

Conference Program

the Environment and the Gospel



INTERNATIONAL
A ROCHA
Conservation and Hope

 **ethos**
ea Centre for Ethics and Society

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

9:00am *Registration*

9:30am *Main Session*

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

11:15am *Morning Tea*

11:40am *Workshop #1*

A Climate of Confusion – Mick Pope

Present Realities and Future Hope: A Christian Perspective on Biodiversity Conservation – Greg Stone

Urban Sustainability – Tom Allen

12:30pm *Lunch*

1:15pm *Workshop #2*

The Bible’s answer to tricky questions – Sally Shaw

Conservation research as a Christian – Andrew Bennett

Taming the desert - Tony Rinaudo

2:05pm *Afternoon Tea*

2:30pm *Action Groups*

Making steps towards sustainability:

Learn to make your own beeswax wraps as a plastic-wrap substitute (\$15) - Limited Spaces

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 (allow for 2 hours at least)

Have a chat with A Rocha:

Talk with some of the national directors of A Rocha Australia

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Mick Pope

Mick Pope 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, and *A Climate of Justice: Loving Your Neighbour in a Warming World*, which has just been published by Morning Star Publishing. 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) including his blog (ethos-environment.blogspot.com)

Psalm 104 shows us that the whole of creation is a testament to God's divine wisdom and power; its destruction is the result of human sinfulness. Working through God's Word together, Mick will help us open up the conversation of this conference. He will encourage us to see how God cares for His creation, and challenge us to become better stewards of our Father's world.

A Climate of Confusion

Christians, the media, and some politicians seem confused over climate change. It is real. It is our fault. It is potentially devastating. This workshop looks at the basic science to show how certain we are, why there is disagreement when there shouldn't be, and why although we need to act individually, we also need to work together for societal change.



Stuart Blanch

Stuart grew up on the NSW Mid-North Coast in a banana farming family. He has a BSc (Hons) in Ecology, a PhD in the ecology of water plants in the Murray River and a Masters in Environmental Law. He has 19 years experience working for Australian and international community environmental organisations. He has worked in the Murray-Darling Basin and Northern Australia, for the NSW NPWS, as well as in restoration ecology in France's Camargue wetlands. He has authored and co-authored research papers and reports in river and wetland ecology and conservation, hydrological modelling, renewable energy, marine and freshwater protected areas, and sustainable development. Stuart is CEO of Hunter Wetlands Centre Australia, based in Newcastle.

Stuart is a founding member of the Board of Directors of A Rocha Australia.

Stuart will share with us A Rocha's story, both here in Australia and across the world. A Rocha started in 1983 when a small group of Christians in England stepped out in faith to demonstrate God's love for his Creation in Portugal. In the past 35 years A Rocha has grown to an international family of projects in 20 countries. Australia is the newest chapter in the A Rocha story, and we are seeking God's guidance and wisdom as we establish an organisation that undertakes practical on-ground nature conservation projects, participates with partners in conservation science research, engages churches about the scriptural basis for creation care, and provides hope through Jesus Christ for people who despair at the global biodiversity crisis.



Greg Stone

One fateful morning in 1979, in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, Greg unexpectedly became interested in the Australian environment. The sight of hundreds of germinating Eucalyptus seeds set him on a new path which has led to operating as an ecological consultant in south-east NSW. Greg works for a range of private and corporate clients, undertakes contracts with a variety of government departments, and has run numerous environmentally-orientated workshops and training programs in Australia and North India.

Greg and his wife Margaret currently live in Araluen, NSW, where they are planning to finally build a mud-brick house.

Present Realities and Future Hope: A Christian Perspective on Biodiversity Conservation

Many scientists have proposed that the sixth mass extinction is already underway, and that we should expect a huge reduction of the earth's biodiversity to occur in the decades and centuries ahead. How might Christians respond to this? The bible provides a unique view of biodiversity conservation which enables God's people to understand the present realities while working with hope for the future.



Tom Allen

Tom recently completed a degree in International Studies at RMIT with an honours project looking at the potential for community builders to engage helpfully with the process of gentrification, whereby the less economically powerful are displaced from their neighbourhoods by rising house prices, soaring rents, higher living standards and cultural shift. He works at TEAR Australia and lives with his partner Mia at the Indigenous Hospitality House in Carlton North. He is passionate about reconnecting with our food and Earth through gardening and cooking, and reconnecting with his legs through cycling.

Living Sustainably

This workshop will practically explore the concept of sustainability in an urban setting. What are things people living in urban areas can do to bring about the sustainable future we need? With a foundation of principles and methods that will help you think about sustainability in your context, we will discuss and share sustainability interventions around the home and in the garden, as well as community level initiatives. An emphasis will be placed on interventions that are open to all and are cheap or free.



Tony Rinaudo

After gaining a Bachelor of Rural Science, Tony spent 18 years in Niger Republic as manager of Maradi Integrated Development Project (1981 to 1999) as an agriculturalist and missionary with 'Serving in Mission'. He managed famine relief interventions and a long term rural development program which contributed to the reforestation of over five million hectares of land and today serves as an inspiration to re-greening movements globally.

Currently Tony is the Principal Natural Resources advisor for World Vision Australia, and is heavily involved in promotion of forestry and agro forestry initiatives within and external to World Vision globally.

Tony and Liz Rinaudo have four children and four grandchildren and they worship at St. Alfred's Anglican Church, Nth Blackburn.

Taming the desert

Tony will share on his faith journey and living and working in Niger Republic for 18 years and how he is now able to apply the hard lessons learnt on the edge of the Sahara desert around the world through World Vision.



Sally Shaw

Originally from UK, I'm married to Doug Shaw (from Queensland) and have three teenage children. We live in the Adelaide Hills and are linked to the Stirling Anglican parish.

From 1984-86 I worked as a nurse/midwife in the Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand. I then moved to Cambodia where I worked in mother/child health and community development with World Vision. I later established a local NGO using improvisational drama to build self confidence in people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Since living in Adelaide (2007) I've obtained a post grad. diploma in Creative Writing, a Masters of Education (2013), post grad in Divinity (2016) and presently working on a Master of Ministry focusing on writing on an experiential evangelical eco-theological curriculum. I also enjoy teaching improvisational drama and drumming. I'm involved with Transition Towns, promotion of Native Bees, Trees for life, Permaculture SA and other conservation work. I'm one of the directors of A Rocha Australia, and I'm passionate to see evangelical Christians much more involved in care for creation.

The Tricky Questions

Sally will run a discussion group and attempt to tackle some of the tricky questions such as:

1. What are some ways that conservation can be incorporated in third world missions and be used to benefit people living in poverty?
2. How important is caring for the environment if Jesus is coming back soon?
3. How does caring for the environment fit in with serving Jesus and our mission of sharing the gospel?
4. What does scripture say about environmentalism?
5. Why do we need to prevent the planet from dying when it's gonna pass away real soon?

“One of the most important things I believe is for each of us is to have a sound Biblical basis on creation care and be able think how we might answer the difficult questions such as the ones above.”



Andrew Bennett

Andrew Bennett is a Professor of Ecology at La Trobe University. He has a keen interest in understanding how human land-use and landscape change affect native flora, fauna and ecological processes.

Wildlife Research and Faith

Andrew will share some of his experience in wildlife research and conservation, and lead discussion about the intersection between nature conservation, stewardship, and Christian faith.