

From: Darling Downs Environment Council info@ddec.org.au
Subject: DDEC's February Newsletter
Date: 31 Januar 2025 at 5:21 m
To: [REDACTED]



0455 619 454
PO Box 6323, Clifford Gardens, Toowoomba QLD 4350
info@ddec.org.au | www.ddec.org.au

Protecting and promoting the environment in our region.
Unite Advocate Innovate

Dear [REDACTED]

Welcome to the new year, can you believe it is already almost February.

This year we are hitting the ground running with a big year of actions and events planned.

Our two big focus areas getting strong tree protections into the upcoming new planning scheme for the Toowoomba Region and working with the community to engage, educate and advocate for ways to improve the rollout of renewable energy

These projects, ontop of our general work of community education, member group support and being a source of assistance and support to community enquiries keeps me very busy.

Events of note coming up include the Qld Law Reform Commission Mining lease objections review community drop in session from 11am to 3pm on Monday 3rd of February at the Highfields cultural centre. See a flyer below.

For those who are interested in how our economic systems influence our planet we are screening the documentary Less is More: Can Degrowth Save the World on Tuesday 18th of Feb from 6pm. Chats with the maker will follow the 26min doco.
[RSVP here.](#)

In a few months on the 26th of March we will be co-hosting the Shaping Rewables on the Downs Forum, an opportunity to find out how we can improve the renewable energy rollout so it respects and benefits nature and the community. Please help us promote this when registrations open.

If you want to make this year a year to step up your action for nature please get in touch about volunteering or just joining our community of active citizens working on our key campaigns please reply to this email about what you are interested in or [check our positions available here.](#)

For the earth,

Ahri Tallon, DDEC Coordinator

Darling Downs Environment Council
<https://www.ddec.org.au/>

DDEC Updates



Keep Toowoomba Cool- free bumper stickers now available at DDEC. Sticker image above.

Call for Action on Heat Waves in Queensland

Queenslanders are experiencing worsening natural hazards like floods, heatwaves and severe storms. People are losing their homes and heat and hazards are impacting our health and livelihoods. Our local governments are key to helping our communities to prepare and adapt to these changes but they need support and resourcing from the Queensland Government to succeed.

We need to secure bipartisan commitment to two key priorities:

- A business case for QHeat2050 to address the increasing heat risks.
- Resources to improve mapping that integrates riverine flooding, coastal hazards, and nature-based solutions, alongside better science for QCoast2100.

You have the power to influence this.

By signing this letter today you are sending a strong message to decision makers including, the Environment Minister, the Shadow Environment Minister, the Premier and the Opposition Leader, to urge them to commit to these crucial actions. Together, we can ensure that our local governments are equipped with the tools and funding they need to protect our communities and adapt to a changing climate. Now is the time to make your voice heard.

[Send a letter here](#)





New Regulations for Windfarms and other Renewables Projects

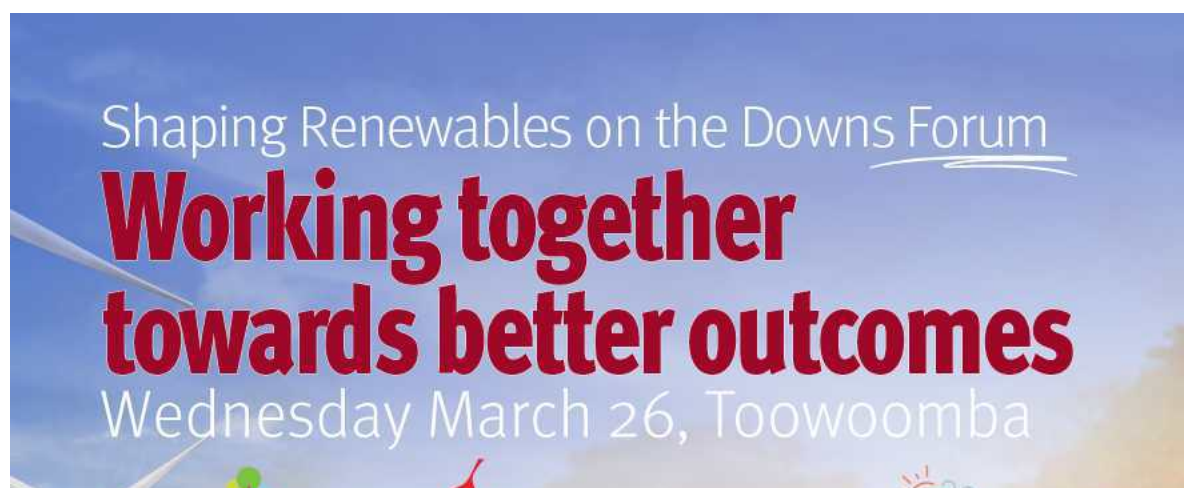
As promised at the election the LNP Government has just made all windfarms impact assessable which means there will be a community consultation and submission process for all new projects effective February 3rd.

