



© Fiona Pfennigwerth



A Rocha Australia *ENEWS*

Summer 2019

We are a Christian organisation engaging communities in nature conservation

In this Issue:

- *Aussie accolade for tree regen*
- *Wetlands book launch*
- *Upcoming AGM and farewelling outgoing directors*
- *John Rymer Legacy*
- *June conference in Sydney*
- *Bio-blitzing in Victoria*

Chair's report...

This issue of our e-newsletter draws attention to activities conducted by A Rocha Australia in recent months, or in planning, and to progress in governance and administration of the organisation.

The Bio-blitz near Kyneton in Victoria in February (see pages 7–8) was historic in being the first multi-faceted, nature conservation project entirely designed, led and implemented by an A Rocha Australia team. (It also revealed the resilience of volunteers in the face of summer conditions

outdoors!) Success of the activity reconfirmed the potential for many more cooperative activities on properties owned and managed by like-minded Christian individuals or organisations. This all demonstrates that A Rocha Australia has reached the point of 'doing worthwhile things' on the ground, with a range of collaborators.

We look forward to greater engagement with Christian churches in Australia through hosting the conference on eco-theology planned for Sydney in June 2019 (page 6). A cast of well-renowned theologians from seminaries of several denominations has already been secured.

Christians who are personally committed to caring for creation are the foundations on which A Rocha Australia is built. In this e-newsletter we honour two of our founding....



Groundcover and floristic surveys in Victoria

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM is on 7 March via skype. Members have been notified by email. Only members of A Rocha Australia may participate and vote. Non-members are welcome as observers. If you would like to join, please email australia@arocha.org. This AGM will include voting for the A Rocha Australia board of directors.



Chair's report continued...

....board directors who have recently retired or will do so at the AGM in March (page 4). It is no small feat to establish an organisation from modest beginnings and these directors played their part wholeheartedly. Other members have been active in their local sphere of influence and some have contributed to publications on Australia's nature and its wise management (page 3).

Great excitement has arisen with announcement of a major contribution to A Rocha Australia finances through the John Rymer Donation (page 5). This is specifically for employment of an executive officer, who initially will be on a part-time basis. A sub-group of the A Rocha Australia board has developed a position description and identified employment arrangements and recruitment hopefully will occur before mid-2019. Highest priority tasks from our Strategic Plan 2019-2022 will shape the executive officer's work in supporting the board and membership.

A truly diligent and transparent organisation will be one that is governed by a capable and dedicated board of directors. With all positions (eight, plus our international representative, and our future executive officer) falling vacant at the 7 March AGM, there is opportunity for injection of new expertise, energy and ideas, as well as a suitable level of continuity. Nominations close on 28 February.

Roger Jaensch
President (Chair, ARA board of directors)

Calling new members!

We've made becoming a member of A Rocha Australia easier through a new single form available on our website:

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



This webpage outlines the 4-step process and the details of the once-off entrance fee. We also have an Associate Membership Form for Under 18's – we would love to see school-aged students to join free. Members are important for good governance of A Rocha Australia. We are pleased to announce that A Rocha Australia now has over 80 members and 450 people on our mailing list.

Aussie accolade for tree regenerator Tony

You may recall Tony Rinaudo's name in Australian news late last year for being one of four recipients of the 2018 Right Livelihood Award, dubbed the "Alternative Nobel Prize." He was recognised "...for demonstrating on a large scale how drylands can be greened at minimal cost, improving the livelihoods of millions of people."

Tony has now also been recognised in Australia, becoming a Member (AM) of the Order of Australia for dedicating more than 35 years of working with communities to regenerate degraded lands across Asia and Africa.

Tony pioneered the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration re-greening methodology which has helped regenerate more than 200 million trees on five million hectares of degraded farmland across the Republic of Niger and he has actively promoted this method across Africa and parts of Asia. Tony is Principal Adviser to World Vision Australia's Natural Resources, Food Security and Climate Change Team. Tony is an A Rocha member and we were very thankful for him sharing about his work at the Melbourne conference in October 2017. Tony was honoured with this more recent recognition of his life's work:

"I really hope it spurs a conversation about how protecting and restoring the environment should be a major part of humanitarian work," he said.

"Regenerating forests and farmlands doesn't just help protect people against the effects of climate change, it also helps reduce hunger and generates opportunities to earn an income."



Tony Rinaudo with Manuel Da Silva and some of his children near Aileu in East Timor.

CREDIT: ANGELA WYLI, Published by SMH.

