



Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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HOPE E-news Bulletin 2012 #01 --- 1 February 2012

The following items have been gleaned from various e:newsletters received by HOPE in recent times; and/or prepared specifically by HOPE members and supporters. If you have any news to contribute, please forward to office@hopeaustralia.org.au.

Hi!

A brand new year and we were looking forward to an announcement regarding an office and Environment Centre venue ... but we have not yet been able to secure any premises. We still eagerly await that announcement! Enjoy reading this bulletin; and look for ways that you can contribute to HOPE's events and activities. Be involved!

Miriam Sharp, Editor - office@hopeaustralia.org.au

Calendar of Upcoming Events

2012 International Year of the Bat

2012 International Year of Sustainable Energy For All

February

- 2 - [World Wetlands Day](#)
- 11-26 - [The Sustainable Living Festival](#)
- 28 - [Business Clean Up Day](#)

March

- 2 - [Schools Clean Up Day](#)
- 4-10 - [Sea Week](#)
- 4 - [Clean Up Australia Day](#) – Register Now!
- 11-17 - [Ground Water Awareness Week](#)
- 21 - [World Forestry Day](#)
- 21 - [Harmony Day](#)
- 22 - [World Water Day](#)
- 22 - [Close the Gap](#)
- 23 - [World Meteorological Day](#)
- 23 - [Ride2School Day](#)
- 31 - [Earth Hour](#)

Office Hours

HOPE's office is open every Monday from 9am to 5pm; with the library resources available at the same time; or at other times by appointment.

Office News

Welcome 2012! I have no doubt that this year will be even busier than the last given our new role as acting Regional Environment Council for the Toowoomba area; and our ongoing efforts to maintain state-wide and national networks of members and supporters promoting sustainability in the home, at work, at school and on recreation.

Whilst we're still trying to secure suitable premises for the Environment Centre and HOPE office here in Toowoomba, the management committee and admin volunteers continue to strive hard to administer the office; organise projects, events and outreach activities; and convene meetings.

A working group has been formed to stage a **Schools Sustainability Forum (20 Apr)** as part of National Youth Week events. The theme of "*Imagine. Create. Inspire.*" and a day of presentations, displays and workshops will be used to encourage secondary schools on the Darling Downs to establish on-campus Environment Clubs.

Our next (quarterly) **ordinary meeting of HOPE** is scheduled for **Sunday 19 February**, commencing at 5pm, Jacaranda Room, Grand Central Shopping Centre, cnr Margaret and Clifford Sts, Toowoomba. (A meeting notice will be circulated shortly.)

We plan to **launch an Environmental Networking Partnership (ENP) program (26 Feb (tbc))** in an effort to bring together environment/conservation, landcare/NRM, animal welfare, heritage and social justice groups to make a strong, cohesive and collaborative environment sector.

At Queensland Conservation's (QC) request, we are planning to stage a State Election *Candidates Forum* on environmental issues for the Toowoomba region. Andrew Nicholson will take responsibility for this exercise. Please forward your environmental issues or concerns to Andrew c/o the HOPE office at office@hopeaustralia.org.au.

We extend our sincere thanks to Joyclyn Orme (sign-writer) and Stephen Warburton (website manager) who are stepping down from their active positions within HOPE. Their contributions of time and talent over many years have been of great value.

Lastly, we need more active members / volunteers to help us achieve all that is planned and proposed in 2012. Please give the office a call with your offer of assistance.

Frank Ondrus, President and acting Office Manager- HOPE Inc.

Volunteers needed

HOPE requires extra volunteers who can help in the following areas:

--- Admin assistance; literature review and follow-up internet research; promotion and marketing; sign-writing; planning and preparing for events and activities; preparing media releases; and developing publications such as information sheets, guides and booklets.

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

Note: If we can enlist a team of 3 or 4 media officers, then their individual contribution may be as little as one item every 3-4 months.

Feature Articles

Garbage Polluting Our Oceans - by Victor Skowronski

Given man's ability to pollute the land, it comes as no surprise that our oceans have suffered a similar fate. Humans have an unfortunate relationship with garbage. First of all we make too much of it, then we bury it in landfill or ship it off to places that get paid for storing it because we don't want to see it ourselves. Plastic takes years to break down, and if we stop using it today the damage will carry on well into the 22nd and 23rd centuries unless we can clean up the mess that we have made.