In addition 'State code 23: Wind farm development' has also been updated to include additional requirements – reflecting an Impact assessment.

Some include:

1. Making sure wind new farm applications result in no significant loss of high quality agricultural land;
2. Workers accommodation associated with the construction of the wind farm does not adversely impact on surrounding communities;
3. Construction impacts on local infrastructure are mitigated, or if unable to be mitigated, remediated;
4. Social impacts are identified and addressed to avoid negative impacts on host communities (community benefit);
5. Decommissioning of wind farms becomes the sole responsibility of the wind farm operator and guaranteed through bonds or financial guarantees, no longer leaving private landowners at risk.
6. Any disturbance to environmental footprints are rehabilitated.

[DDEC along with other regional conservation groups and the QCC have put in a submission to the consultation about renewables regulation closing on the 6th of Feb that is available to read here.](#)





SAVE THE DATE: DDEC will be partnering with other organisations to host a Downs Community Renewables Forum on Wednesday the 26th of March 2025 to discuss the issues with the renewables rollout and what better planning and regulation is needed. Registration will open in a few weeks.

★★ **EXCITING NEWS:**
The **Darling Downs Environmental Council**
Library is now open and accepting donations!

We are thrilled to announce that the creation of the **Library at the hut** — a warm inviting space where members and visitors can relax, share ideas and connect with one another.

Our Library already features a small collection of books and magazines on various environmental topics that are available for **borrowing**.
We welcome a wide range of materials, including:

- Books on the environment and social change
- Historical resources
- Environmental journals
- Children's books and activity books

If you're unsure whether your donation is suitable, please feel free to contact us for guidance.

—Visit us soon, and consider contributing to our library's collection! —

Donations
can be dropped off at the hut
during opening hours:
Mon – Thurs
10am to 3pm

DDEC
1A Heller St, Rangeville
Phone: 0455 619 454

Help DDEC Earn when you Return

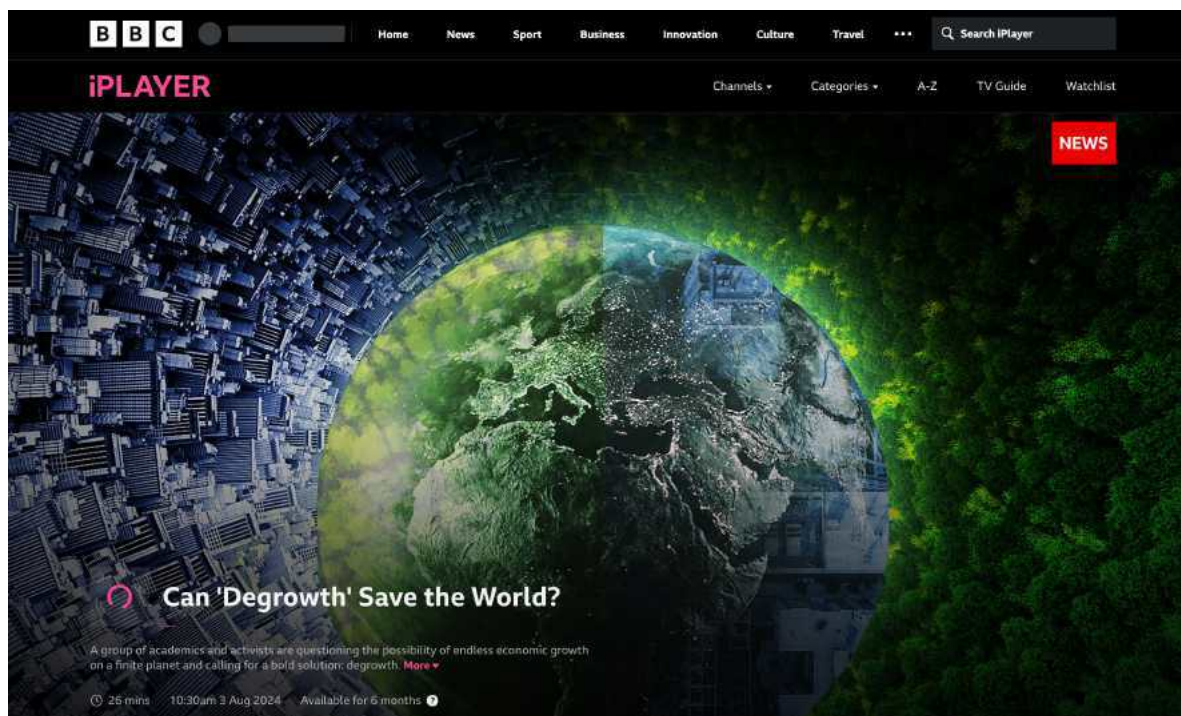
When taking your eligible recyclable containers to a container refund point you can donate the proceeds to DDEC by using our member number **(C10571344)**— that's twice the impact for the environment!

