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A Rocha Australia ENEWS

Autumn 2019

We are a Christian organisation engaging communities in nature conservation

Chair's report...

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Welcome to the Autumn 2019 issue of A Rocha Australia's ENews. We have much to update you on, including new appointments, successful gatherings and upcoming events.

After three-and-a-half years leading A Rocha Australia, Roger Jaensch has stepped down as board Chair and has been appointed by the board to be our inaugural part-time executive officer. Thanks to a generous donation from the estate of John Rymer, A Rocha has been able to employ our first staff member. We are very grateful to God for these funds and the opportunities they have opened to us in Creation care.

We are very thankful for Roger's willingness to continue serving, now in a more operational role, as we continue to grow A Rocha.

The executive officer will have a wide range of responsibilities. These include for securing conservation outcomes through projects, supporting and establishing local A Rocha networks, strategic direction of the organisation, fundraising and administration. As you can imagine, that is a lot for someone working less than a day-and-a-half per week. So the board will continue to be active in the day-to-day operation of A Rocha.



Chair's report continued...

We will support Roger as he decides what to focus upon among the many demands on his time. I appreciate your support for him through prayer at this pivotal time. If you would like to support A Rocha financially as we seek to double the number of hours Roger is able to work – to half time – you can read about our special fundraising challenge on page 11.

We are grateful to Dr Chris Mulherin, executive director of ISCAST, who assisted us during the recruitment process with his independence and highly relevant expertise.

Roger will commence work on 1 July and will be based in Toowoomba. Visit the A Rocha website to keep informed about the new role and Roger's contact details in the months ahead.

At our recent annual meeting we welcomed two new directors to the board, Isabel Lyons and Greg Stone. They bring important skills, expertise and networks to A Rocha's work. You can read about Issy and Greg on page 3. Congratulations to Julia Jardine who has taken on the role of Secretary. With Roger's move to become executive officer, I would appreciate your prayer and support as I take on the role he has built so well.

On another bright note, for those living in NSW, or otherwise willing to travel, we hope to see you at our conference in Sydney titled [Christ, the Cross and Creation Care](#) which will take place on Saturday 22 June 2019, at Christ College in Burwood. This event will be the fourth annual conference hosted by A Rocha and partners, and our first in Sydney. We are very grateful to the people who have offered to present talks, run workshops, send a video, or generally share their stories. Presenters hail from a wide range of backgrounds and affiliations, including four Sydney bible and theological colleges, three mission agencies, Christian justice advocacy, Indigenous communities, a major denomination, environmental education, eco-theologians, environmental consulting and land management. There will be ample opportunities to ask questions and contribute to discussions. A very big thanks also goes to conference supporters Interserve, Morling College, Christ College and TEAR Australia. We plan to release the proceedings from the conference by Christmas.

Thank you for your support to A Rocha. I encourage you to become a member, forward this ENews to friends and people in your church, and to consider supporting the fundraising challenge to support our new executive officer. I thank God, of whom David wrote

*The earth is the Lord's, and
everything in it, the world, and all
who live in it*

(Psalm 24.1)



Dr Stuart Blanch
President (Chair, board of directors)

Welcome to new A Rocha Australia directors!

At the Annual General Meeting on 7 March the following directors were voted in to serve a second term:



Stuart Blanch

Chair



Philip Hughes

Treasurer



Roger Jaensch



Julia Jardine

Secretary



Jen Schabel

Comms Officer



Sally Shaw

Roger stepped down in May to apply for the Executive Officer role. Two new directors were voted in, both of whom have had a long association with A Rocha:

Greg Stone, southern NSW

Greg's environmental and theological studies began simultaneously almost forty years ago, and the two have remained connected ever since. For the last twenty or so years Greg has operated as an environmental consultant working in the private sector as Woodlands Environmental Management, and under contract to various NSW government departments. Bible teaching and Christian leadership training in North India has also been a significant part of his life since 1994.



Greg has been involved in the establishment of the A Rocha Australia project at Capernwray Bible School in Australia, and in running creation care seminars with A Rocha International in North India. Greg and his wife Margaret live in Araluen NSW where they have finally moved into their mud brick home.



Issy Lyons, Sydney NSW

Issy grew up in Sydney. She has been extremely passionate about conserving the environment from a young age, which started at the zoo and learning about the different animals around the world and how human impacts are affecting them. When she was 17 and came to Christ, this passion took on a new meaning and even increased, as she learnt about God and started to see the world as his creation.

