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# A Rocha Australia *ENEWS*

Winter 2017



*welcome*  
to our newest members!

Capacity to support our partners in their creation care activities and to conduct our own nature conservation projects is presently hampered by lack of employed staff. Experience from within the global A Rocha family has shown that appointment of a 'national director' has often been the catalyst for transition from ideas to action. Accordingly, the board of A Rocha Australia recently agreed to start fund-raising for an executive officer position and comprehensively documented the duties, selection criteria

and terms of employment. A sub-group of the board has embarked on fundraising by applying a suite of approaches, tried and tested as well as innovative. One avenue will depend on reaching and maintaining a threshold number of voting members, which we are close to achieving. I encourage existing financial members to discuss membership of ARA with potential applicants among friends, family and colleagues as this will contribute to advancement of creation care in our country.

<http://australia.arocha.org/get-involved/membership/>

We hope to see many of you at 'The Environment and the Gospel' conference in Melbourne on 14 October.

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



Red-backed Fairy-wren  
near Brisbane, QLD



Striated Heron  
Brisbane River, QLD

## Working together for Creation Care in Australia

as part of a worldwide Christian conservation network



Christian Conservation



Cross-cultural



<http://australia.arocha.org>

a new A Rocha Australia banner

# Does God care about my Keep Cup?

You've got a keep cup, you're thinking about putting a compost bin out the back and your metro card is loaded up for when you take the tram to work instead of driving. You're doing your bit for the environment, right?

But is caring for the environment really an issue for Christians? Is it something my Church should care about? Does God care about the environment? Does God care if I care about it?

**A Rocha Australia, a Christian conservation organisation passionate about caring for God's creation, invites you to join them in discussing these questions and learning practical applications of loving God by loving his world.**

**Come and hear why Christians should care about the environment.**

## Learn

New insights, ideas and skills about how you can care for God's world.

## See

What A Rocha is doing for God's creation in Australia and across the world.

## Hear

Stories of how a range of people - from climate scientists, to ecological researchers, to missionaries, to inner city hipsters - have responded to the gospel by caring for our planet.



REGISTER ONLINE  
OR PAY ON THE DAY

9:30 - 3:30pm

14th October 2017

616 Melbourne Road,  
Spotswood 3015

AUSTRALIA  
**A ROCHA**  
Conservation and Hope

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com>

## Updates from Tahlee, NSW

Since the last update, there have been a number of interesting developments at the Tahlee Centre for Creation Care.

The highlight has been the commencement of a Koala research program which has resulted in a koala being discovered at Tahlee. Tim Currie, a final year Environmental Science student from Deakin University conducted a lot of groundwork to establish the research program. Please pray for this program to continue and for more koalas to be discovered.



We were excited to welcome 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.



*Photo by Alan Stuart*

Although their visit was short, it was impactful 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 to assist with the baseline biodiversity study through the installation of motion sensing cameras around the property, and looking at better management of the plants onsite.

The bird surveys have continued and over 100 surveys have been recorded on site. From these surveys over 150 different bird species have been recorded. Including 11 birds listed as vulnerable or higher on state or federal endangered species lists. We conducted our first night survey with the assistance of Roger Jaensch and Philip Hughes. A visit by the Hunter Bird Observers Club in early

March observed more than 60 different species. 77 species were spotted in a five hour period on 20 August, including seven threatened species: Osprey, Varied Sittella, Little Lorikeet, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Pied and Sooty Oystercatcher and Eastern Curlew. This is one of Tahlee Centre for Creation Care's growing partnerships. Please pray for these to expand and continue.

In March a weed control program commenced with the assistance of the local MidCoast Council. Several weed types were identified and have been or in the process of being removed. This has opened up space near our foreshore, and a restoration project has begun to re-establish native vegetation in this area to attract native fauna, particularly koalas and native birds. We are partnering with the Wetlands Centre to help grow some of the trees.

**John Anderson**  
**Director, NSW**



*Osprey, by Peter Weinstock*

# South Australian gathering at Crafers

A brave group of people overcame wet, cold and windy conditions to attend this gathering on 6 August! Here are some of the topics we discussed:

- Sally shared about her restoration work on council land adjoining their property. The remarkable transformation has been enjoyable and helped her learn a lot about God's amazing creation.



2010 – broom, gorse and blackberry two metres high!

2017 transformation!