Glass wine and spirit bottles from 150ml to 3L are now accepted for a 10-cent refund at container refund points across Queensland.





Upcoming DDEC Events



Join us for **Less is More: Can Degrowth Save the World** Documentary Screening and Discussion

Tuesday the 18th of February from 6pm to 7.15pm

The Documentary will go for 26 minutes and will be followed by a panel with the filmmaker and discussion.

Documentary description

A group of academics and activists are questioning the possibility of endless economic growth on a finite plane and are advocating for a bold solution: degrowth. Originating in France, the degrowth movement has spread to places like Japan, the UK and Barcelona, taking root in academia, grassroots organisations and among university students. The movement argues for a 'democratisation of the economy' and for collectively managing key resources, like housing. Critics argue that opposing economic growth is impractical and warn of negative consequences, especially for the most vulnerable. This documentary takes a look at the theory - and asks what the practice might look like.

RSVP Here

DDEC Volunteer Gummingarru Visit



We are inviting the DDEC member group and volunteer community for a visit to local first nations sacred site Gummingurru.

DDEC is working to take responsibility for building knowledge and awareness with our community of First Nations issues, peoples and places.

We also want to have a conversation about what we need to do to better listen to and communicate with First Nations peoples when it comes to how we take action to steward country.

This event will include a tour, followed by some team building activities and then meeting for lunch at a nearby pub.

When: Saturday the 15th of February from 9am

Where: Gummingurru, 148 Old Homebush Rd, Gowrie Junction QLD 4352

The Gummingurru stone arrangement is estimated to be around 4000 years old.

In the country of the Jarowair Aboriginal people, this site is an Aboriginal Bora (or ceremonial) site and was used as a men's initiation site until about 1890.

It was also a site where different tribal groups met on their way to the Bunya Nut Festival.

In 2008 the Gummingurru land was handed back to the Gummingurru Aboriginal Corporation (GAC). The traditional custodians now care for Gummingurru and are reviving the cultural knowledge of this place and rediscovering stone arrangements that have been buried in the soil.

[RSVP Here](#)





Volunteers Needed: Withcott Koala Tree Maintenance

Help provide food for local Koalas in care by maintaining the Koala Tree Planting in Withcott. First Sunday of the month from 3pm you can meet across the bridge at Shorelands Drive, Withcott. Organised by Toowoomba Wilderness Society and DDEC. Contact Jenny on 0429 072 555



Community Updates

PFAS Contamination in Oakey Secrecy

This is an Issue the Irrigators, the Oakey community as a whole and the economy of the region. And everybody who drinks water or grows food in the Murray Darling.

The Irrigators Assoc (100 farms), have put a submission in to the current Senate Committee on PFAS but they have been consistently stone-walled when they ask for information about whats going on from Government depts and also Defence.



Council wants your feedback on the Central Highfields Master Plan

Highfields is a thriving and growing urban hub. In the coming years, several thousand more people will call this beautiful part of our region home.

In late 2017, Council purchased a 45-hectare area of land at the corner of Highfield and O'Brien Roads to provide a future town centre for Highfields. The new town centre will offer a wide range of goods, services and accommodation options to cater for anticipated growth and the changing needs of the community.

In 2018, Council endorsed the Highfields Central Master Plan, which included three options for the future layout and use of the land. The master planning process included community workshops, which clearly revealed a strong desire for a modern, accessible, connected and safe town centre.

Council has collated the community feedback and used this information to update the Central Highfields Master Plan. The key changes to the masterplan are detailed via the button.