Furthering this passion, she has completed a degree in Environmental Biology, and a Cert III in Conservation and Land Management. She has interned at A Rocha Canada in conservation,

which she found extremely beneficial to live and work alongside Christians of different backgrounds but with the same passion for God's creation. Post university she has worked in bush regeneration and carbon crediting. She now works with a consulting firm as a graduate ecologist.

A Rocha at Surrender, VIC

Victorian directors spent a great few days at the Surrender conference at Belgrave Heights east of Melbourne in March, with lots of interest in A Rocha.

Surrender's primary purpose is to motivate emerging generations across the wider church to move from interest to action by becoming personally involved in expressions of Christ's call to the least, the last and the lost.

Additionally, Surrender affirms, encourages and inspires those already committed to incarnational mission and justice and recognizes their crucial role in raising up the next generation.



Queensland Network pitch in at Anstead

On 5 May members of the A Rocha Queensland Network joined forces with Quarry Church to lend practical support to the work of a community organisation, Anstead Reserve Habitat Restoration Group (ARHRG). Being a Sunday they met for devotion beforehand, and spent a lovely morning of weed pulling and revegetation maintenance and enjoying the sun over morning tea. All up there were around 20 volunteers and the Anstead group were very happy with the work that was done. What a great way to encourage a dedicated local bushcare group.

Anstead Park Bushcare Group is undertaking habitat restoration in 80 hectares, the largest bushland site bordering the Brisbane River. The site consists of a mix of spotted gum, forest red gum, gum topped box open forests and riparian forest communities. It is home to 132 species of vertebrate fauna.



Cassinia's Autumn Bioblitz and tree planting in May

On a misty Autumn morning in the green hills of Glenaroua, a small group of people gathered from around Victoria for the second ever A Rocha Australia BioBlitz. Saturday was spent walking the Mollison Creek, planting a diversity of trees and shrubs to restore the canopy, establish the understorey and stabilise the soil along the creekbank. After camping out at the Dettmann's cottage in Baynton with a bonfire and roast potatoes we headed out to Sievers Lane on Sunday morning. We pulled out the binoculars and measuring tape and did our second round of biodiversity monitoring. We'll be discussing the results and the whole purpose of these BioBlitzes at our Sydney conference in June so come along to find out more!



Cassinia's Autumn Bioblitz and tree planting in May

A Prayer for the Planting of Trees:

May these trees be like a banner planted on a hilltop, proclaiming God's right ownership of these lands long unjustly claimed by tyrants and usurpers.

They are a warrant and a witness, each seedling shouting from the earth that death is a lie, that beauty and immortality are what we were made for. They are heralds of a restoration that will forever mend all the sorrow and comfort of grief.

They declare a kingdom of peace, of righteousness, of joy, of love, and of the great joining of justice and mercy into a splended perfection in the person of a king whose amaranthine wonders eternally upwell, beautiful beyond the grasp of human imagination. Because their work is so great, we pray, O Father, your blessing on these small trees.

May their roots work deep, finding rich soil.
May their leaves and buds be wakened by gentle sun and watered by ample rain.
May they be protected from frost, rabbit and roo.
May their lives be life-giving, nourishing the soil, providing home for bug, bird and beast and creating clean air so that generations to come might also live.
May the passers-by who will one day rest in the shade of their branches meet in the rustles of their leaves whisperings of grace, stirring of the spirit and the awakenings of eternal hungers, that can be met and satisfied only in you.

Let these trees, O Lord, bear witness in their deepest natures to eternal things.
Let our lives also, O Lord, do the same, Amen

(Adapted from Douglas Kaine McKelvey's book, "Every Moment Holy")



A Rocha volunteers were delighted to find a female White-throated Treecreeper in a revegetation patch. Although it is a common bird in central Victoria, to see it in a 15 year old revegetation patch means there is available food for this bird even though the patch is a little isolated from other suitable habitat. So, revegetation works for treecreepers!

