civil society organizations have played a pivotal role in advancing these declarations, underscoring the capacity of communities to drive environmental change from the bottom up (Australian Local Government Association, 2022)

Furthermore, the petition highlights the importance of governance and institutional accountability in responding to environmental crises. Declaring a climate emergency is framed as a strategic mechanism to prioritise climate action, mobilise resources, and foster coordinated responses across sectors.

Overall, the Climate Emergency Declaration petition demonstrates how environmental advocacy, public participation, and policy frameworks intersect in addressing the climate crisis within Australia.

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## Community Gardens Australia (CGA) – Supporting Local Communities and the Environment

Written by Allan Fong – HOPE researcher NSW



Community gardens Australia (CGA) is the peak body connecting community gardeners across Australia. Established in 1996, they support, connect and advocate for community gardening activities in all states and territories and currently have over 800 gardens listed on their national directory.

### Benefits of community gardens

Community gardens are not just for people who live in apartments and don't have access to a garden. They offer a range of benefits which go beyond growing fresh vegetables for the local community:

- They help build a strong sense of community and belonging, bringing together people from different ages and backgrounds who would otherwise never meet. They help to reduce social isolation by providing a welcoming green space for people to meet.
- Provide an opportunity for knowledge sharing where experienced gardeners can pass down their skills to younger gardeners.
- As well as providing pesticide free produce, they provide a physical workout through digging, planting and weeding in a green, tranquil stress relieving environment.
- They boost local biodiversity by introducing a variety of plants, flowers and crops creating vital urban habitats for pollinators such as bees, butterflies and local birds.



### Advocating for Community Gardens

CGA engage with local, state and federal governments as well as partnering with organisations in health, environment, food systems and community development to speak publicly about the value of community gardens, as well as making submissions to inquiries and contribute to policy discussions. A recent example of their work is a partnership with two other organisations "Grow it Local" and "Permaculture Australia" to deliver the 2026 Community Growing Conference series. The conferences aim to equip communities with practical skills, knowledge and confidence to grow successful local food systems. In addition to the conference series, the three partnering organisations aim to actively support and boost each other's work through cross-promoting initiatives, collaboration, network sharing and aligning advocacy efforts where possible.

### Where to find a community garden

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*"When organisations align around shared values, the impact multiplies. Together, we can reach more people, strengthen more community gardens, and inspire the next generation of growers"*  
...Naomi Lacey, Director of Community Gardens Australia.

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Community gardens are mostly volunteer-run and exist on council land, schools, churches or community centres. They could be city farms, dedicated neighbourhood community gardens, school gardens or even

footpath gardens. The CGA website offer a location search function where you enter your suburb (or postcode), filter by garden type to find your nearest community garden. [Find a garden - Community Gardens Australia Useful resources](#)

The CGA website contains a wealth of useful resources and information to assist both home and community gardeners:

- Wicking – a method of watering gardens from “below the soil”. The water is stored in an underground reservoir and is drawn upward through a wicking medium such as perlite. Plant roots absorb the water through capillary action without over watering or water loss. [Wicking made easy: how sub-irrigation can transform your community garden - Community Gardens Australia](#)
- Aquaponics – growing vegetables and fish together without the need for soil. Water from a tank holding edible fish is pumped through vegetable growing containers. The closed loop system allows waste from the fish tank to fertilise the vegetables, and the fish are given a supplemental feed to ensure a nutritionally balanced diet. [Vegetable and fish — all in together - Community Gardens Australia](#)
- Zero waste – tips for achieving a zero-waste lifestyle, covering methods to reduce waste and creating useful resources from waste. Their “Gentle Footprints Towards Zero Waste” pdf designed for schools discusses waste management, recycling, worm farms and composting. [Zero Waste Initiative For Community Gardens - Community Gardens Australia](#)
- The number one thing beginner gardeners get wrong – Many first-time gardeners give up because their pot plants keep dying. This article discusses the tell-tale signs of overwatering and underwatering as being the most common reasons why plants prematurely die. [The number one thing beginner gardeners get wrong - Community Gardens Australia](#)