Find out more and have your say

Toowoomba Region Koala Habitat Project Koala Count Project Media TRC Youtube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dE0Eso4xjTU>

Fast forward to 9.08.28AM

7 News Toowoomba Article

<https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSToowoomba/videos/617298904015015>

ABC SQ Radio Interview

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/southqld-breakfast/breakfast/104832468>

Fast forward to 2hr33'45"

Interesting to see what journalists (and councillors) prefer to highlight from our report.

These general awareness efforts will become increasingly important when our community (and councillors as our representatives) consider the implications of proposed developments in year

to come across our Region.

Particular thanks to Lana Bradshaw (Pittsworth Landcare), Deb Hansen (KLAWS), Jan Clewett & Shaen Egan (Save Mt Lofty) for your support for this deputation.

We look forward to helping other regional groups prepare similar council deputations. You need to have a clear event / issue to highlight, an upbeat spin, plenty of colourful images, make the presentation short & snappy, leaving enough time for councillors to have their input.

Chris Meibusch



Image courtesy: Justine Rice - Dale Martin

KOALA CLIMATE CORRIDORS BUNYAS TO BORDER : EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Koala Climate Corridors: Bunyas to Border project is an exciting new initiative by Great Eastern Ranges, the International Fund for Animal Welfare and Lockyer Uplands Catchments Inc.

"to establish a landscape scale habitat corridor between the Bunya Mountains and Main Range National Park to help Koalas and other wildlife"



Image courtesy: Mitchell Roberts

Eligibility checklist for landholders :

- Own land within / feeding into the B2B Corridor
- Desire to make a difference for native wildlife on your property and contribute to landscape scale connectivity across an important biodiversity corridor
- Willing to revegetate a strip / section of your land with native trees and shrubs that provide food and connecting habitat for Koala, Greater Glider, Glossy Black Cockatoos and other wildlife

adapt to climate change by providing them with safe spaces to move as conditions and food sources shift."

In the first year of the B2B Project's inception, 2,700 native food and habitat trees and shrubs were planted by 86 volunteers across 21 properties, creating over 19.5 acres of new habitat and linkage corridors for wildlife.

This year, we are aiming to plant 3,500 native trees and we need your help!

All planting projects, small or large will be considered for current and future planting rounds (or we can connect you to alternative funding providers to assist you in achieving your project goals)

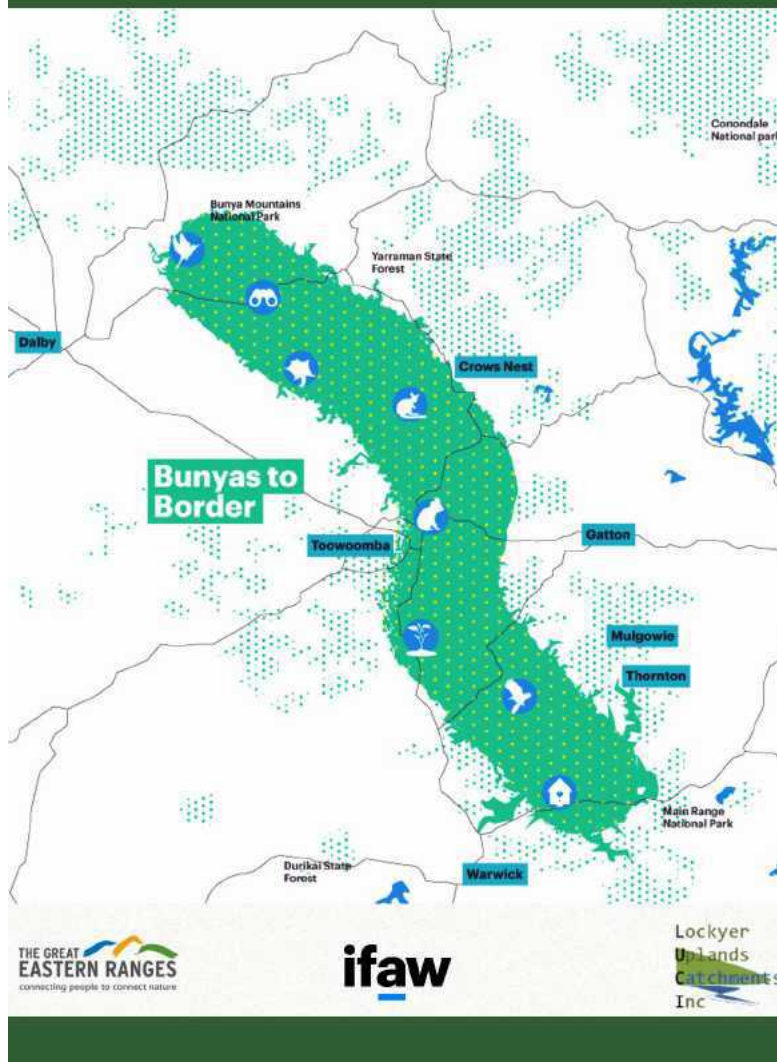
Black Cockatoo and other wildlife

- Land is currently fenced off from livestock or able to be fenced off while plants establish
- Willing to get your hands dirty, and get your neighbours, friends, family and / or the broader community involved in your planting project

