

From: Darling Downs Environment Council info@ddec.org.au
Subject: DDEC's March Newsletter
Date: 3 March 2025 at 3:49 pm
To:



0495 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. Inspire.

As usual this is another jam packed newsletter with lots of local and state updates about environmental issues and opportunities for action.

See below for bigger updates about our recent Koala advocacy, the upcoming Shaping Renewables on the Downs Forum and our recent work advocating for tree protections.

[Starting Locally, the Toowoomba Council is seeking feedback on their new waste management strategy.](#) This is not an area DDEC has had capacity to look into so if anyone has ideas about what is needed in this space please let me know.

Related to this at the [State Government level a Committee is currently seeking feedback on improving Queenslands Container Deposit Scheme,](#)

[Further, we recently got the good news that Toowoomba will host the first bulka/big bag recycling facility.](#)

Currently Brisbane has a Cyclone heading for it which although it is the first for 30 years it is something that is expected to happen more frequently as the atmosphere heats up. [The Climate Council has developed this map that tells us how much each electorate area of Australia is forecast to heat up pending on the levels of action or climate change.](#)

If you want strong nature laws and climate action as part of the outcomes of this Federal election you can email your local Federal candidates via this [online action here.](#)

Finally on a lighter note, who has gone for a paddle up Oakey Creek from Boodua Reserve near Kingsthorpe before? I went on Sunday and it was beautiful (see the photo below). It is 4WD access only but if anyone is interested to check it out I have a 3 person canoe I am happy to lend out.

For the earth,

Ahri Tallon, DDEC Coordinator

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





DDEC Updates

Building Support for Increased Koala Protections

Recently Ahri Tallon (DDEC Coordinator), Don Carlson (DDEC President), Lana Bradshaw (Pittsworth Landcare), Cr Dr Rebecca Vonhoff (TRC), Jenny Withnall (DDEC Committee) and Sandy Brown (DDEC Committee) met with the new Environment Minister the Hon Andrew Powell.

At the meeting we discussed the need for the Toowoomba region to be included in the Koala Strategy and Mapping for SEQ. [The policy brief we shared is available here.](#)

As part of the case Lana Bradshaw shared findings of the Pittsworth Landcare initiated research into the Koala Population of the region [which is available here.](#)

This report presents the results of a Koala population study in Toowoomba Region: Council Local Government Area in the Darling Downs region of Queensland

Coastal Local Government Area in the Darling Downs region of Queensland, performed non-invasively using a citizen-science model. Scat samples from wild Koalas across the study area were collected by the local community. DNA isolated from these samples was then subjected to a range of molecular tests to provide insights into the genetic health, disease status and the diet of the Darling Downs Koalas.T

Importantly, this data can be used to inform improved strategies aimed at conserving and recovering the species.

The outcome of the meeting, the Minister said he would consider it. DDEC is meeting with again in May so we will be sure to raise this issue again!





Protect Trees Toowoomba

As many of you probably know, this year the draft new planning scheme will be released. This is a big opportunity to get decent tree protections put in place. To achieve this we need to work to engage the neighbourhoods that want to see an end to clear felled development to raise their voices. If getting a balance between development and habitat that keeps Toowoomba's 'garden city' charm is important to you we urge you to get involved. Please reply to this email and we will send you the next meeting information.