Fifty years ago, most flotsam in our oceans was biodegradable. Now it is 90 per cent plastic. In 2006, the United Nations Environment Programme estimated that there were 46,000 pieces of floating plastic in every square mile of ocean. With its stubborn refusal to biodegrade, all plastic not buried in landfills - roughly half of it - sweeps into streams and sewers and then out into rivers and finally, the ocean. Ship-generated pollution is also a source of concern, since a typical 3,000-passenger cruise ship produces over eight tons of solid waste weekly.

A portion of the rubbish which finds its way into our oceans - some say as much as 70 per cent - sinks to the ocean floor. The remainder floats, usually within 20 metres of the surface, and is carried into stable circular currents called gyres or vortices. There are five of these large gyres or vortices in the oceans of the world, points where currents collide and circulate. In the Pacific Vortex, often described as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, there is a serious environmental problem; millions of tons of rubbish are being collected there. Covering thousands of square kilometres this oceanic rubbish tip leaks poisonous plastics and small plastic fragments which poison the whole food chain. It is estimated that in this area, pieces of plastic rubbish outweigh surface [zooplankton](#) by a factor of 6 to 1. Similar problems exist in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

Plastic is broken up by ultraviolet radiation from the sun and fragments into successively smaller pieces, but the sun alone can never fully break it down. It forms a broth of tiny pieces which is invisible to satellites; wherever it spreads it goes undetected. Plastic debris releases chemical additives and plasticizers into the ocean. Plastic also adsorbs hydrophobic pollutants like PCBs and pesticides like DDT. These pollutants bioaccumulate in the tissues of marine organisms, biomagnify up the food chain, and find their way into the foods we eat.

It has been estimated that plastic bags kill more than 100,000 sea turtles and other marine animals each year because they mistake them for food. A floating plastic bag looks just like a jelly fish, which turtles love to eat. Autopsies on marine life have found tiny fish, the size of your thumb, with over 20 tiny pieces of plastic in their gut. Plastic doesn't decompose, it simply breaks into smaller and smaller pieces so fish that open their mouths wide to feed on zooplankton end up ingesting the tiny pieces of indigestible plastic. Birds are also affected. Albatrosses frequently feed on dead squid and fish eggs that float on the surface of the sea. Floating plastic objects are often mistaken for this food and swallowed, causing blockages and reducing the amount of food that can be eaten. This plastic is then fed to their chicks, often leading to their death.

Studies are being carried out, searching for a solution to the problem. Collecting and recycling the debris would be a huge undertaking. So how can we as individuals make an impact?

- Stop using plastic shopping bags and use reusable bags instead.
- Stop buying food in plastic packaging, particularly bottled water. Buy what you can in bulk or eat more whole foods and less packaged processed foods, and encourage everyone you know to do the same.
- Become involved in organizations such as Cleanup Australia, Cleanup the World and International Coastal Cleanup - check out their websites at:

<http://www.cleanup.org.au/au/>

<http://www.cleanuptheworld.org>

<http://marinelife.about.com/od/conservation/p/internationalcoastalcleanup.htm>

The Australian Youth Climate Coalition

The AYCC (Australian Youth Climate Coalition) is running a petition to Repower Australia with 100% renewable electricity. You can sign the petition online [here](#).

What is this petition about?

The petition is part of a campaign called Repower Australia. Now that the Clean Energy Future legislation has been passed, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation is being created to invest \$10 billion in renewable energy, leveraging private sector finance to develop clean, safe sources of energy like baseload solar thermal, solar photovoltaics, and wind.

However, half of the money could be squandered on dirty fuels like coal and gas. So, the AYCC is making it clear that the community wants the money to go to renewable energy. Our petition asks that the CEFC:

- Only invests in renewable energy, not gas or fossil fuel energy
- Ensures large-scale baseload solar thermal plants are built in Australia
- Happens as soon as possible, and is additional to the existing 20% renewable energy target

You can sign our petition online [here](#); it's also possible to download the petition sheets and sign up people yourself.

Who is the AYCC?

The Australian Youth Climate Coalition is young people cooperating to build a generation-wide movement to solve the climate crisis. We inspire, educate, empower and mobilise young people to create short-term cultural change and long-term political change, and currently have over 70,000 members across Australia.

