



© Fiona Pfennigwerth



# A Rocha Australia *ENEWS*

Spring 2017

## In this Issue:

- Highlights from the Melbourne conference
- Southern Highlands threatened species walk
- A personal story of Creation Care
- New book: A Climate of Justice
- Lausanne consultation at Tahlee
- Representing A Rocha in Nepal

While the board of A Rocha Australia is in regular email contact and has quarterly skype meetings, the best way to plan and pray over the work of A Rocha in Australia is to meet in person. We valued being able to do this at the national conference in Capernwray last year.

In meeting our aim of coming together at least once a year, this October we took a two-day retreat at the Kangaroo Ground property of Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia, before the Melbourne conference. Governance issues that we addressed included insurance, now purchased for public liability and volunteer personal accident, as well as risk management, safety training,

strategic directions and fundraising for the proposed executive officer position. Thematic topics that we discussed included eco-theology materials in the Australian context and avenues for working together with specific Christian organisations in Victoria to develop nature conservation or related property management projects.

The board is planning for upcoming events in which we can contribute to the wider A Rocha family, including the global Forum set for Portugal in June 2018. It has clarified the role and tasks for A Rocha Australia in co-hosting an upcoming conference on creation care, to involve Indigenous Australians and creation care practitioners from Pacific Island countries. This, the *Lausanne/World Evangelical Alliance Creation Care Consultation for the South Pacific* is scheduled on 23-27 April 2018 at the co-host Tahlee Ministries' property on Port Stephens, NSW. We hope it will catalyse new initiatives for nature conservation, led by Christians who are engaged with local communities.

**Roger Jaensch**  
President (Chair, ARA board of directors)



A Rocha board members meeting with Barry Borneman, CEO of Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia





Board directors out and about in Melbourne



This is apt! "A Rocha" means "The Rock" in Portuguese



# A Rocha Australia Conference

the Environment and the Gospel

9:30 - 3:30pm

14th October  
2017

616 Melbourne Road,  
Spotswood 3015

AUSTRALIA  
**A ROCHA**  
Conservation and Hope

## Highlights from the Melbourne conference:







Panel Interview



Greg Stone's talk

The October conference in Spotswood, Melbourne was a wonderfully encouraging day in a fantastic space with engaging presentations, enthusiastic attendees and excellent food!

Here are the titles of the main presentations

- Psalm 104 "The whole earth is full of Your creatures" – Mick Pope
- The A Rocha story – Stuart Blanch
- Panel Interview– with Sally Shaw, Greg Stone and Kathleen Withers
- A Climate of Confusion – Mick Pope
- Present Realities and Future Hope – A Christian Perspective on Biodiversity Conservation – Greg Stone
- Urban Sustainability – Tom Allen
- The Bible's answer to tricky questions – Sally Shaw
- Conservation research as a Christian – Andrew Bennett
- Taming the desert – Tony Rinaudo

You can check out the presenter bios and descriptions of their talks in the attached Melbourne Conference Program Booklet. Some talks are available to download here: <http://australia.arocha.org/news/melbourne-conference-photos-talks/>



Tom Allen's workshop



Tony Rinaudo's talk





Have a chat with A Rocha



Put your money where your mouth is

The afternoon involved these Action Groups:

- Making steps towards sustainability: Make your own beeswax wraps as a plastic-wrap substitute
- Put your money where your mouth is: Write to your bank or super about where they are investing so you can use your money as a force for good



- Enjoy what God has made: Join Philip Hughes on a birdwatching bushwalk
- Have a chat with A Rocha: Talk with some of the national directors of A Rocha Australia.

Many thanks to all involved, including director Anna for coordinating the day and Stefan for photos.



Make your own beeswax wraps



Port Phillip Bay birdwatching



# Southern Highlands threatened species walk

On a warm Saturday morning in late September around thirty people gathered at River Bend Reserve, Berrima NSW to learn about the local threatened species *Eucalyptus macarthurii* (Paddy's River Box), in association with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and Wingecarribee Shire Council.



A Rocha Australia hosted the event as a part of Threatened Species Day 2017. The two-hour walk along Wingecarribee River was led by Greg Stone representing A Rocha Australia.