We would also like to know if you are interested in the following:

- Weed management in existing bushland
- Nest box / arboreal drinking station install
- koala fodder / Glossy Black Cockatoo planting
- Shelter belt planting
- Cultural / ecological burning
- Carbon farming project (>10 ha)
- Workshops / social media

Please submit your expression of interest form or contact Maree with any queries at B2B@lockyeruplandscatchmentsinc.org.au



Groom the 6th Highest Area for Solar

in Australia

The 2024 Sunniest Neighbourhoods have been announced! Residents of the 4350 postcode, which is in the **Groom** electorate, are in the **6th Sunniest Neighbourhood** in the whole of Australia! [1]

Solar Citizens' Sunniest Neighbourhood Awards acknowledge the communities across Australia with the highest rooftop solar uptake. Rooftop solar is the cheapest way to power our homes, and millions of Australians are taking full advantage of the energy bill savings. The solar households in these neighbourhoods are not only providing clean, cheap energy for themselves but also for their communities.

In November, we delivered the 4350 Sunniest Neighbourhood Award to Garth Hamilton MP, your local Member of Parliament.

As of October 2024, the Groom electorate had a huge 41% of all households having rooftop solar installed

This is a remarkable achievement! **You can firm the LNP's commitment to household renewable energy by writing a brief message of thanks to your local Member of Parliament and show him how popular rooftop solar is in Groom.**

It'll take just a few minutes to send an email thanking them for accepting the award. To make it easy, you can send your email directly to: garth.hamilton.mp@aph.gov.au

Your email to Garth Hamilton is best written in your own words, as Garth wants to know that he's hearing directly from local voters. In your email, you may wish to include the following points:

- Let Garth know that you've heard from Solar Citizens that he received a Sunniest Neighbourhood Award on behalf of residents in his electorate.
- If you already have rooftop solar yourself, let him know the impact this has had on your energy bills.
- If you haven't yet been able to get rooftop solar, let Garth know what the barriers have been.
- And, most of all, thank Garth for acknowledging rooftop solar owners in their electorate!

That's all it takes, just a few minutes. And if you get a reply, we'd love if you share it with us by forwarding to info@solarcitizens.org.au





New Birdlife Australia Project in the Lockyer-Toowoomba Region

Birdlife Australia is launching the Lockyer Toowoomba Birds on Farms project, which encompasses the entire Lockyer Valley Regional Council area, and parts of the Toowoomba Regional Council.

The project is mainly (but not exclusively) focused on woodland birds. Approximately 195 bird species in Australia rely on woodlands, and just over a quarter of those birds are threatened or in decline. Australia has lost 30% of its woodlands, and 75% of what remains exists on private landholdings. The purpose of Birdlife's Birds on Farms project is to improve populations of threatened woodland birds by supporting private rural landholders to increase the extent, condition, and connectivity of woodland habitat on their properties.

There are currently six Birds on Farms projects operating in Australia, the Lockyer-Toowoomba Birds on Farms project will be the seventh, and the first in Queensland. The first year of the project will involve quarterly scientific surveys on the properties of interested land holders, and the second will involve habitat management plans and plantings in priority areas. The project is being co-ordinated by Toowoomba Ornithologist Scot McPhie. If you have a minimum of 5 hectares of woodland on your property and are interested in being involved then please email scot.mcphie@birdlife.org.au





Water Quality in the Condamine Basic

A presentation by Paul Webb from Water Obs.

Download here



Free Energy Audits for Farmers

The Energy Southern Queensland (*EnergySQ*) program will help farms understand and manage their on-farm energy consumption and identify ways to reduce your energy spend and carbon footprint. Any farms in the Southern Downs, Western Downs, Toowoomba, Goondiwindi, Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim regional council areas can participate. Farms can either participate individually or we can work with a 'cluster' of farms in a local area.

Details are available here: <https://www.qff.org.au/projects/energy-sq/>

We're working on the program until next Easter so can provide ongoing advice to participating farms as they join up for that whole period.