We have local groups all over Australia taking action in their communities, establishing the public support that we know is needed to secure a safe future.

[MobileMuster - Mobile Phone Recycling "Round 'em up and Hand 'em in!"](#)

About MobileMuster

MobileMuster is the official recycling program for mobile phones in Australia, and was initiated voluntarily by the Australian mobile telecommunications industry in 1999. It is a not-for-profit program funded solely by mobile phone manufacturers and network carriers to collect and recycle mobile phones and prevent them from ending up in landfill. **MobileMuster** is the industry's commitment to product stewardship and is the only whole-of-industry led electronic product recycling program in the world. All mobile phones are recycled to the highest environmental standards and none are refurbished or sold for reuse.

MobileMuster involves a number of organizations from the mobile phone industry including:

- ⤴ industry members (i.e. handset manufacturers and network carriers) who fund and support the program
- ⤴ over 7,000 wranglers (*e.g. mobile phone retail stores, service centres, other retailers, local councils, state and federal government agencies and businesses*) who help collect mobile phones by either hosting public collection points (3,500) or collecting from staff, customers and/or students (4,000)
- ⤴ Australia Post who distribute free recycling satchels (just ask at the counter)
- ⤴ numerous service providers who transport, recycle and process mobile phones, batteries and accessories

Why Recycle Mobile Phones?

There are an estimated 19 million old, unused mobile phones in Australian homes. More than half of Australian mobile phone users keep their previous mobile phone even if it isn't working, and almost a third of users have 2 or more old mobile phones at home. These phones are wonderful candidates for recycling for the following reasons:

- △ to prevent pollution and protect our environment
- △ to minimize solid and hazardous waste going to landfill
- △ to recover resources to manufacture new products
- △ to reduce the need to use raw materials and save our natural resources

Did you know that 90% of a mobile phone is recyclable? These materials can be used to make gold rings, aluminium cans, plastic fence posts and stainless steel items. Recycling 250,000 old phones, batteries and accessories equals 48,000 aluminium cans, 2,400 plastic fence posts and also avoids the need to mine more than 728 tonnes of gold ore, 808 tonnes of silver ore and 178 tonnes of copper sulphide.

Almost 6 million mobile phones have been collected by MobileMuster since the project started at the end of 1998.

How to Recycle Mobile Phones

Take your old phones to a collection point. There are over 4,500 collection points Australia wide including:

- △ Nokia Care and Motorola ServiceOne Centres
- △ Mobile Phone Retailers - Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, 3 Mobile, Virgin Mobile, Crazy Johns, Fone Zone, Allphones, Dick Smiths and Harvey Norman
- △ Cartridge World stores and Battery World stores
- △ Officeworks
- △ Salvo stores
- △ Over 300 local councils
- △ participating Sydney Credit Union branches

Alternatively you can recycle by post in the following ways:

- △ Free recycling satchels are now available from participating Australia Post outlets nationwide.
- △ You can download a reply-paid mailing label from the MobileMuster website and use your own satchel.

More Information

Further information and reply-paid mailing labels are available from the MobileMuster website at:

<http://www.mobilemuster.com.au>

Packaging Stewardship Forum of the Australian Food and Grocery Council

Away from home recycling systems reaching 1.14 billion

Over the past 2 years, over 7,500 new away from home recycling systems have been installed nationally by the Packaging Stewardship Forum of the Australian Food and Grocery Council. The Forum is a voluntary industry product stewardship initiative on behalf of Australia's largest beverage companies and their packaging suppliers. New systems have been installed at more than 350 shopping centres, airports and rail stations, stadia and entertainment venues, racecourses, raceways and higher education institutions nationally which are now diverting more than 4,550 tonnes of predominantly plastic bottles and aluminium cans from landfill annually. That's equivalent to more than 185 million small plastic (PET) bottles.