<https://interserve.org.au/go/kingdomgardeners/>

Kingdom Gardeners

FAITH, ENVIRONMENT AND MISSION



13 JUNE 2019
7.15pm at Syndal Baptist Church

Christ, the Cross and Creation Care

8:30am - 3:30pm Saturday 22nd June 2019 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 McClean
*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

Christ, the Cross and Creation Care

Christ College, Burwood, Sydney
Saturday 22nd June 2019

PROGRAM



8:30	Registration, cuppa, stalls
9:00	Welcome, scene setting, prayer <i>Stuart Blanch – President, A Rocha Australia</i>

Session 1 – Theology of Creation Care

9:10	Is God Green? <i>Rev Dr Lionel Windsor – Lecturer in New Testament Moore Theological College, Sydney</i>
9:35	Trees, orchards and sacred space: biblical reflections <i>Rev Dr Kit Barker – Lecturer in Old Testament Sydney Missionary and Bible College</i>
10:00	Creation care and mission <i>Rev Dr Darrell Jackson – Associate Professor of Missiology Morling College, Sydney</i>
10:25	Creation care and Christian moral vision <i>Rev Dr John McClean – Vice Principal, Lecturer in Systematic Theology Christ College, Sydney</i>
10:50	Morning tea
11:20	Q&A discussion panel with Session 1 presenters <i>Facilitated by Jen Schabel, A Rocha Australia director</i>

Session 2 – Concurrent Workshops

11:40	Christian mission and Creation care <i>Rev Scott Litchfield – National Personnel Director, Interserve</i> <i>Mark Delaney (via Zoom) – International Coordinating Team, Servants to Asia, and co-author of 'Low-carbon and Loving It'</i>	Opportunities & challenges for Christian environmental workers & communities <i>Greg Stone – Theologian, ecological consultant at Woodlands Environmental, and A Rocha Australia director</i> <i>Anna Radkovic – Cassinia Environmental, and former A Rocha Australia director</i>
	Small group discussions <i>Facilitated by Julia Jardine, A Rocha Australia director</i>	Small group discussions <i>Facilitated by Isabel Lyons, A Rocha Australia director</i>
12:30		

12:40 Lunch by Parliament on King

Session 3 – Indigenous Christians: caring for Country, caring for Creation

1:20	<p>Ngarrindjeri Cultural Framework – identifying Our People's traditional obligations to land, waters and all living things that connect us.</p> <p><i>Clive Rigney – Raukkan Community, South Australia</i></p> <p>Sharing God's love and supporting Yolngu through land and sea management</p> <p><i>Mitch Hollier (video) – Marine scientist and teacher, Pioneers missionary – Arnhem Land</i></p>
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Session 4 – Concurrent Workshops

2:00	<p>A Theology and Practices of Creation Care for the 21st Century</p> <p><i>Dr Andrew Shepherd (video) – Theologian, and former Co-Director, A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand</i></p>	<p>Renew Our World: the global church campaigning together to love neighbour, care for creation, and help shape a fair and sustainable world for all.</p> <p><i>Jo Knight – Head of Advocacy, TEAR Australia</i></p>
2:25	<p>Engaging a denomination in Creation care</p> <p><i>Sheryl Sarkoezy – Researcher for the Gospel, Culture and Society Committee, Presbyterian Church in NSW/ACT</i></p>	<p>The value of using experiential methods to teach Creation care</p> <p><i>Sally Shaw – Eco-theologian, educator and A Rocha Australia director</i></p> <p><i>Jen Schabel – Landscape ecologist, educator and A Rocha Australia director</i></p>
2:50	<p>Small group responses</p> <p><i>Facilitated by Philip Hughes, A Rocha Australia director</i></p>	<p>Small group responses</p> <p><i>Facilitated by Sally Shaw, A Rocha Australia director</i></p>

Session 5 – Next steps

3:00	<p>Resource needs and future actions for Creation care: small group discussions and report back</p> <p><i>Facilitated by Stuart Blanch, President, A Rocha Australia</i></p>
3:20	<p>Closing remarks, thanks and prayer</p> <p><i>Stuart Blanch – President, A Rocha Australia</i></p>
3:30	<p>Close</p>

Get involved

There will be opportunities to participate, such as creating your own discussion group, story-telling circles, providing a short video or poster, and praying and reading the Bible together.

Getting there

Christ College is a 7 minute walk from Burwood Railway Station. A range of street parking is available, including paid and free, within a 5 minute walk.

Purchases at the event

A book stall will be set up on the day (cash only, ATM across the street). If you would like to offset your travel carbon footprint there will also be an option to donate to the A Rocha Australia/ Cassinia collaboration for tree planting.