[QFF is an independent industry body for agriculture](#), so we don't sell or promote any products or services through the program.



Learn more at www.qff.org.au/projects/energy-sq/



ENERGYSQ

Identifying on-farm energy savings

ENERGYSQ is a FREE on-farm energy efficiency program to support growers/producers located in the Southern Downs, Western Downs, Toowoomba, Goondiwindi, Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim regions to:

- understand their on-farm energy consumption, and
- identify ways to reduce their energy spend.

An initiative of



Supported by



National Trust Tree Registration Opportunity

HOW DOES THE SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER PROTECT TREES?

The National Trust is not a statutory body and has no legal powers. Its influence lies in its ability to offer independent expert advice to a variety of government bodies, local councils, community groups and the general public. The Trust can only ensure the conservation of these trees by encouraging careful planning and management around them. At present, the most effective way of protecting trees is to make people aware of the great value of trees. Awareness brings community concern when these trees are threatened by poor management or removal.

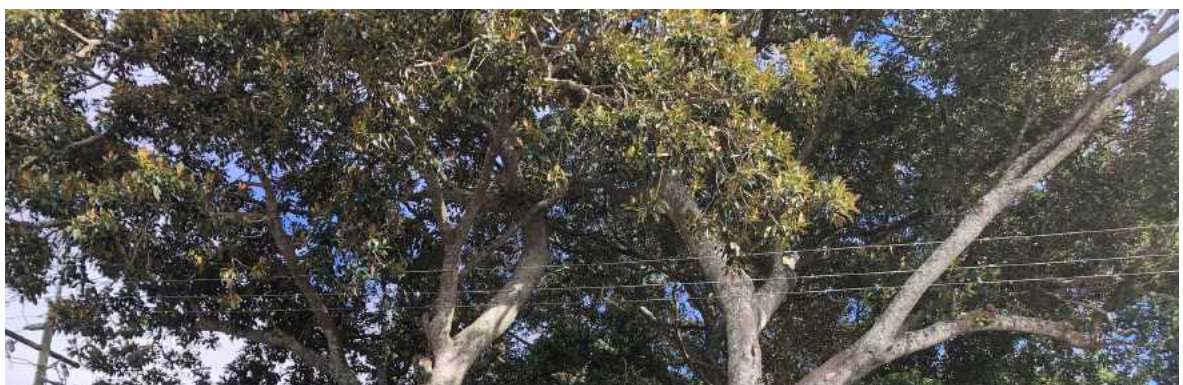
The inclusion of trees on the Trust's Register therefore imposes no legal restrictions or obligations on the owners or responsible authorities, nor provides trees with statutory protection. Therefore we encourage you to nominate a tree to the National Trust and then use our endorsement to pursue other avenues, to ensure that trees are not only recognised for their significance but also protected by law.

There are several ways to legally protect significant trees and vegetation. These include, but are not limited to the:

- Local urban planning controls implemented by your local Council or Shire
- State heritage law (for trees with heritage values)
- State environmental law (for trees with natural values)

Protection for the great majority of significant trees is best achieved by local government planning controls.

[Click here to nominate a tree](#)





Murray-Darling policy 'a \$13 billion flop

[Read this punchy article about the failure of the Murray Darling Basin Scheme.](#)



Blister pack recycling program

Pharmacycle is Australia's first and only end to end recycling program for household and commercial medicinal blister pack waste. It is the quick and easy way to recycle empty medicinal blister packs. Best of all, it's completely FREE to drop off at a participating pharmacy.

After a successful trial across 100 Chemist Warehouse pharmacies in Victoria last

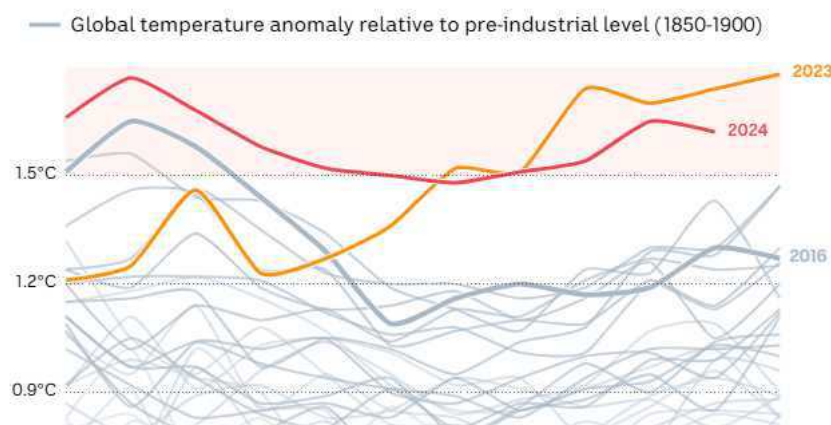
year, Chemist Warehouse and [PharmacyCycle](#) have teamed up with Codral® to roll out a national recycling program for blister packs around the country.

