

The A Rocha Story

The Environment and the Gospel Conference

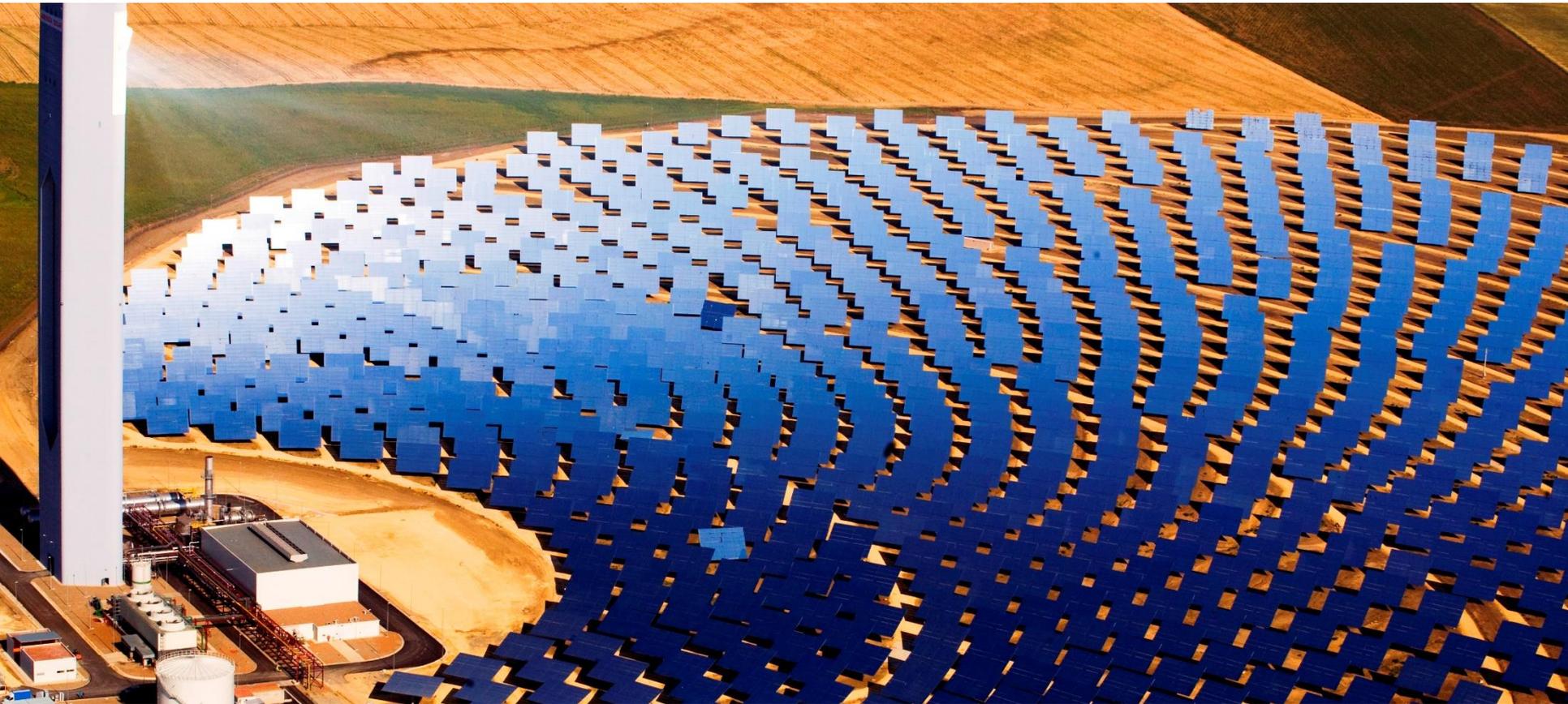
**Victorian Conference
St Mark's Anglican Church, Spotswood**