For more information please email australia.comms@arocha.org

Subject to minor amendments up to or on the day.

Hosted by:

Conference Supporters:



Interserve



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CHRIST
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Publication of Tahlee bird study

We are very pleased to congratulate Stuart Fleming on the publication of his baseline study of the birds of Tahlee and surrounds (in north-western Port Stephens, NSW). 167 species were recorded in the 100 ha Tahlee area during the four-year baseline study.

Fourteen species classified as threatened under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth) or the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW) were recorded in the surveys. Regulars amongst these were Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* and White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus*

leucogaster as breeding residents, Beach Stone-curlew *Esacus magnirostris* and Bush Stone-curlew *Burhinus grallarius* the latter of which sometimes roosted on the property, Australian Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris* and Glossy Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami*.

This report is available to read on-line at www.hboc.org.au/the-whistler-volume-13/.

Fundraising challenge

As reported in our last ENews, a large donation has generously been made to A Rocha Australia from the estate of John Rymer to enable our first executive officer to be employed part-time for an intended seven years.

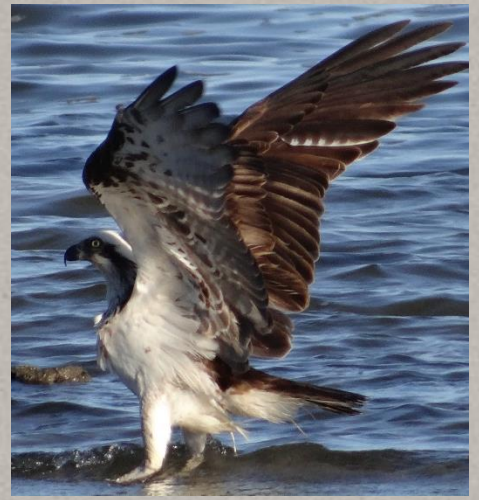
This donation will enable Roger Jaensch to commence in the role for 10 hours/week. We hope that the funds will be matched by other donations and potentially grant funding for more paid hours so our strategic, conservation, fundraising and communications plans can be moved forward more quickly.

Would you be willing to help us grow the work of A Rocha Australia? With your support, we will make quicker progress in meeting our aims to strengthen our opportunities to 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.

Donations and bequests can be set up via our website.
Thank you for considering how you may be able to help us at this exciting time.

Also, could you be A Rocha Australia's Auditor?

A Rocha Australia is a steadily growing organisation and as a registered charity there are numerous governance requirements that the board of directors needs to address. One of these is for our finances to be audited, and so the board is seeking to appoint an auditor. If any members or supporters know of a suitably qualified person with experience in auditing small charity organisations please contact treasurer Philip Hughes – philip.hughes@arocha.org



an Osprey on the shoreline



executive officer, Roger Jaensch

Volunteers: artists involved with A Rocha

Have you admired our artwork for the upcoming Sydney conference? This artwork was very kindly provided by artist and illustrator Lara Cooper, based on the Sunshine hinterland in QLD.

www.laracooper.com.au

@laracooperart



The painting includes these endangered species:

Button Wrinklewort (yellow flower)
Rutidosia leptorrhynchoidea

Schdyers Grasshopper
Schayera baiulus

Peach Myrtle (white/pink flower)
Uromyrtus australis

Green Carpenter Bees
Xylocopa lestis

Common Mist Frog
Litoria rheocola

Bulloak Jewel Butterfly
Hypochrysops piceata



Deb Mostert is another Queensland-based artist, and is involved in A Rocha activities around Brisbane. Deb is a contemporary visual artist and an avid bird watcher, with native Australian birds featuring in many of her artworks, including painting curlews and kookaburra on this house wall, below.

Her latest exhibition, "Australien Future – tales of migration" marries her family migration story with that of endangered migratory shorebirds. She has been working on this project for a few years and is looking forward to the conversations that will come about as people discuss why some birds/people are more vulnerable than others. This exhibition will be showing at the Migration Museum in Adelaide in June/July.

Deb's website is <https://debmostertartist.com.au/>



We also thank Newcastle, NSW-based artist Fiona Pfennigwerth for kindly lending us this artwork for our ENews header/footer. Fiona's website is <https://fionapfennigwerth.info/>