Major away from home recycling installations include:

- Qantas and Virgin Terminals in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth and a further 12 regional airports, receiving 92% of passenger visits annually
- Queensland Theme Parks - Movie World, Wet N Wild, Dreamworld, Seaworld and Currumbin Bird and Wildlife Sanctuary
- Westfield Shopping Centres - all 36 centres nationally
- Lend Lease Shopping Centres - all 9 centre nationally
- Mirvac Shopping Centres - 10 centres nationally
- GPT Shopping Centres - 13 centres nationally
- Metro Trains (Melbourne) - all 100 host and premium stations, with rollout soon to be completed across all of the metropolitan train network
- Queensland Rail - 40 stations across the metropolitan train network
- Centennial Parklands (Sydney)
- Sydney Opera House and Sydney Theatre Company
- Sporting stadia including the WACA, the GABBA, Suncorp, Patersons (former Subiaco Oval), Bellerive Oval, Aurora and Carrerra
- Melbourne Exhibition Centre, Burswood Casino and The Dome, Sidney Myer Music Bowl, Brisbane Racing Club, Brisbane Entertainment Centre, Exhibition Park in Canberra, Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre, Symmonds Plains and Baskerville Raceways in Tasmania.
- 92 higher education institutions, including multiple campuses, covering 53% of students and staff.

These and other away from home recycling projects are now providing recycling opportunities to more than 1.14 billion visitors to venues annually. New recycling systems are also currently being rolled out into KFC stand-alone restaurants and to 26 Colonial shopping centres nationally. The PSF has a plan to achieve best practice recycling rates for beverage containers of 70% by 2016 and 80% by 2021. This will mean a continued focus on putting in place new recycling systems in major venues in both metropolitan and regional areas, working in partnership with like minded councils to expand recycling services into local sporting grounds, venues and parks, and boosting glass recycling rates from pubs and clubs and kerbside to use the glass back into new glass bottles, or in alternative markets.

To find out more, see www.afgc.org.au/psf.

[The Australian Green Infrastructure Council](#)

It is an exciting and busy time for AGIC as we continue to both build the organisation and ready the national sustainability rating tool for infrastructure in preparation for its national launch officiated by Minister Albanese in Parliament House Canberra on February 29th 2012. The launch of the scheme is timely, as all levels of Australian Government commit to a record Investment in the rebuilding and upgrading of the nations infrastructure. Australia's national engineering construction investment is targeted at \$20-30 billion per year until 2013/14 in a business climate facing many challenges. Skill shortages along with inflated wages and salaries resulting from the mining and energy boom, coupled with unprecedented population growth pressures, urban congestion and the repair of infrastructure damage from recent extreme weather events represent all the investment programs competing for available funds and driving the need for infrastructure projects. The national infrastructure challenge takes on a much more sobering perspective when the investment of over \$600 billion to upgrade Australia's aging assets was identified by Engineers Australia Infrastructure Report Card. Regional Councils impacted by this years extreme flood event also face huge new challenges with flood damage estimates a factor of 2-3 times their annual infrastructure budget in some regions.

While the rating scheme will not address all these challenges, it will provide a robust national sustainability assessment framework for infrastructure. The application of the Rating Tool on these new projects and existing asset upgrades, while driving innovation in the delivery, will also contribute to improved governance. Potential benefits are more equitable tender assessment, improved risk assessment and mitigation, reduction in waste, encouragement of local procurement and capacity building of local employees, and the framework to platform cultural change and continuous improvement programs. It is great to have members structuring tenders and projects around the schemes framework in anticipation of its release. It is being increasingly demonstrated that projects based on sustainability criteria and objectives are providing excellent returns on investment. Infrastructure covered by the scheme includes Australia's national, roads, railways, air and seaports and transmission grids (Pipes, poles and wires), water infrastructure and major civil head works on power stations / mines. Market testing of the tool on 12 projects spread nationally was completed in December. Further data is available on the AGIC website <http://www.agic.net.au>

Advertisement

2012 National Environmental Grants Guide Now Available

Toowoomba based environmental consultancy, Yarramine Environmental this week made available for purchase the 2012 edition of its National Environmental Grants Guide - an annual directory of environmental grant and funding opportunities from around Australia. Hot off the press, the directory lists grant and funding opportunities available from the Australian and State Governments, corporate giving programs as well as the major Australian philanthropic funds and trusts. The handy glove box sized (A5) Guide will prove to be a convenient resource for community environment and Landcare groups as well as Regional NRM Bodies, Councils and others when seeking funds to assist with a variety of their environmental improvement and natural resource management projects. Designed to present grant information to readers in an easy to access manner, the Guide includes information on how much funding is available for each grant opportunity, how to apply and who is eligible. Website links are also provided along with useful contact details, where available, to help readers obtain further information. A sample listing from the 2012 edition - which contains over 200 listings - as well as a mail/fax order form is available for download from the consultancy's website - www.yarramine.com.au. Guides cost \$39.95 each and this includes postage and handling. For general information about Yarramine Environmental's Grants Guide please contact Amanda Kimball on (07) 4638 2442 or at grantsguide@yarramine.com.au