See our planning scheme recommendations



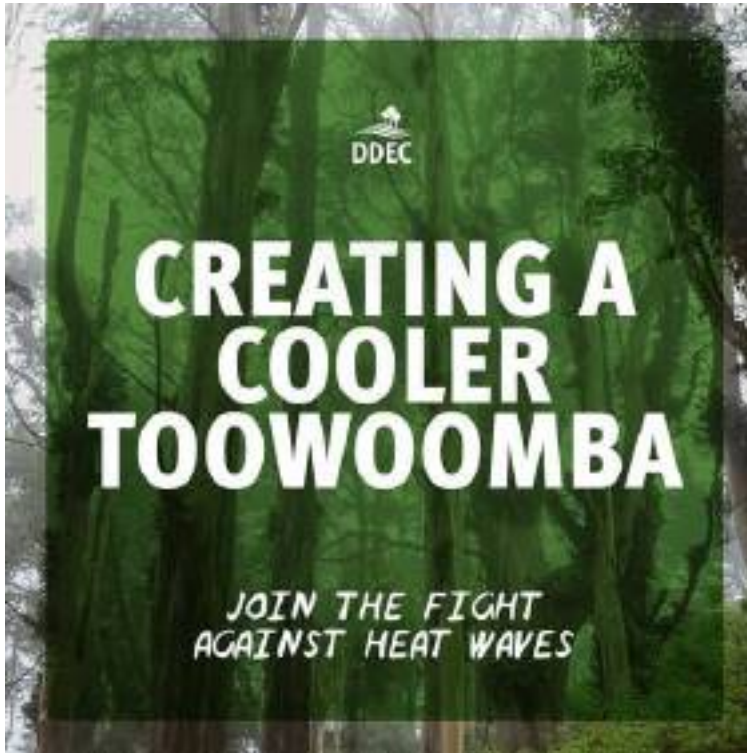
Keep Toowoomba Cool Update

The Keep Toowoomba Cool working group has been progressing with a few key updates to share:

- We have been meeting with Council to explore how community organised street tree planting in partnership with council could work to help speed up the cooling of our neighbourhoods.
- Musfirah and Junmei, two social work placement students have recently completed this report into the types of community engagement strategies for urban greening. [Click here to read the report.](#)

- We have some research volunteers investigating what policies need to change to ensure developers are handing over new developments with street trees alive and healthy until the home is bought.

Please get in touch if you want to get involved!



Deongwar Update

Recently the new Environment Minister sent some of the organisation advocating for the protection of Deongwar State Forest an update as to what is being considered by the Minister and the Department. [Please see the letter here.](#)

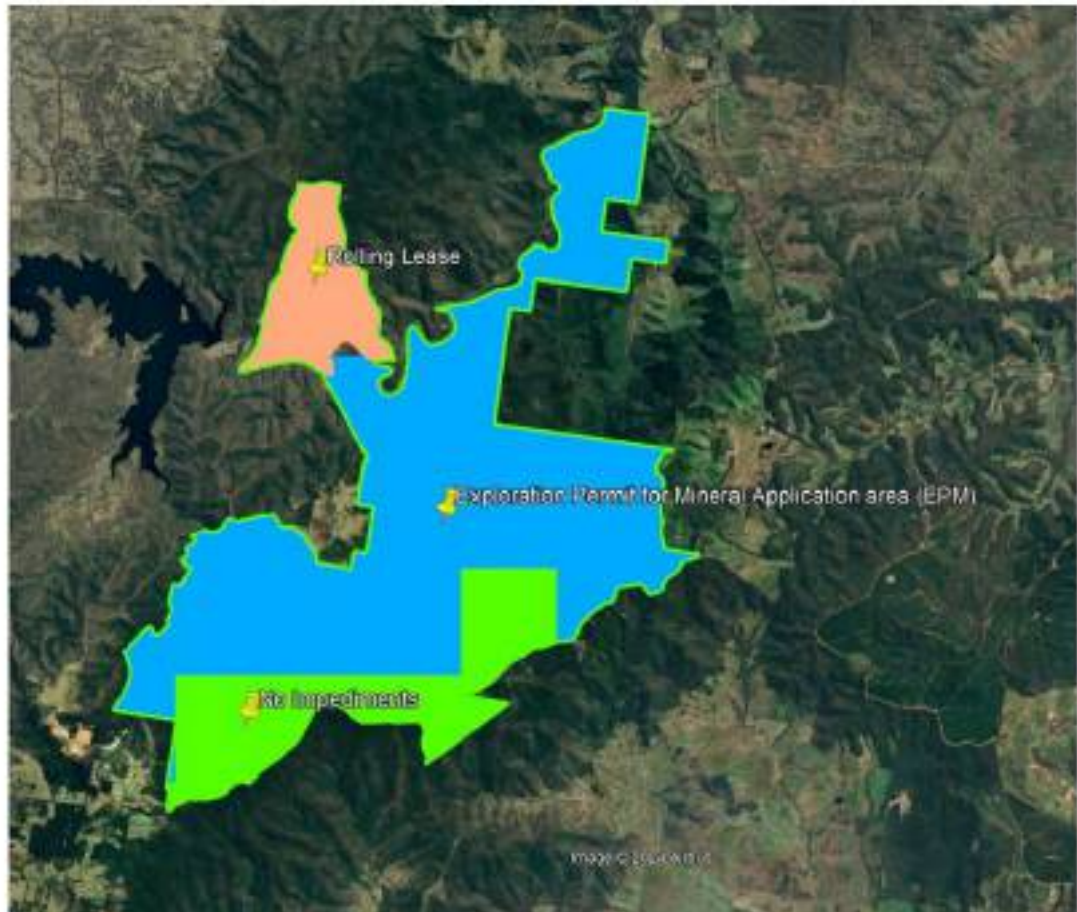
Key take aways:

- **Challenges to Conversion**
 - Some existing interests (e.g., **grazing leases, mining, or exploration leases**) may prevent areas from being added to the protected area estate.
 - Coordination with other government agencies is required to evaluate these impacts.
- **Ongoing Negotiations and Next Steps**
 - The government is prioritizing assessments and negotiations for Deongwar State Forest.
 - Once evaluations are complete, DETSI officers will arrange a meeting with Ms. Moffat to discuss the future use of the forest.
 - For interim inquiries, **Nick Weinert (Executive Director - Protected Area Strategy and Investment, Queensland Parks and Wildlife**

Area Strategy and Investment, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service) is the contact person.

[Sign the latest Deongwar Petition Here](#)

Deongwar State Forest: Encumbrances and Notes.



Map 1. Showing area free of encumbrances in green. (948 hectares) Toowoomba Regional Council 50 year rolling lease in orange, expires 2027. (438 hectares) and the Exploration Permit for Mineral Application area (EPM) shown in blue. (3518 hectares)

Help DDEC Earn when you Return

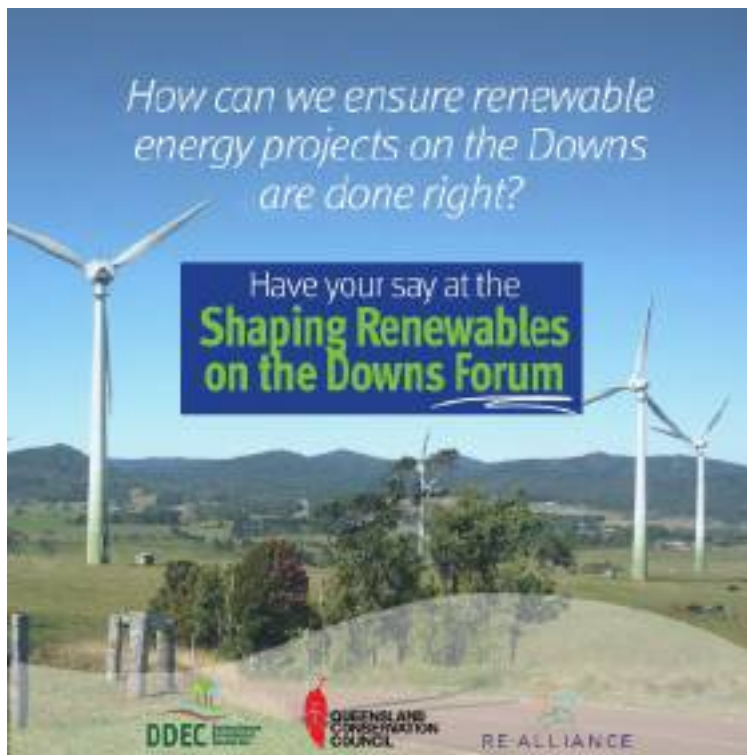
When taking your eligible recyclable containers to a container refund point you can donate the proceeds to DDEC by using our member number **(C10571344)**– that's twice the impact for the environment!

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



Shaping Renewables on the Downs Forum; Working together towards a better future.