- We compared difficulties we've experienced in sharing the importance of caring for God's creation with fellow Christians – most respond with disinterest. We agreed that generally we don't have this difficulty with non-Christians!
- One way to encourage churches could be through Five Leaf Eco Awards started by Jessica Morthorpe see <https://fiveleafecoawards.org/> . This is a gentle approach to encouraging churches to consider creation care for their church congregation.
- Another way would be to encourage church members to attend the Anglican Care Creation Network 1–3pm Thurs 31 August at the Parish of St Mary's. The visit will involve looking at the Picket Fence community garden, lunch and then a short forum on ecotheology: [http://anglicanparishofstmarys.com.au/wp/?page\\_id=1504](http://anglicanparishofstmarys.com.au/wp/?page_id=1504)
- There is an upcoming Living Smart course – to encourage sustainable living and is run by Christy Spiers, a Christian who works with the Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges – [http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidemtlofyranges/get-involved/urban-sustainability/Living\\_Smart](http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidemtlofyranges/get-involved/urban-sustainability/Living_Smart)
- Sally is doing a Master of Ministry and is looking at designing an ecotheological experiential type of curriculum for evangelical churches. She is keen to visit church groups. Please contact her if you're interested in having her visit: 0418154195



**Sally Shaw**  
Director, SA

# Lausanne / World Evangelical Alliance Creation Care Consultation – East Asia Conference

The Lausanne Movement began in July 1974 when 2,400 leaders from 150 nations gathered in Lausanne Switzerland at the invitation of Billy Graham and John Stott for the first international congress on World Evangelisation. The purpose was to encourage and network evangelical leaders from around the world into a global movement. Creation Care became one of the 37 established issue groups.

The L/WEA Global campaign for Creation Care and the Gospel aims to establish and strengthen Evangelical Creation Care movements at the national level around the world, seeing Creation Care movements established in thirty countries and for Creation Care to become a mainstream part of the Church and mission.

The L/WEA East Asia Regional Conference on Creation Care and the Gospel was held in Taiwan in July 2017. Around 120 people attended, including theologians, scientists, missionaries and Creation Care practitioners from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Mongolia, Philippines, Mainland China, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea. Key note speaker was Professor Dr. Richard Bauckham, St. Andrews University College Cambridge UK.

I attended this conference to guide preparations to organise and host the South Pacific regional conference at Tahlee, 23– 27 April 2018. This conference will draw delegates from Australia and New Zealand indigenous groups as well as from PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga and other smaller island nations. The valuable insights and learnings gained from Taiwan will greatly benefit our preparations for next April.

**John Anderson**  
Director, NSW



*Samuel Chiu (East Asia Projects Coordinator, A Rocha International), Dave Bookless (Director of Theology, A Rocha International) and John Anderson at the conference*

## Tree stands proud 80-year memory



Eric Hurn turns 90 in a few days time. He was just 10 when he planted this gum tree. "The teacher must have been pretty on the ball to have us kids planting these trees when many trees in the area were being ring-barked and cleared," said Eric. He was tasked with nurturing the tree which is still standing proud today, 80-years later. "Those occasional buckets of water," Eric described, "must have done the trick!" This tree-planting clearly inspired something in Eric. He went on to plant thousands of trees on his grazing and potato growing property

near Crookwell, NSW. He also hosts a planting day each year with local primary school students on a Traveling Stock Reserve. Eric accepted the 2013 NSW Individual Landcarer Awards at the NSW Landcare Awards. He is a member of a Crookwell church.

*Photo by Mark Selmes, story by Ruth Aveyard, 31 Jul 2017*

<http://www.crookwellgazette.com.au/story/4823118/tree-still-standing-after-80-years/>

## Three Reasons Why Evangelicals Stopped Advocating for the Environment – It's not theology, it's politics.



Andrew Spencer from Oklahoma Baptist University in USA has written an interesting article in which he asserts that the instinctive resistance of some conservative American Christians to environmental activism is often rooted in historical, political concerns rather than theological concerns.

Andrew provides an overview of what he considers to be the main concerns, and calls for the restoration of a Christian vision of the inherent value of creation.

He encourages conservative Christians to present a theological basis for concern for God's creation and the ethics that flow from that rather than making economic concerns or political associations the primary basis.

Given the strong influence of American culture on Australian society we recommend this article as an interesting read. Access the full article visit here:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/june-web-only/three-reasons-evangelicals-dont-advocate-for-environment.html?start=1>

