

## Highlights from the National Conference Capernwray, Southern Highlands NSW, 11-13 Nov 2016



Worship



Fellowship



Planning

and Bird Watching!







## Reflections on the national conference

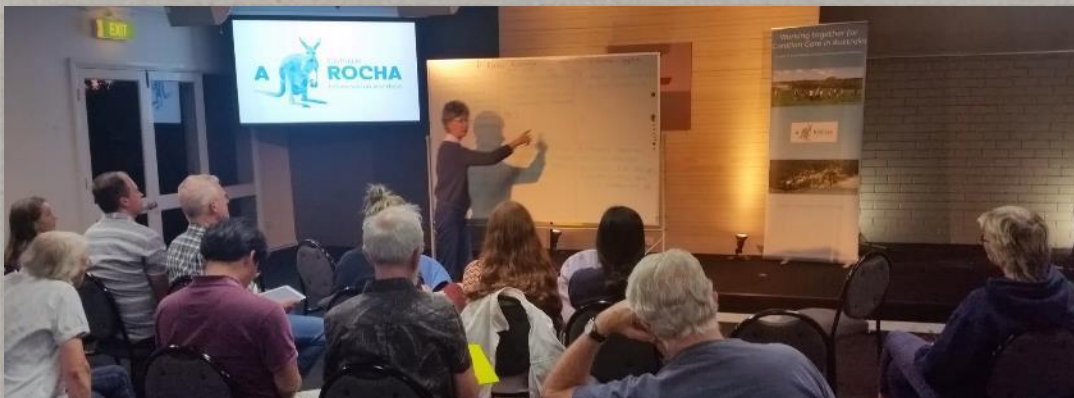
Hope is part of our identity. The logo of A Rocha Australia includes the words 'Conservation and Hope'. The certainty that God provides us as Christians, that he is ultimately in control of the world and creation's future, was a theme emphasised during our 2016 national conference. And it continues to impact my thinking.

Our minds found great peace in the setting for our 2016 national gathering: the verdant farmland of the NSW Southern Highlands. We were hosted wonderfully by Capernwray Australia at its Burradoo campus and the adjacent Wingecarribee River provided close contact with nature—including more than one early-morning platypus. A mother lyrebird feeding its mobile youngster was an unexpected highlight of our excursion to Fitzroy Falls. All of our wild creatures were greatly appreciated by Peter and Miranda Harris, co-founders of A Rocha, who joined us as part of their first visit to Australia.

In sharing about events within A Rocha world-wide, Peter and Miranda gave many examples of how conservation science is desperate for hope and how Christians are increasingly appreciated for bringing their fresh and encouraging perspective. We are also adopting the role of peacemakers between environmental and development interests and within the wider conservation movement. In our worship, Peter reminded us that our first goal is to worship God, not to 'save the world'. Miranda spoke of how our recent progress has been encouraging to the A Rocha family. Both Peter and Miranda demonstrated the Christian disciplines of listening and caring, ministering to conference participants.

Greg Stone's presentation on conservation challenges in the Southern Highlands led us to discussion on linkages between social and ecological communities and how Christians can engage in both. Reports from around the continent included an inspiring outline of the Five Leaf Eco-Award program coordinated by Jessica Morthorpe. A skype link-up brought together the New Zealand and local parts of the A Rocha global family. We planted a local native tree, *Eucalyptus stellulata*, to commemorate the formal establishment of A Rocha Australia over the past year, Peter and Miranda's visit and the beginning of what we anticipate will be a mutually productive collaboration with Capernwray Australia.

As A Rocha Australia now has its foundations established, we are turning attention to strategic planning. Conference-goers were from five States and held diverse interests in creation care, both large and small scale. Drawing from all participants and presentations, twelve broad subjects for future endeavour and focus were identified. We assigned priorities to this list and the A Rocha Australia board will now plan our way forward.