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Queensland News

Condamine Alliance's exciting new environmental project Treehenge.com.au

Condamine Alliance is an environmental Charity that aims to protect and preserve for future generations the land, water and native plants and wildlife of the Condamine catchment. Condamine Alliance is a Non Government Organisation that has Government sponsorship through "Caring for our Country" on a Federal level and "Q2 Coasts and Country" State level. Our mission as a Natural Resource Management organisation, that has been established for a decade is to manage the country's natural resources.

[Treehenge](http://Treehenge.com.au) is creating something special, imagine a special place, where lives and memories entwine. [Treehenge](http://Treehenge.com.au) is a forest of remembrance and regeneration, a living symbol of land restoration that is large enough to be seen from space. It celebrates life, but most of all, it supports it. We're taking a tired, degraded region, and breathing life into it again, one tree at a time, attracting native plants and animals back to the area. You can become a living part of the henge by dedicating a native tree in honour of a special person, pet or momentous occasion, such as a birthday, wedding or in memory of a loved one who has passed on. By being part of [Treehenge](http://Treehenge.com.au) you'll leave a lasting memory that will help a region grow, a gift of life that gives back more and more each year. We invite you to be part of it.

[The Environmental Defenders Office \(Qld\) Inc.](http://www.edo.org.au) is a non-profit, non-government community legal centre working in the area of public interest planning and environment law. It was established in 1989 and is part of a national network of EDOs working to protect the environment.

The EDO (Qld) advises and acts for individuals, community groups and conservation groups. It also takes an active role in environmental law reform and policy formation and contributes as a stakeholder in government consultation processes. The Office runs education programs designed to help build the community's skills and knowledge in order to empower citizens and to facilitate public participation in environmental decision making. Other activities include the production of monthly bulletins, a wide range of information and fact sheets and the running of workshops in regional areas.

While the organisation receives base funding from the Commonwealth and State Community Legal Service Funding Programs and Queensland EPA project funding, it relies on donations to carry out public interest legal work. The EDO (Qld) is driven and supported by its members. Members gain insight into complex environmental issues while helping to influence Queensland's environment and its future in a positive, constructive manner.

The EDO (Qld) website contains a wealth of information pertaining to environmental law. There are dozens of Information Sheets covering topics such as the Right to Information Act, Climate Change, Coal Seam Gas Exploration and Coastal Protection, to name just a few. In addition there is a range of Fact Sheets covering Sustainable Planning Law. The site also has links to court, government and non-government websites dealing with environmental issues. A membership application form is available for those who would like to join the organisation.

For further information, contact the EDO (Qld) at:

30 Hardgrave Road, West End Qld 4101

Phone: **07 3211 4466**; Fax: **07 3211 4655**

Email: edoqld@edo.org.au; Website: <http://www.edo.org.au/edoqld/>

National News



"The "One Person Can..." project was launched in December 2011 as a means of giving a high degree of visibility to the safe-climate actions all sorts of people already take. It is not affiliated with any particular environmental group or political party. It is for everyone. The project began as one person's attempt to weaken the psychological barriers to tackling climate change effectively, but all sorts of people have helped shape this project by contributing suggestions and feedback. People are much more likely to take safe-climate actions if they can see that millions of others are already taking action. We know one person's actions alone will not solve climate change, and we might think our own actions are wasted if we don't see others also taking action, but how many people know what actions *you* take? Actions like switching off standby power, growing your own vegies, and taking short showers are close to invisible unless you tell people you do those things! We know that 1.25 million