Paddy's River Box is being protected in the Capernwray project on their property upstream.

## A Rocha Australia 2018 Photo Competition

A Rocha Australia is growing a continent-wide network of Christians who want to encourage Creation Care and biodiversity conservation. To help us in celebrating and sharing our vision across Australia we would love to get photo contributions of Australian fauna, flora and landscapes from our members and supporters. Will your photo make the cut for our 2018 calendar? Please use this online form to upload your submission:

<http://australia.arocha.org/news/a-rocha-australia-2018-photo-competition>



Jen Schabel

Philip Hughes

Jen Schabel



## Talking with Mick Pope about his new book

*We caught up with Mick Pope at the Melbourne conference and asked him to describe his new book. Here is what he said:*

"Some people think that justice is optional to the Christian faith, but in my new book I draw the direct connection between the Parable of the Good Samaritan and our need to act justly in this world. I look at this both in terms of the obvious point of the parable which is caring for people who are in need and restoring them back to health in various ways, whether it's foreign aid or getting people out of slavery, or dealing justly with refugees, but also the backstory of the parable, which is why were there bandits there in the first place, the waylaid person, and dealing with systemic evil. I also relate all of those issues to climate change. Some people may not be very comfortable with the idea of climate change but they are comfortable with justice issues. Well what about the fact that we think we can build a

connection between the Syrian refugee crisis and a long drought in the region? That people in India who lose their land to catastrophic flooding due to melting glaciers in the Himalayas and unseasonal very heavy monsoonal rains is due to global warming? Or that people are losing their homes in South Pacific or Oceania to rising sea levels? The whole point of this book is to view justice through the frame of loving your neighbour as yourself and loving God, and then seeing that there is a fundamental relationship between climate change and lots of things that Christians have traditionally cared about."

The Melbourne release was at the Justice Conference in October. The Sydney release will be at Paddington Anglican Church on Saturday 2 December. The book can be purchased at: <http://morningstarpublishing.net.au/product/a-climate-of-justice/>




Mick is a meteorologist and ecotheologian, with interests in science, creation care, and theology. He is Professor of Environmental Mission at Missional University, Adjunct Faculty at Eastern College, and a member of RASP, the Centre for Research in Religion and Social Policy at the University of Divinity. Mick has a number of published papers and book chapters in ecotheology, including *A Climate of Hope: Church and Mission in a Warming World* with Claire Dawson. He speaks regularly to churches and other groups on theology and its interaction with environmental mission, science, and ethics. Mick contributes regularly to *Ethos: EA Centre for Christianity and Society* publications [www.ethos.org.au](http://www.ethos.org.au) including his blog [ethos-environment.blogspot.com.au](http://ethos-environment.blogspot.com.au)



# A personal story of Creation Care: David King – Katoomba, NSW

To an ordinary person the idea of founding five Bushcare groups and keeping them sustained, year after year, with chocolate cakes and chai, through rain, hail and shine, while also juggling the demands of full time work and family, would seem a crazy task.

 Blue Mountains City Council added 3 new photos — with David King. October 27 at 2:47pm · 🌐

Local volunteer group in The Gully Katoomba – Garguree Swampcare – has won the prestigious state Indigenous Land Management Landcare Award, recognising the core indigenous ecological practise and philosophy of 'Connecting to Country'. This comes after the win of the regional award earlier this year.

Together they have transformed The Gully ecosystem by weeding, planting, bush regeneration, removing rubbish, brush matting and restoring it to its natural state.

At the core of the group is connecting to country, great healing and the learning and sharing of cultural knowledge.

#Congratulations



But David King, a Gundungurra man, is no ordinary person. David was recognized as the Blue Mountains 2015 Bushcare Legend of the Year. He has the sort of enthusiasm that makes everyone around him feel great. Over the past 15 years he has enthused many local volunteers in the task of restoring and caring for the Country he holds dear.