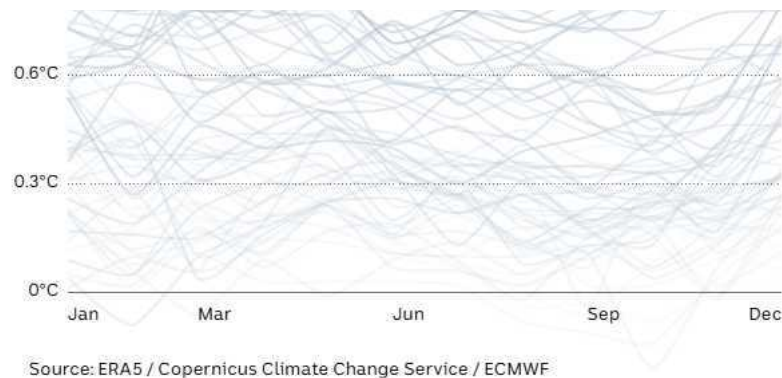
Drop-off locations will be located in all Chemist Warehouse and My Chemist pharmacies nationwide with Australians able to return their empty blister packs (the packaging that pills and tablets come in) to the designated PharmacyCycle recycling bins in-store across the country.



2024 Hottest Year on Record World Wide

2024 was officially the hottest year worldwide, with [global temperatures exceeding the 1.5°C target](#) for the first time last year. The average temperature was [1.6°C above pre-industrial levels](#), the highest ever recorded. In Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology reported it was the [second hottest year on record](#), surpassed only by 2019.





2025 has continued the trend, with [heatwaves in the southern states](#) during the first week of January and in [Queensland last week](#).

This underscores the urgent need to transition away from fossil fuels, alongside the need for safe, weatherproof and energy efficient homes based on [up-to-date datasets](#).

[Renew published research](#) last year that found that the amount of energy needed to cool a home in Brisbane is set to double by 2050. This means that a 7-star home built in Queensland today will score zero stars by 2090 under a severe climate change scenario. Just imagine how hot today's existing homes that currently have an average rating of just 1.7 stars will be a couple of decades from now!



DID YOU KNOW?

New builds are required to have a 7-star Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) rating, but the average rating of existing homes is only 1.7 stars.

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY MINIMUM
STANDARDS FOR OLD RENTALS NOW!**

Wambo Windfarm Begins Construction

From their newsletter:

The Wambo Wind Farm team have launched into the new year and realised some important milestones for the project, with the first two of Wambo's 42 Stage 1 wind turbines being completed last week.

The project, community, and wider region experienced heavy rain and changing conditions to close out 2024, so it's fantastic to see construction progressing.

Construction of Wambo Wind Farm's wind turbines will continue throughout 2025, as will scheduled deliveries to site.

We are committed to working with the community and our neighbours, and we look forward to welcoming you at one of our bi-monthly drop-in sessions in Jandowae, chatting at community events or any time you have a question or concern by calling 1800 490 475.



Community Events



Come and see us in the Darling Downs and South West Queensland

As part of our mining lease objections review, we are considering whether any recommendations we make for mining should apply to other resource production proposals. This includes greenhouse gas, geothermal and **petroleum leases** and their associated environmental authorities.

The focus of our review is on community participation.

Our [consultation paper](#) (and [fact sheet](#)) sets out our approach to reform and our consultation proposals.

We want to hear your views.



Come along to our drop-in sessions

Our team will be at the locations listed below. Please come by and talk with us, ask questions and share your views.