Australian households (around 3 million people) either have solar PV or buy Green Power, because figures for those actions are publicly available. However, we don't yet have figures for the less expensive and less visible climate-friendly actions many people take. The "One Person Can ..." website provides mechanisms to make everyone's climate-friendly actions visible. There is a 10-minute survey of 40 typical actions, and graphs showing the results for Australia as a whole and for all local government areas, federal and state electorates, and the groups who choose to participate. These results are published as widely as possible so that everyone can see how many others are also taking action. Ideally every householder would be invited to take the survey, and they and everyone else would see updates of the 'results so far' from time to time. One Person Can relies heavily on word-of-mouth publicity and social media, but it also seeks the support of organisations that have established channels of communication that reach large numbers of people. We are asking local councils and shires to help by inviting local householders to take the survey, and then by publicising their local result graphs. We are asking Federal and State MPs to include information about the survey and its results in the newsletters they send to all residents of their electorates. We are inviting groups (employee groups, sporting associations, professional associations, community groups, school communities, etc.) to be listed as participating groups. They ask their members to take the survey and have separate result graphs showing the actions taken by their members. It's very early days yet, but already a few local councils and MPs have agreed to help, and two employee groups have been listed. By Christmas we had recorded the actions of 500 people, but that barely scratches the surface. Please visit the website at <http://www.onepersoncan.org> and take the survey yourself so that YOUR actions can be added to the graphs and help inspire others!"

ACT bag ban begins

A law banning single use plastic bags in the ACT came into effect in the first week of November. The ban applies to single use, disposable plastic bags under 35 microns in thickness.

World Environment Day 2012

Happy New Year and welcome to the 2012 celebrations for World Environment Day. In order to enable you to start planning your activities for 5 June 2012 early, we have prepared all the [information materials](#) you will need. This year's theme - **Green Economy: Does it include you?** - underpins the concept of an economy that is **low carbon, resource efficient** and **socially inclusive**. The theme also supports one of the main objectives of the Rio+20 Summit, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012. The question in this year's theme prompts you to [find out more](#) about the Green Economy and assess

whether, in your country, you are being included in it. This is important, because in 2012 global leaders will once again meet to decide and agree on your future, and you will want to be a part of this.

World Environment Day, as always, provides a platform for you to join in these discussions and, together with the collective power of other individuals around the world, make every positive action you take for the environment count. The global World Environment Day [host country](#) for 2012 is Brazil, where 20 years ago, for the first time, the largest number of global leaders assembled together to decide on a sustainable future. [Learn more](#) from our website! [Download](#) the World Environment Day logo, t-shirt, paper cup and water bottle designs to include in your promotional materials. [Mobilise participation in your area!](#) Like our Facebook page! [Follow us](#) on Twitter! Join us in celebrating World Environment Day! Every year. Everywhere. Everyone.

Climate Change - Global Action - Facts and Fiction

The current political debate regarding the "Carbon Tax" together with the ongoing debate regarding the reality or severity of Climate Change has left many people confused and uncertain. There are some who believe that Climate Change is not occurring at all while others believe that the problem is being exaggerated. One of the main arguments put forward against the "Carbon Tax" is that other countries have not implemented similar measures and that as a consequence Australian industries will become uncompetitive in global markets because of this additional tax. Many people feel that Australia is rushing to lead the way in this area and would prefer to wait and see what action is taken by other developed countries before deciding what should be done here.

The best way to address these concerns and this confusion is to find information from independent, unbiased sources. Unfortunately it can be difficult to find such sources amongst the thousands of organizations and commentators bombarding us with facts, reports and opinions.

An excellent source of information is the Australian Government Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. A section of their website is devoted to *Global action - facts and fiction*, and provides a wealth of information covering Climate Change, Carbon Pricing and details of actions being taken in many countries around the world to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Information on this website makes it clear that Climate Change is real, that Australia is one of the worst offenders in the emission of greenhouse gases and that Australia is not alone in tackling the problem.

Of particular interest in the current political debate are the following Fact Sheets:

- *Climate Change: Countries Acting Now*
- *International Pledges on Climate Change Action: The Future*
- *Australia: Part of the Climate Problem - Part of the Solution*

Other resources on the site include a list of Frequently Asked Questions, details of Australia's greenhouse gas emission levels and a summary of emission trading schemes in other countries.

The Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency website is at:

www.climatechange.gov.au

The section of this site dealing with *Global action - Facts and fiction* is at:

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/international/global-action-facts-and-fiction.aspx>

World News

[Recycling could create 1.5m US jobs](#)

A new report predicts that 1.5 million jobs could be created in the US by 2030 if the nation increased its recycling diversion rate to 75%. The report, titled "More Jobs, Less Pollution: Growing the Recycling Economy in the U.S.", was prepared by the Tellus Institute with Sound Resource Management.