Garguree Swampcare volunteers – under David King's leadership – are restoring degraded swamp systems within 'The Gully', an Aboriginal Place managed in partnership between the traditional owners and Council. Thanks to years of hard work controlling weeds, planting and restoring creeklines and swamp areas, the Gully swamp systems are starting to come back to life. As the swamp recovers, the group is sharing the significance of The Gully and the cultural importance of swamps through cultural awareness workshops, walks and talks. And as the country heals, personal connections are also thriving. Through Garguree Swampcare people from across the Aboriginal, local and broader community have formed personal, enduring relationships as they work together Caring for Country.

Watch this story: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIDtzDeVx0w>

Now David is looking to inspire the custodians of the future. Most recently, he has started the Birriban Landcare group at Katoomba High School, where a whole new generation of young people is being captivated with this enthusiasm for caring for Country.

**Editor note:** This story was published by Blue Mountains City Council, and what they didn't ask about was David's Christian faith being a key driving motivation. So we did!

*"Many verses inspire my passion for God's creation. Two always stand out Genesis 1 where God continually states it was "good" and the last reference God says it was "very good". Then in Psalm 19 it refers to "his handiwork". As a Christian I see the wonder of God's creation and believe that God created it to sustain us so we need to understand it and utilise the resources. So we don't need to change and poison it. We need to see God in it and delight in His creation."*





# Lausanne Movement



**WEA**  
World Evangelical Alliance

## Creation Care Consultation South Pacific (LWCCC-SP)

23-27<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at Tahlee Ministries, NSW, Australia

This event is part of a global campaign to jump-start or strengthen evangelical creation care movements. The consultation seeks to catalyze a movement of Christians who will develop new and strengthen existing creation care partnerships and initiatives throughout the South Pacific.

This cross-cultural consultation will encourage participants to reflect on the theology and practice of creation-care from a range of perspectives, and learn from non-Western and indigenous experiences. The conference will be a mix of plenary sessions and interactive learning (in English). We will also explore and enjoy God's creation around the beautiful Tahlee Ministries grounds, have time to get to know each other, pray and reflect – and also do some birdwatching!

John at Tahlee has been inviting strategic Christian leaders within the nations of the South Pacific region who have a passion (or the seeds of a passion), for caring for God's good creation.

For further information  
please contact  
[info@tahlee.org](mailto:info@tahlee.org)

We'll report back in the  
Autumn 2018 ENews



### *An example of combining creation care with environmental education:*

In the last fortnight some cut-in hollows were made in trees for Eastern pygmy-possums at a Christian campsite in Sydney which has over 4000 visiting students each year. Students will now get to learn about the importance of hollows as habitat. Some 179 native species are dependent on hollows in NSW.

*NB: These hollows have a faceplate reattached and a small entrance is drilled into the side.*





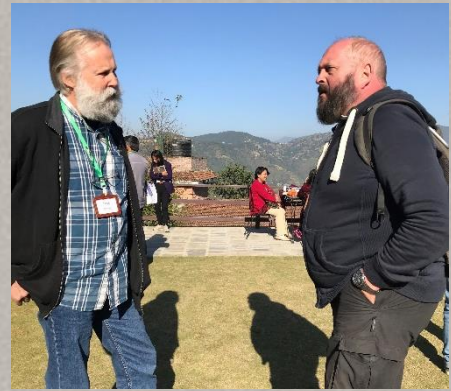
## A Rocha Aussies represent in Nepal

A Rocha Australia members Greg and Margaret Stone recently attended a National Creation Care Conference held in Dhulikhel, Nepal. The event was hosted by the Nepalese Integral Mission Forum (IMF) and in conjunction with the Lausanne Global Campaign for Creation Care and the Gospel.



Left: Greg Stone (A Rocha Australia member), Divya P Khanal (Coordinator, Integral Mission Forum) and Joel Hafvenstein (Executive Director of United Mission to Nepal).

Right: Greg Stone and Roger Cozens (Climate Change and Environment Advisor, United Mission to Nepal).



Greg was invited to speak on the subject of 'A Christian perspective on the natural world'.

The conference was attended by a range of NGOs, groups and individuals involved in a diversity of activities related to natural resource management.

### New business cards!

A Rocha Australia is growing in size and we'd like to encourage more people to connect with us. We have recently received a batch of business cards to distribute. If you would like some mailed to you please send a request to:

[australia.comms@arocha.org](mailto:australia.comms@arocha.org)