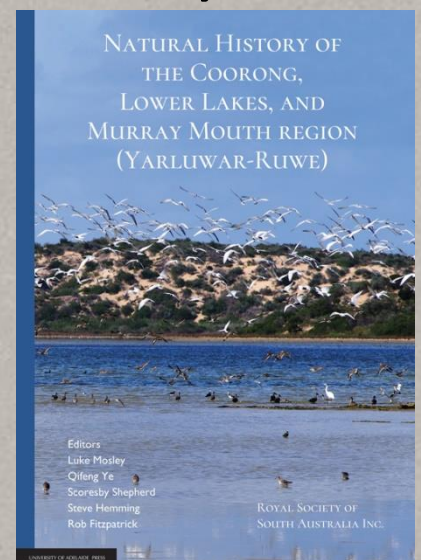
Congratulating Scoresby on book launch

If you've seen this movie then you'll know a bit about the Coorong and you've no doubt been impressed by its environmental values. We have the great pleasure of congratulating A Rocha member Scoresby Shepherd on his co-editing role for this latest Natural History book, launched on 2 Feb in conjunction with World Wetlands Day. What a testament to your dedication to conserving the natural values of this region Scoresby, congratulations!



This book explores the natural history of this region of South Australia, listed as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. It has four main themes: a historical overview of the region; its physical-chemical nature; its biological systems; and its management, resource use and conservation. The effects of large-scale anthropogenic change, climate change, global warming and sea level changes are discussed from multiple perspectives, as are the effects of acid sulfate soils and the overall consequences of the Millennium Drought on water quality, biological life and food web.

The discussion includes information from Ngarrindjeri leaders about the history and culture of the Ngarrindjeri people, the traditional owners of the region's land and waters. The book concludes by establishing the vision and framework required for the important and increasing role that the Ngarrindjeri Nation will play in the shared long-term management of the region: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/press/titles/natural-history-cllmm>



Upcoming AGM and farewelling outgoing directors

A Rocha Australia's fourth Annual General Meeting will be held in March. This will include voting of directors. Directors comprise the board and are responsible for governance and for accountability to A Rocha members and authorities. Directors are in office for three-year terms with a maximum of three consecutive terms. Directors who wish to continue on the board must re-nominate and be elected by the A Rocha Australia members at the coming AGM. Stuart Blanch, Sally Shaw, Roger Janesch, Jen Schabel, Philip Hughes and Julia Jardine propose to re-nominate. John Anderson and Anna Radkovic will not be re-nominating.

Our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for John and Juanita Anderson

John served the A Rocha Australia family while the Director of Tahlee Ministries, north of Sydney. John tirelessly promoted our new and emerging A Rocha Australia entity to Christian networks including Missions Interlink, and provided advice and leadership on theological matters underpinning our development. John set up the our first associated project, the "Tahlee Centre of Creation Care" which included biodiversity baseline surveys. He hosted the "Bringing A Rocha to Australia" gathering in October 2015 and co-coordinated



the *Lausanne/WEA Creation Care Consultation– Oceania* in April 2018. This event saw theologians, scientists, ministers, community practitioners, activists and educators gather together from across the Oceania region with the aim to catalyse a movement of Christians who will develop new and strengthen existing creation care partnerships and initiatives, for the glory of God. We thank God for John's servant heart and pray for John and Juanita's new location and next season of ministry. John and Juanita will remain members of A Rocha Australia and we thank them in advance for their continued support.

Our thanks and best wishes to Anna Radkovic in her new role



Anna has decided to not re-nominate to the A Rocha Australia board so that she can dedicate more time to coordinating the exciting new collaboration with Cassinia Environmental. The recent very successful Bioblitz weekend near Kyneton is hopefully the first of many, and we look forward to seeing what else emerges in the future as regards intentional Christian communities. Involved in A Rocha Kenya while growing up as a missionary kid, we've greatly valued Anna's knowledge from this international

experience, her enthusiasm and her fresh ideas. We thank Anna for representing A Rocha Australia at the international gathering in Portugal last year, and particularly for coordinating *The Environment and the Gospel conference* in Melbourne in October 2017. This move is very much a side-step and we look forward to continue working with Anna as the Cassinia collaboration gains momentum.

John Rymer legacy to support new executive officer role

A large donation has generously been made to A Rocha Australia from the estate of John Rymer to enable a part-time executive officer to be employed from 2019.