[Scotland looks to build on a record year for renewable energy](#)

Scotland's Energy Minister Fergus Ewing has called on the renewable energy industry to build on the successes of 2011. Two weeks after Department for Energy and Climate Change figures were released which showed 2011 is on track to be the best year ever for renewable energy in Scotland, with 94 per cent of 2010's entire output generated in the first three quarters alone, Mr Ewing said he was determined to make 2012 an even better year.

[The proof is in the heating - solar's shining success story](#)

Something extraordinary happened to the German national power grid during the pleasantly mild early weeks of last summer. Not only did the country's almost 1 million, mainly rooftop (photovoltaic) solar panels pump 13.2 gigawatts into the grid - the equivalent output of up to a dozen nuclear power plants, or about 40 per cent of the highest-ever demand in Australia's national electricity market - but they did so at exactly the right time.

[A Milestone Birthday for Planet Earth](#)

Milestone birthdays are opportunities to take stock of our family, health and financial situation. So how is Planet Earth doing 20 years after the historic UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro? The planet's economic output has more than doubled since 1992, writes Peter Bosshard.

[Why Biodiversity Loss Deserves as Much Attention as Climate Change](#)

Biodiversity loss is probably a challenge that is often ignored as climate change looms. Currently the world is losing species at a rate that is 100 to 1000 times faster than the natural extinction rate, further, it is currently seeing the sixth mass extinction. The previous mass extinction occurred 65 million years ago, and was caused by ecosystem changes, changes in atmospheric chemistry, impacts of asteroids and volcanoes. For the first time in history, the current extinction is caused by the competition for resources between a single species Homo sapiens and all others. A recent conference arranged by the Danish Ministry of Environment in the University of Copenhagen, provided an opportunity to influence the process of organizing a UN Biodiversity Panel. More than 100 scientists and decision makers from the EU countries gathered and came to the conclusion that drastic measures should be taken to decelerate current loss of biodiversity.

[Nitrogen pollution an increasing problem globally.](#)

The invention of nitrogen-based fertilizer in 1909 helped fuel a global agricultural boom, and it's been crucial in feeding a growing population ever since. But a growing number of scientists say that boon to our food supply has come at a big cost — massive, nitrogen-based pollution.

[Gas no good to bridge coal and renewables, says study](#)

The amount of greenhouse gases released by unconventional gas drilling 'exceeds that of oil or coal', an American study says in contradiction of some claims made by Australia's growing coal-seam gas industry.

[Spaceship Earth: A new view of environmentalism.](#)

'Spaceship Earth.' Sure, it's an antiquated metaphor. It's also an increasingly apt way to discuss a planet with 7 billion people, a global economy, a World Wide Web, climate change, exotic organisms running amok and all sorts of resource shortages and ecological challenges.

Resources

Web Resources:

[NEW ONLINE PUBLICATION: Ticking the Box: Flaws in the Environmental Assessment of Coal Seam Gas Exploration Activities](#)

Produced by the Environmental Defenders Office

The coal seam gas (CSG) industry in NSW is expanding rapidly. At the same time, the community is becoming increasingly concerned that the legal regime that regulates the exploration and extraction of coal seam gas does not ensure a thorough environmental assessment of such activities.

This publication argues that the legal process applying to CSG exploration lacks independence and rigour in terms of the assessment of potential environmental impacts. As a result, the Reviews of Environmental Factors (REFs) provided to comply with this process are of poor quality, and often constitute a fairly generic lists of impacts. The publication outlines the nature of the problem and illustrates, through some case studies, the deficiencies in the legal process. In light of these problems, legal reform to the assessment of CSG exploration is necessary. To download a free copy, please go to: http://www.edo.org.au/edonsw/site/pdf/pubs/ticking_the_box.pdf

[Sustainable Events Planner](#)

The Sustainable Events Planner aims to assist event organisers and their visitors to make sustainability the main event.