Date	Time	Venue	Address
Toowoomba Monday 3 February	11am – 3pm	Highfields Cultural Centre	Sean McCarthy Way (car park entrance off Balmoral Street), Highfields
Dalby Tuesday 4 February	10am – 3pm	BMO Business Centre	178 Drayton Street (access via Hogan Street), Dalby
Chinchilla Wednesday 5 February	10am – 12pm	Chinchilla Community Centre, Function Room	67 – 71 Middle Street, Chinchilla
Roma Wednesday 5 February	2:30pm – 4:30pm	Roma Cultural Centre, Ernest Brock Room	57 Bungil Street, Roma
Injune Thursday 6 February	10am – 12pm	Injune Memorial Hall, Supper Room	38 Hutton Street, Injune

We want to hear your views

We are currently accepting submissions on our final consultation paper. To make a submission, please visit the '[Make a submission](#)' page or email us at qlrc-miningobjections@justice.qld.gov.au. Submissions close on 31 January 2025.

If you would like to arrange a meeting or discuss our review more generally, please email qlrc-miningobjections@justice.qld.gov.au, visit our [website](#) or call (07) 3564 7777 for more details.



QCC Webinar: how to build renewables better

February 05, 2025 at 6:00pm - 7:30pm

Join us to explore the solutions to building renewable energy better, to conserve resources, benefit communities and protect nature.

There are solutions emerging to improve recycling of renewable energy components, deliver lasting community benefits and improve biodiversity. Hear about these and how you can help build the renewable energy industry we want to see.

RSVP Here



1.30 pm to 4.30 pm

Sunday 2 February 2025

1.30 pm- AGM

followed by

Guest Presenter - Frances Michaels

2.00 pm

Seed Saving

Frances will encourage our seed-saving by explaining:

- **How** to save seeds
- **Why** to save seeds
- The **value** of seed saving to build resilience and adapt locally to climate change
- How to **save and share seeds effectively** to build community resilience
- Which vegetable varieties are especially suited to the growing conditions of **SE QLD gardens**

A little about **Frances Michaels**

Frances is a **Permaculture Elder** who first completed a Permaculture Design Certificate (**PDC**) with **Bill Mollison in 1985**. She has taught **40 PDCs**, has an Advanced Diploma of Horticulture, and a Diploma of Permaculture Design. Frances is also a **Master Gardener** and is the retired CEO of **Green Harvest** (for 34 years).

We'll send you the Zoom link once you book.

See [Humanitix](#) for full details.
Bookings are Essential

Book here!

[Extreme Heat Awareness Day: take local action, join us online and try the Hot Quiz for Cool People to win prizes](#)

On February 5th, we're launching **Australia's first-ever [Extreme Heat Awareness Day](#)** with the Red Cross and other partners. We need your help to make it a success! We've [updated our website](#) with 5 actions each for individuals, organisations and government. You can register for our webinar sharing [why we need an Extreme Heat Awareness Day here](#).

If you've got plans to be involved, reply to this email so we can include you in our story of this huge event.





MULTICULTURAL
LEADERSHIP
INITIATIVE



How do we build a climate movement stronger than ever?

Sign up to our
BIASES AND BOUNDARIES WORKSHOP

This workshop goes **beyond your average diversity and inclusion** session, to explore the implicit biases that might be impacting our climate work. We want to drive a more inclusive movement and support climate groups and organisations to **create individual and collective cultures of ...**



Breaking
through
BIASES



Reflection,
proactive +
reactive
boundaries

Who is this for?

- ANY climate/environmental groups
- ANY group interested in supporting and/or building the climate movement

*Sign up!
The workshop
is free!*



Together, we will learn about:

- The concept of Unconscious Bias,
- Recognising and reflecting upon our own biases and practices,
- Strategies to minimise bias in our

Dr. Yolanda Waters,
Director of Research and Education
0493 775 401

Bird Photography Exhibition

Wow look at all of the effort Charles Dove put in for his ongoing exhibition at the Engine Room Cafe. Running from 8am to 2pm until the end of December it is free to all or take some money along and buy some beautiful posters to educate the family. Charles will be there on Tuesdays and is more than happy to chat to you. Isn't nature amazing? To think these are photos taken in our region.

Congratulations Charles and thank you for all you do.





We are proud to be your voice for the environment in the Darling Downs!

Feel free to donate however as we are now DGR registered. No pressure, but it would be great for the future of DDEC and the active community of groups now using the centre.

Your donation supports our important work and ensures that we can rise to the challenges that lay ahead. All donations are now tax deductible.

Click on the image to go to our donations page.

Another way to support our work is to consider adding DDEC into your will to leave a legacy for our environment.

Include DDEC in your Will Today



Darling Downs Environment Council

DDEC acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, people of the Wakka Speaking Nation, the "Bunya Burra".

Darling Downs Environment Council · Australia
This email was sent to palbion@me.com · [Unsubscribe](#)

Created with [NationBuilder](#). Build the Future.