14 October 2017



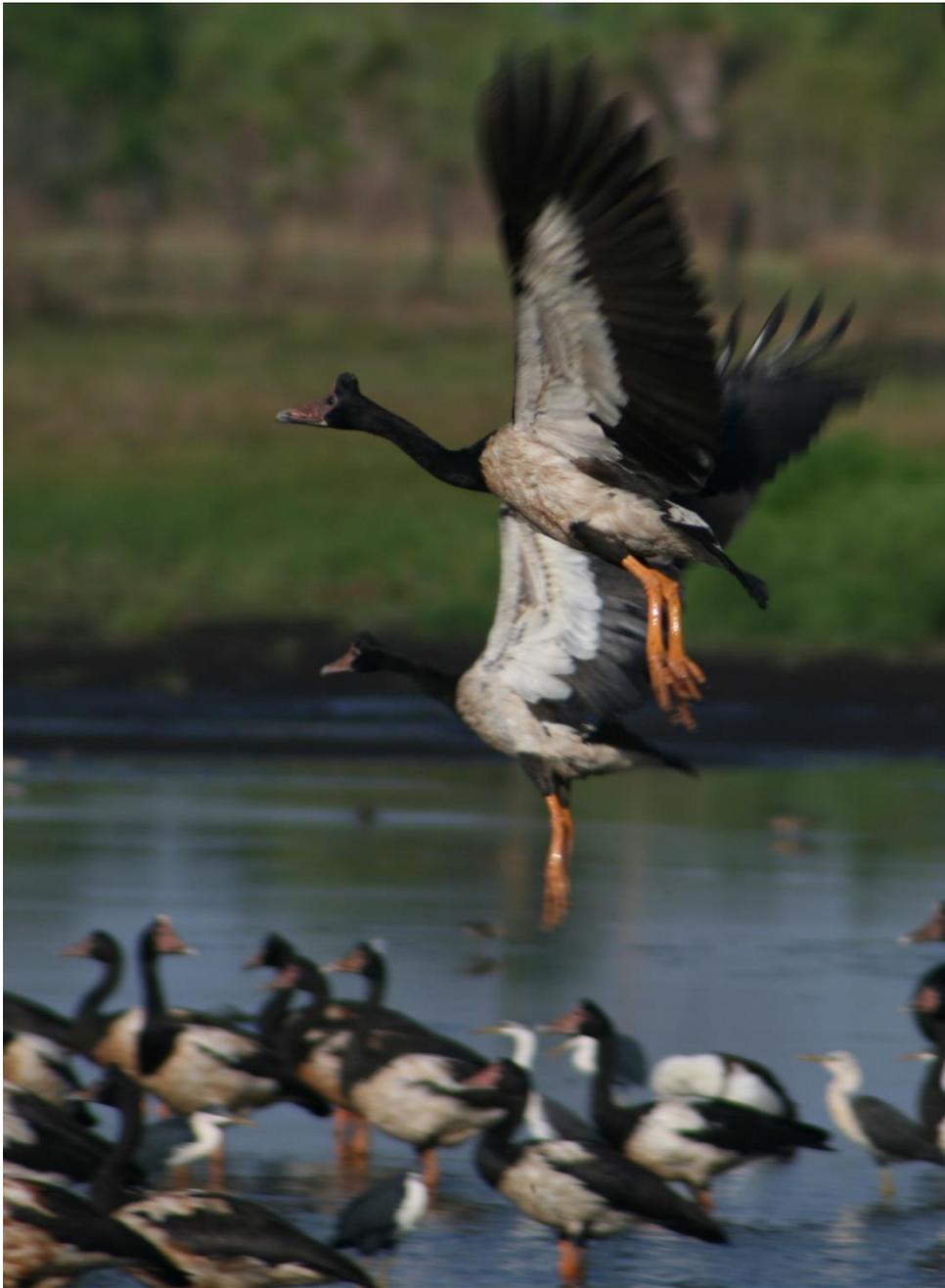
**Dr Stuart Blanch
Director
A Rocha Australia
0403 209 805**

Is it normal for a Christian to be concerned about the environment?