Bridging the Emissions Gap: A UNEP Synthesis Report

The Bridging the Gap: An Assessment is a follow-on to the UNEP 2010 report Emissions Gap: A Preliminary Assessment. It explains to decision-makers and stakeholders the range of potential options available to close the emissions gap in 2020. It includes a package of ideas beginning with the big picture from the modeling community, then focusing on opportunities to reduce emissions from international sources of emissions, and finally highlighting current national efforts in important emitter countries. PDF Available at: [Bridging the Emissions Gap: A UNEP](#)

Book Reviews:

[Climate Change, Assets and Food Security in Southern African Cities](#)

Edited by Bruce Frayne, University of Waterloo, Canada, Caroline Moser, University of Manchester, UK and Gina Ziervogel, University of Cape Town, South Africa

There is overwhelming evidence that the climate is changing. It is the poorest countries and people who are the most vulnerable to this threat and who will suffer the most. This book shows how increasing urbanization and growing poverty levels mean that it is imperative to ask how climate change might impact on asset accumulation and food security for the urban poor. It demonstrates how these three, often separate foci, can be brought together to frame a holistic urban adaptation approach. The insights which this book presents can be used to understand other urban centres in low and middle-income countries outside of this region and around the world.

[Read more about the book>>](#)

[Climate Change Mitigation and Agriculture](#)

Edited by Eva Wollenberg, University of Vermont, USA, Maja-Liisa Tapio-Bistrom, Mitigation of Climate Change in Agriculture, Maryanne Grieg-Gran, International Institute for Environment and Development, London, UK and Alison Nihart, University of Vermont, USA

This book reviews the state of agricultural climate change mitigation globally, with a focus on identifying the feasibility, opportunities and challenges for achieving mitigation among smallholder farmers. The purpose is ultimately to accelerate efforts towards mitigating land-based climate change. While much attention has been focused on forestry for its reputed cost-effectiveness, the

agricultural sector contributes about 10-12% of emissions and has a large technical and economic potential for reducing greenhouse gases. The volume presents a synthesis of current knowledge and research activities on this emerging subject. [Read more about the book >>](#)

[Seasonality, Rural Livelihoods and Development](#)

*Edited by **Stephen Devereux**, Institute of Development, University of Sussex, UK, **Rachel Sabates-Wheeler**, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK and **Richard Longhurst**, Institute of Development, University of Sussex, UK*

*Foreword by **Robert Chambers**, Institute of Development, University of Sussex, UK*

Seasonality is a severe constraint to sustainable rural livelihoods, and a driver of poverty and hunger, particularly in the tropics. Many poor people in developing countries are ill equipped to cope with seasonal variations which can lead to drought or flood and consequences for agriculture, employment, food supply and the spread of disease. This book is a systematic study of seasonality for over 20 years, and it aims to revive academic interest and policy awareness of this crucial but neglected issue. Thematic chapters explore recent shifts with profound implications for seasonality, including climate change, HIV/AIDS, and social protection. Case study chapters explore seasonal dimensions of livelihoods in Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi), Asia (Bangladesh, China, India), and Latin America (Peru). The book provides innovative tools for monitoring seasonality, which should enable more appropriate responses and it is valuable to researchers, professionals and policy makers.

[Read more about the book>>](#)

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2012 National Environmental Grants Guide Now Available

Toowoomba based environmental consultancy, Yarramine Environmental this week made available for purchase the 2012 edition of its National Environmental Grants Guide - an annual directory of environmental grant and funding opportunities from around Australia. Hot off the press, the directory lists grant and funding opportunities available from the Australian and State Governments, corporate giving programs as well as the major Australian philanthropic funds and trusts. The handy glove box sized (A5) Guide will prove to be a convenient resource for community environment and Landcare groups as well as Regional NRM Bodies, Councils and others when seeking funds to assist with a variety of their environmental improvement and natural resource management projects. Designed to present grant information to readers in an easy to access manner, the Guide includes information on how much funding is available for each grant opportunity, how to apply and who is eligible. Website links are also provided along with useful contact details, where available, to help readers obtain further information. A sample listing from the 2012 edition - which contains over 200 listings - as well as a mail/fax order form is available for download from the consultancy's website - www.yarramine.com.au. Guides cost \$39.95 each and this includes postage and handling. For general information about Yarramine Environmental's Grants Guide please contact Amanda Kimball on (07) 4638 2442 or at grantsguide@yarramine.com.au

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