Roger Jaensch  
President/Chairperson  
[australia@arocha.org](mailto:australia@arocha.org)





Cecil Hoskins Nature Reserve





## Resources and videos from the National Conference



We're planning to load a lot more material about our national identity, local projects and regional networks onto our website in coming months: <http://australia.arocha.org/>

Videos from the conference are now on Youtube. To view them click on this link in our website footer. You might like to subscribe to our channel.

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*Eight directors met with Capernwray staff at the conference. See the directors video to hear our thoughts and aspirations for A Rocha Australia*

## A message from Peter and Miranda Harris to the Australian family

Peter and Miranda took some time out from the conference to sit down with a cuppa and record some of their reactions to what has been happening in Australia. Here are some of their thoughts from their first trip here:

**Miranda:** It's been entirely inspiring to listen to people from different regions speaking of the beginnings. We have a sense that God has been developing his root system here in this big continent. We planted a tree yesterday as a part of our program and were thinking about the roots taking time to form this big network under the soil before anything appears above, before anything can be seen. Some of the



people here have faithfully planted and sown, the system has been developing, and it is quite remarkable and wonderful for us to see some of the growth now appearing. So thank you for having us here and it's wonderful to take so much good news with us on our travels along with the memory of great friendships begun here. Our partnership and involvement with you is really important to us"

**Peter:** "The way that A Rocha is set up means that each country expresses these common commitments in their own way, and we are amazed and excited to see this robust beginning of a completely new expression of the A Rocha vision here in this part of the world. We really congratulate the pioneers who have been faithful over so long in bringing this about. To see firsthand just how much has been done already and the quality of everybody involved is a great thrill. It seems as though the Lord has the technical bases covered. There are people with a great deal of experience in conservation, people who have thought deeply about Christian mission and people who have thought about the relationship between their faith and caring for creation".



# Some updates from around the country

## Brisbane creation care network

There have been five gatherings in 2015–16 with the most recent held on 15 October at Moggill Creek Catchment Area "The Cottage". Highlights over this time have included theological teaching on the biblical basis for creation care, meeting Christians involved with other networks, personal testimonies and building up a network of about 80 people.



Ross Jansen–van Vuuren [rossvanvuuren@gmail.com](mailto:rossvanvuuren@gmail.com)

## Capernwray, Southern Highlands

The revegetation project is underway with Capernwray students planting out the triangle near the Wingecarribee River in Spring. The Threatened Species Seminar hosted by Capernwray and A Rocha Australia brought together expert speakers from a range of organisations and agencies to update interested members of the public about local threatened species issues and initiatives.



Greg Stone [woodlandsendiro@gmail.com](mailto:woodlandsendiro@gmail.com)

## South Australia

The group in Adelaide has been meeting and is considering getting involved in the Saltfields – helping to create the South Australian International Bird Sanctuary along the Gulf of St Vincent.

Sally Shaw [sallyashaw@gmail.com](mailto:sallyashaw@gmail.com)



## Tahlee Creation Care Project, NSW

Tahlee has identified 143 bird species and is working with the local council to monitor mammals through the installation of motion sensor cameras around the property.

[director@tahlee.org](mailto:director@tahlee.org)



## Victoria – upcoming event

Victorian members and supporters of A Rocha Australia will be meeting for a BYO picnic lunch on Sat 3 Dec. If you are a Victorian member or a member from elsewhere travelling through Melbourne then please come and meet other people interested in A Rocha. The venue is the Somerton Road Picnic Area at Woodlands Historic Park adjacent to Tullamarine Airport. We will begin at 1200 noon and go for a walk after lunch.

Further details from Anna at [zofiaranna@gmail.com](mailto:zofiaranna@gmail.com).

*A Rocha Australia ENews, Spring 206*





Fitzroy Falls, Morton National Park



We hope you've been encouraged by this update. Please:

- Thank the Lord for his goodness in bringing A Rocha Australia to where it now is, and praying for what is ahead.
- Encourage others to connect with us.
- Email us with ideas (and offers!) of how you might be able to help. You can use the contact form on our website:

<http://australia.arocha.org>

**GET INVOLVED!**