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A Rocha Australia *ENEWS*

Summer 2017

We hope you have been able to take time out over summer to enjoy some special parts of Australia. At A Rocha Australia we've also enjoyed a quieter time but as you'll see when you read on, things have been happening, and many more behind the scenes (including the drafting of a Strategic Plan, 2017–21). We look forward to seeing God at work in 2017. Our next board meeting and Annual General Meeting will be via skype on Thursday 2nd March. All members have been notified. Supporters who would like to become members can follow the steps outlined on our website: <http://australia.arocha.org/get-involved/membership/>

More A Rocha Australia news and 2017 happenings will be shared after these meetings.



Victorian catch-up

Victorian members and supporters of A Rocha Australia enjoyed a pre-Christmas picnic at Woodlands Historic Reserve near Melbourne in December.

After an enjoyable lunch and lively discussion about biodiversity conservation and A Rocha, we spent time walking around the reserve discussing ecology and birdwatching, and some even scaled a river red gum for a closer view of its inhabitants.

Philip Hughes, director – VIC



Update from our President



Thanks be to God who has graciously enabled A Rocha Australia to come into existence and provided a splendid team of His people to take it forward!

I wish to acknowledge the entirely voluntary, considerable efforts of the directors and officeholders in governing and running our organisation over the past year. Special thanks to Ruth Colman and Wendy Hoare who have served in key roles. Tahlee Ministries Inc. has provided important administrative support. All ARA members and supporters are to be congratulated for their activities to promote creation care locally.

With formal collaboration established or developing between ARA and Christian organisations, to develop on-ground projects for nature conservation, we are underway.

Over the coming year we will explore ways for ARA members and friends to directly contribute to or conduct projects. This will likely happen through growth and maturation of ARA networks in several urban centres around Australia. Conferences related to creation care are being considered for later this year and 2018.

Above all, because so many people in the scientific and wider community see only a dark future, we should promote the hope for our world that can be found in Jesus Christ.

A Rocha Australia family to date:
8 directors
37 members
254 mailing list supporters
21 Facebook followers

Roger Jaensch
President (Chair, board of directors – QLD)

a waterhole, Callide River, QLD



The Australia Institute climate change speaking tour

It's not everyday you meet someone who took a stand on climate change that cost him his job as a US Congressman. And yet, that is what Bob Inglis did as six-term Republican Congressman from deep-red South Carolina when he listened to the science on climate change.

He did a 180 degrees on climate, switching from thinking climate change was a hoax and the preserve of the Left, to leading the charge for conservative Republicans to take a lead on climate action. He visited Antarctica and the Great Barrier Reef. He listened to family and researchers.

And, despite knowing the backlash he faced from the Republican Party, he tabled a bill in the Congress for a cap-and-trade system on carbon. And it cost him his seat. He subsequently lost the Republican primary in 2010 to a Tea Party candidate, partly for his stance on climate change and opposition to off-shore oil drilling.

As I sit across from him and his wife Mary Anne at a cafe in Sydney's Circular Quay, I think 'Wow, this guy has really paid a price as a politician for taking seriously God's command in Genesis 2:15 to use and take care of the land". And then Mary Anne talks about her involvement with A Rocha hosting Creation Care kids clubs on their family farm in South Carolina where young people get to learn about God from the Bible while experiencing His creation.

Bob is on a speaking tour around Australian cities hosted by The Australia Institute, including talking with



conservative politicians about how the Right can use market mechanisms such as cap-and-trade systems to cut carbon pollution.

Bob and Mary Anne follow Jesus Christ, and are committed to action on climate change based on politically and economically conservative principles such as free enterprise, small government, accountability and innovation. It's a message Australian conservative politicians and businesses need to hear.

Interested? Learn more at RepublicEn (<http://www.republicen.org/>). Read more about Bob Inglis' speaking tour and what motivates him to take action for God's climate: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-22/a-republican-case-for-climate-action-in-the-trump-era/8275120>

Thanks Mary Anne and Bob, I really enjoyed meeting you both and encouraging you in your work. And a big thanks to A Rocha Co-Founders Peter and Miranda Harris who put them in contact with A Rocha Australia.

Stuart Blanch, director – NSW

Tahlee Centre for Creation Care Project Report

Since the last newsletter update there have a number of interesting developments:

- We welcomed students from Redcliffe College who were in Australia for a masters study program. They were challenged about the biblical basis for Creation Care and what that means for us as Christians. Although their visit was short, it was impacting and hopefully the start of many more education groups to Tahlee to learn about Creation Care.
- We have extended our partnership with the local council and they are assisting with the baseline biodiversity study through the installation of motion sensing cameras around the property. This will be very beneficial for the fauna side of our survey as most of the mammals on the property are nocturnal and not always easy to spot at night. In the next update we hope to have lots of exciting news to share.
- The bird surveys have continued and over 100 surveys have been recorded. 146 different bird species have been observed including 6 listed as vulnerable or higher on state or federal endangered species lists. We conducted our first night survey in January with the assistance of Roger Jaensch and Philip Hughes. We are looking forward to an upcoming visit by the local bird observers club in early March. Last year they observed 66 species when they visited, and hoping for a similar number this time.
- Tim Curry a 3rd year student from Deakin University has begun our Koala project. He has done a literature search, connected with the Save our Species coordinator, has begun scats and scratches surveys and has identified feed trees. No koalas have been observed at this stage but he has collected anecdotal accounts of past sightings.
- A neighbouring property was visited to look at environmental values and potential for restoration activities. A discussion paper has been detailed for the Board.