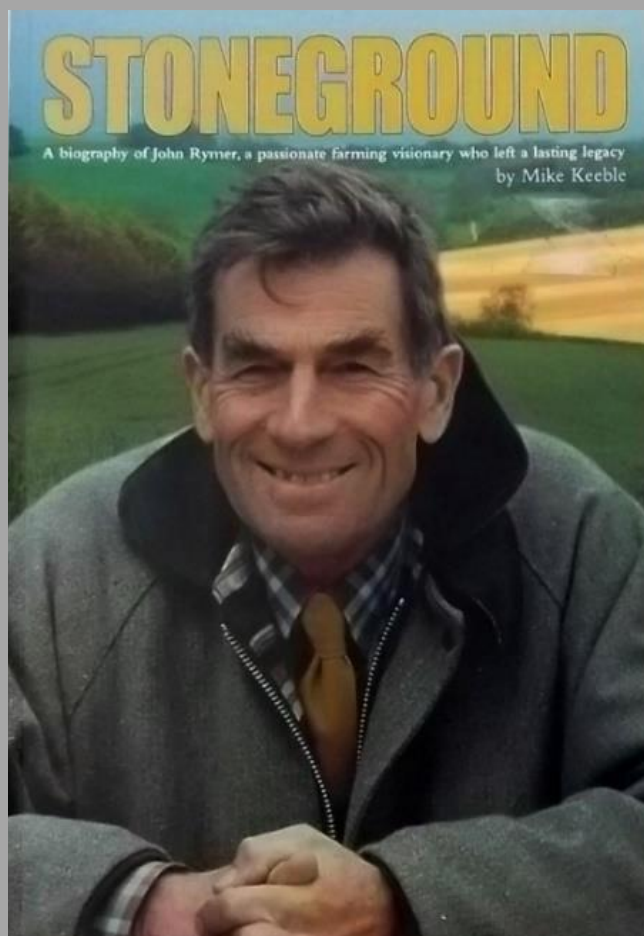
This paid officer will help A Rocha Australia to move forward by leading the implementation of our strategic, conservation, fundraising and communications plans. The executive officer will build partnerships and projects with Christian organisations, produce theological and conservation science resources on Creation Care, and engage with secular conservation organisations, government agencies and research institutions.

The John Rymer legacy of \$175,000 will be provided over a seven-year period with the hope that the funds will be matched by other donations and potentially grant funding.

"We are very mindful of God's grace in providing this wonderful legacy and hope that it will encourage others to financially contribute too, to increase the size and scope of the role," said Roger Jaensch, chair of the A Rocha Australia board.

"We look forward to seeing how A Rocha Australia will grow through the work of an executive officer."

Any donations made to A Rocha Australia in 2019 through our website will help to support this new role, unless otherwise specified for another purpose.



John Sykes Rymer (d. 1996), started farming in East Yorkshire after obtaining his agricultural degree from Cambridge. He was a visionary who had a passion for making a difference in the agricultural world, and as a result left a lasting legacy. Although he called himself a 'muddy boots' farmer, he was in fact a businessman with a passion for science. This ability to apply new science and technology to a farming business set him apart from many others and earned him a reputation for being ahead of his time.

He also had a passion for the environment. He received awards for his revegetation projects, which included planting large numbers of trees, preserving hedgerows, creating nature reserves for wildlife, as well as conserving important areas of natural land. This was contrary to the practice of many UK farmers who preferred to 'remove' the natural environment in order to enlarge their acreage and increase their income.

Christ, the Cross and Creation Care

8:30am - 3:30pm Saturday 22nd June at Christ College, Burwood, Sydney.

*Bible talks, panel discussion, workshops, and
stories from Christians across Australia.*



Key Speakers



Rev Dr Darrell Jackson
*Associate Professor of Missiology,
Morling College*



Rev Dr John McLean
*Vice Principal, Lecturer in
Systematic Theology, Christ College.*



Rev Dr Lionel Windsor
*Lecturer in New Testament,
Moore Theological College.*



Rev Dr Kit Barker
*Lecturer in Old Testament,
Sydney Missionary and Bible College.*

**Registration \$40 / \$25
Book Tickets at Eventbrite**

Further Information visit www.australia.arocha.org



AUSTRALIA
ROCHA
Conservation and Hope

Bio-blitzing weekend at Glenhope, Victoria



Pooling resources and knowledge for bird surveying

On a warm Saturday in February, A Rocha people gathered at a property near Kyneton, north of Melbourne, for a Bio-blitz! A range of ages came from near (Kyneton, Bendigo, Melbourne) and far (NSW and Aotearoa New Zealand!) to survey the bio-diversity on a small section of the 450 hectare grassland property which provides important habitat for the critically endangered Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*). Led by A Rocha director and Cassinia Environmental employee Anna Radkovic, the keen participants were divided into teams to survey grasslands and birdlife around the property .