**Should Christians who love God and His Bible
be concerned about the environment?**



**Does caring for God's
creation distract from
gospel mission?**



Can a Christian serve Jesus in environmental mission?

A Rocha, 1983



A short history

- 1983-85 - Vision is born, charity set up in UK, founders move to Portugal. Christians and environmentalists ask “Why A Rocha?”
- 1986-94 - Field studies centre and school env education in the Alvor Estuary, more visitors
- 1995-99 - Portugal project established, focus moves to new countries, e.g., France, Lebanon, UK
- 2000-01 - international network grows, new governance, interest in Australia starts to grow
- 2002-06 - 8 new countries, e.g., Ghana, Brazil, India, stronger science oversight, Climate Stewards
- 2007-14 - expand to NZ and Uganda, extra theological expertise, Management Team in UK
- 2015-17 - A Rocha Australia formed (20 in total), partnerships e.g., WEA/Lausanne, some A Rocha org’s struggling

A Rocha Core Commitments

1. Christian

Underlying all we do is our biblical faith in the living God, who made the world, loves it and entrusts it to the care of human society.

2. Conservation

We carry out research for the conservation and restoration of the natural world and run environmental education programmes for people of all ages.

3. Community

Through our commitment to God, each other and the wider creation, we aim to develop good relationships both within the A Rocha family and in our local communities.

4. Cross-cultural

We draw on the insights and skills of people from diverse cultures, both locally and around the world.

5. Cooperation

We work in partnership with a wide variety of organizations and individuals who share our concerns for a sustainable world.

A Rocha seeks to live out Jesus' command to love God not money. We challenge a dualist view of the gospel that says Christians can be personally saved but continue to live greedy lives without loving others or God's creation.



How A Rocha works

- Staff and volunteers who are committed evangelical theologians, professional conservation scientists, environmental educators, conservation project managers, videographers, sustainable farmers, poverty alleviation practitioners, community development, etc
- Scientific research e.g., staff authored and co-authored 27 scientific research papers since 2015
- Engages in partnerships, conferences, joint research, provision of advice
- Owns and / or manages land for nature conservation

A Rocha seeks to give hope by living out faithful lives in Jesus Christ amidst the global environmental crises that is destroying His Creation, due to humanity's sin.



A Rocha Australia

- Interest started growing in 2005, formed in October 2015
- Incorporated association in NSW
- Not-for-profit charity, now seeking DGR & REO status
- Strong evangelical Christian statement of faith
- Board of Directors with broad expertise
- Cash reserves of a few thousand dollars
- 54 members, 300 supporters
- 3 annual conferences held
- Ambitious Strategic Plan, e.g., field studies centres
- Goal to appoint a paid Exec Officer
- ARA Associated Projects (Tahlee, Capernwray)
- Networks in Victoria, SE Qld, SA

A Rocha Australia Objects

- Advancement of the Christian faith and understanding of its relevance to creation care;
- Education of the public by promotion of conservation, and scientific study of ecology and the environment; and
- Enablement of practical projects in conservation of biodiversity, natural resources and habitats in a community context for the benefit of future generations.

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A Rocha Australia **ENEWS**

Autumn 2017



Update from our President

Our network of members, supporters and associates has continued to grow. During March, the board of directors of A Rocha Australia formally agreed to the accreditation of the Capernwray Environmental Plan – Stage 1 (Southern Highlands, NSW) as an Associated Project of ARA. The next step involves completion and joint signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between ARA and Capernwray Torchbearers Australia to define this arrangement. Our cooperative interactions with Capernwray regarding creation care have been a great blessing and we pray that this will continue and grow, to the glory of God."

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

Spotted at Tahlee!!

This healthy looking koala was seen in early March by a local birdwatching group on a tour of the Tahlee property.



CREATION CARE CAMP
SCRIPTURE UNION NEW SOUTH WALES



Director Jen Schabel helped to lead a Creation Care camp near Tamworth in April, a wonderful time of community, permaculture, cooking and gaining a biblical perspective on creation care.

Thank you



Directors of A Rocha Australia, 2017