John Anderson, director – NSW



New camp for NSW

Scripture Union celebrates 150 years in 2017. A new Creation Care camp will be fledged in April near Tamworth, NSW.

A Rocha director Jen Schabel will be one of the leaders:



**19-22 APRIL 2017
DUNGOWAN**



This is the first year for Creation Care Camp and it is shaping up to be a great time of fun, friendship and learning together from God's Word.

We will be staying on a country property near Tamworth where we will learn about permaculture, help to garden, cook what we harvest, and go on bushwalks.

Over three days we will live in a Christian community and explore how we can glorify God by caring for what he has created. If you like outdoor work, sleeping in tents and growing in your faith then come on a new adventure with us!

WHO
For boys and girls in years 7-12

WHERE
"Wyndhaven", Dungowan

WHEN
19-22 April 2017

COST
\$110

FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER
go to www.sunsw.org.au/creationcarecamp

Further discussions at the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary



Some South Australian A Rocha members and supporters returned to the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary recently. They visited St Kilda on the largest tidal estuary of Gulf St Vincent, home to over 200 bird species and a sanctuary for Bottlenose dolphins, to look for opportunities to start an A Rocha project.

They visited a storm-damaged mangrove boardwalk built in 1984 and an interpretative centre opened in 1995. Funding and maintenance difficulties have led to these valuable educational facilities being closed to the public by the local Council. There may be potential for A Rocha to work in partnership with The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources and possibly other groups to help these facilities to be reopened.



They also visited the Garland lily area in the Saltfields (5kms from St Kilda). Garland Lilies were once common in large colonies in grassy areas, in particular the plain on which the city of Adelaide now stands. Due to urbanisation and grazing, the Garland Lily is now rare. There may be potential for A Rocha to engage in on-ground conservation and rehabilitation of native plants and wildlife habitat in this area.

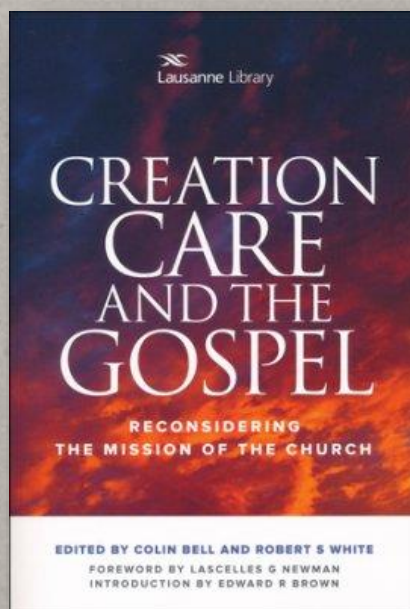


While it is early days and both of these possible projects need further investigation and discussion by the board and local members, it is exciting to see what opportunities exist.

– excerpts of a detailed report by Sally Shaw – director, SA

Adelaide book launch

The Lausanne book *Creation Care and the Gospel* was launched at Tabor Adelaide on 21st February. Contributor Mick Pope from Melbourne (on left) spoke about Creation Care and Mission. Graham Buxton (on right) gave a short talk to launch the book. Contributor Sally Shaw (middle) and 35 people came to the launch.



From: <http://lausanne.christianbook.com>:

This book collects the work of biblical scholars, theologians, biologists, environmental researchers, and community organizers who met at "The Global Consultation on Creation Care and the Gospel" in Jamaica in 2012. Participants from 23 countries as diverse as Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, and Canada gathered for five days to pray, talk, and reflect on the state of the planet--the home in which we live--and on the role and ministry of the church in caring for God's creation.

The book contains biblical and theological affirmations from well-respected scholars and teachers, reminding us that caring for creation is central to the Christian faith. It is an integral part of our mission, an expression of our worship of God, and a matter of great joy and hope.



A Rocha Australia now on Facebook

Thanks to director Anna Radkovic we now have a Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/ARochaAustralia>

Our aim is to make A Rocha known to a greater audience and to provide weekly prayer points and news snippets from Australia and overseas. While social media won't be the main way we'll communicate, we hope that it will connect more people with us.



Receiving A Rocha International ENews

As the A Rocha family in Australia gets bigger and print runs of the International Newsletters and the Annual Review will now be limited, we'd encourage you to sign up to receive the monthly updates electronically: <http://www.arocha.org/en/enews/>
We thank Ruth Colman for her commitment over many years to mailing ARI publications to supporters across Australia.