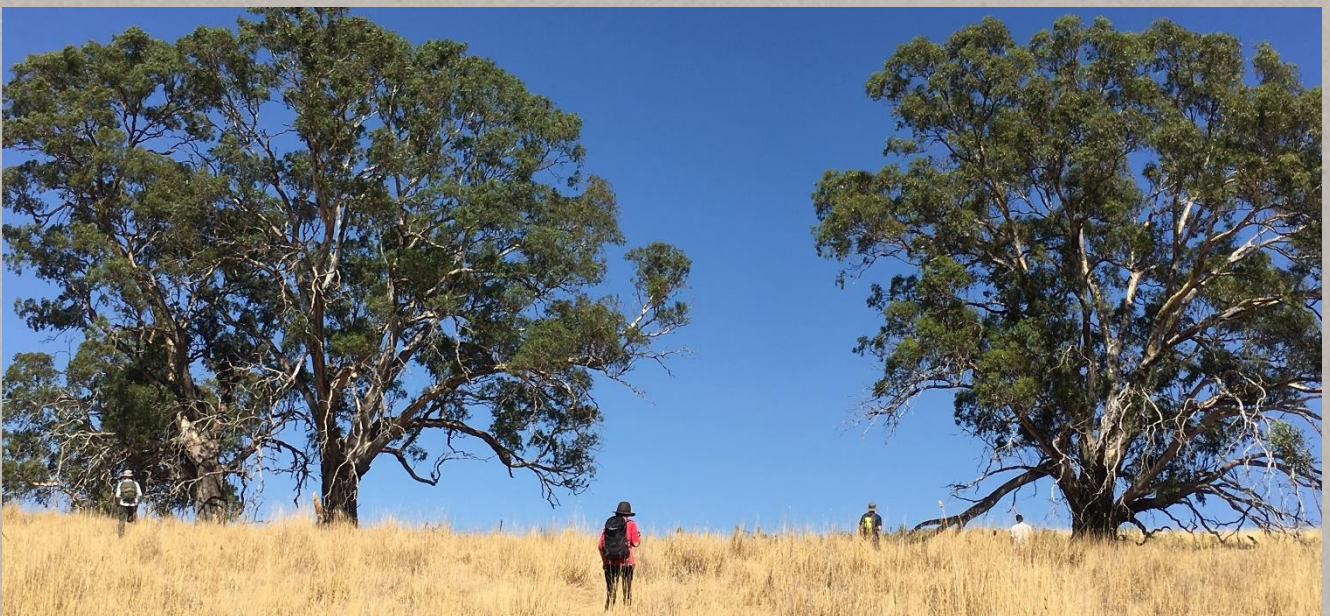
A few hours later the water hole in the creek that runs through the property provided a welcome respite from the rising mercury; an opportunity to look for aquatic insects and watch circling wedge-tailed eagles; and an ideal site for a shared lunch.

Reconvening later for an evening BBQ there was plenty of time to enjoy good food, rich conversation and share stories of faith, conservation and hope. For Andrew Shepherd, visiting from A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand, the day was memorable. "Having been involved in many similar A Rocha community conservation activities in Aotearoa New Zealand during the last decade, it was exciting to participate in an A Rocha event 'over the ditch.' While the temperature was hotter and the land drier, there was the same excitement and joy about new discoveries and the strong sense of community that comes from observing the wonders of God's creation together."

There were also swims at Turpin Falls and those who stayed the weekend joined with Kyneton Baptist Church for morning worship.



Wedge-tailed eagle, the largest bird of prey in Australia





The bio-blitz activity was the first event of A Rocha Australia's collaboration with Cassinia Environmental to provide scientific research on biodiversity on Cassinia properties.

Our intention is to undertake these surveys each season. The next bio-blitz is planned for May, so keep that in mind with your forward planning – we'd love to have you join us!

Cooling off at Turpin Falls; lots of great food and fellowship was had over shared meals



"Thank you Anna for organising such a great couple of days and for your hospitality in opening your home to so many. There was a real sense of coming together around God's beautiful creation, good food, and sharing stories of God at work in our lives. Great to have Andrew Shepherd from A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand there too!" – Julia, director