- Verge gardens - the verge is the public space between the footpath and the road. It's not uncommon to find native and exotic plants on the verge, but some people are using the space to plant fruit trees and vegetables. This article discusses how start a verge garden, citing the importance of checking with local council and assessing public safety [INFO SHEET: Verge gardening - Community Gardens Australia](#)

Want to know more about Community Gardens Australia, visit their website [Community Gardens Australia - Community Gardens Australia](#)

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## Empowering Australian Households Through Smarter Energy Use

*How Energy.gov.au Helps Families Save Money, Improve Comfort, and Live More Sustainably.*

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



As energy prices, climate pressures, and the cost of living continue to affect everyday life in Australia, household energy use has become more than a technical issue - it is now a practical, economic, and environmental concern. For many households, the challenge is not just paying electricity bills, but understanding

where energy is used, what changes matter most, and how to make homes more affordable, efficient, and comfortable. In response to this growing need, the Australian Government established the **Energy.gov.au Households platform** as a public information and support resource to help households access clear, practical, and reliable energy guidance. By turning complex energy information into everyday advice, tools, and support, the platform helps Australians make more informed decisions about energy use, efficiency, and household costs.

**Aims and Objectives:** The **Households** section of Energy.gov.au is designed to help Australians better understand and manage the energy used in their homes. Its aim is to make energy information simple, practical, and useful for everyday life. The platform provides guidance on important areas such as **heating and cooling, hot water, insulation, lighting, appliances, energy ratings, solar PV, batteries, and water efficiency**. It also helps users understand energy costs, compare options, and identify ways to improve household efficiency without necessarily making expensive changes all at once.

**Major achievements:** One of the platform's key strengths is its focus on the areas where households use the most energy. For example, **heating and cooling can account for 20% to 50% of home energy use, hot water around 15% to 30%, and appliances about 30%**, while **lighting can make up 5% to 10%**. By highlighting these high-use areas, the platform helps households focus on the changes that can save the most money. It also provides practical figures, such as the fact that **draught-proofing can cut energy bills by up to 25%**, while a **4-star showerhead can save a family of four around \$315 a year on water bills**.

**Current work and contributions:** A major contribution of Energy.gov.au Households is its ability to turn technical energy advice into practical action. Through resources such as **Quick wins to save energy, Reduce your energy bills, Household guides, Find the best energy deal, and Solar PV and batteries**, the platform helps Australians reduce costs and improve efficiency. It offers clear guidance on actions such as reducing standby power, improving insulation, managing heating and cooling more efficiently, and choosing better appliances. It also supports households making larger transitions, including electrification and solar and battery upgrades, while linking users to initiatives such as the **Cheaper Home Batteries Program**, which offers around a **30% discount** on eligible battery systems from **1 July 2025**.

**Partnerships and contributions:** The platform's impact is strengthened by the wider energy systems it connects to. Energy.gov.au links households to **consumer rights information, rebates, energy providers, state and territory support schemes, appliance standards, and the Energy Rating Label system** through the **Equipment Energy Efficiency (E3) Program**. In this way, it serves not only as an advice platform, but also as a gateway to Australia's broader household energy transition.

**Why this work matters:** The value of Energy.gov.au Households lies in its ability to make energy efficiency practical and achievable for ordinary households. Energy use affects not only bills, but also comfort, health, environmental sustainability, and long-term resilience. By showing households where energy is used, what savings are possible, and which changes are worth making, the platform empowers Australians to move from uncertainty to informed action. More broadly, it reflects a shift from vague sustainability messaging toward practical household tools that help people save money while contributing to a cleaner energy future.

❖ **Get involved: Website:** Explore practical household energy advice, tools, and resources. <https://www.energy.gov.au/households>

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