Date: Wednesday, 26th March 2025



Time: 8:45 AM – 3:30 PM



Venue: Karl Langer East Room: Burke & Wills Hotel, Toowoomba



Tickets: \$15 (includes morning tea and lunch)

Join us for a pivotal event shaping the future of renewable energy in Southern, Western and Darling Downs!

The Shaping Renewables on the Downs Forum aims to bring together community members, landholders, stakeholders, and government representatives to discuss how to address the challenges of the renewable energy rollout so it can benefit the whole community.

The renewable energy rollout is a massive opportunity for the Downs to reap community, economic and drought-proofing benefits. However, the renewable energy rollout must be done right, ensuring regional communities are actively involved and have a voice, while supporting farming livelihoods and protecting our precious natural areas. Bring your voice to the table to enrich and deepen the discussion on how we go forward. It is the intention to document the issues, ideas and concerns raised at the forum into a report to give to all levels of government highlighting what changes are needed next.

Let's work together to create a better future for the Downs region.

Why Attend?

- Explore Key Issues: What needs to change to ensure 'renewables are done right' so they protect our precious natural places and ensure farming benefits
- Have Your Say: Share your ideas, concerns, and priorities to influence the future of renewables planning and regulation in Queensland to ensure maximum benefits and collaboration for local communities from renewables in the Downs.
- Shape Policy: the forum's findings will be documented into a report to be shared with all levels of government.
- Hear from experts: and decision makers about key issues and impending policy changes.

[Tickets here](#)





[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

Protecting TECs of Coolibah - Black Box and Poplar Box Grassy Woodlands in southern Queensland areas of the Brigalow Belt

Boost your biodiversity and resilience! Get support for positive management practices in and around woodland areas on your property.

Property owners in southern Queensland, your grazing lands may support two unique ecosystems: Coolibah-Black Box Woodlands and the Poplar Box Grassy Woodlands. Both are valuable to maintaining the health and productivity of your agricultural systems.

Protecting these woodlands ensures they continue to provide the shade, shelter, and soil health that your livestock rely on, creating benefits for both your farm and the environment. You can participate in this project to not only conserve these critical ecosystems but also contribute to the long-term sustainability and productivity of your grazing systems. Collectively, we can make a difference beyond your property boundary and throughout the regional vegetation corridors.

The areas for the project are just west of the darling downs. Between Roma, Miles and Goondiwindi.

Find out more here: [Brigalow Belt | Southern Queensland Landscapes \(Natural Resource Management Group\)](#)

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

In 2016, 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

Queensland's Clean Energy Investment Lead at Risk

Queensland leads the country in committed renewable energy and storage investment, according to a [new report](#) by the Clean Energy Council (CEC). The report found Queensland has 30 large-scale renewable energy and storage projects either under construction or committed, with a total capital investment worth over \$10 billion.

The report from CEC found Queensland has 30 large-scale renewable energy and storage projects either under construction or committed, with a total capital investment worth over \$10 billion. There are 8 wind farms, 8 solar farms and 13 big battery projects heading towards construction or commissioning across the state. Queensland now runs on close to 30 per cent renewable energy.

The Queensland Conservation Council points to the findings of this report as key evidence that Queensland's Energy and Jobs Plan was delivering investment certainty for the industry – which is now at risk due to the current Queensland Government's lack of an energy policy.



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Image courtesy: Mitchell Roberts

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 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)

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 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 plantin
- 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





Are you a budding nature conservation photographer?

Honouring the legacy of acclaimed conservation photographer Wayne Lawler, [Wildlife Queensland](#) is excited to open the 2025 [Wayne Lawler Nature Conservation Photography Grant](#).

This grant (up to **\$2,000**) supports non-professional Australian nature conservation photographers in capturing conservation stories and promoting community-led conservation projects.



Applications close 30 April 2025.

For details and to apply, visit [Nature Conservation Photography Grant | Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland](#)

This program is managed by Wildlife Queensland and funded by a trust established by Wayne Lawler.

Please share this opportunity with your networks!



Email Queensland's Energy Minister

Renewable energy is under attack in Queensland. First, Premier David Crisafulli said Queensland's renewable energy targets should be repealed, then the State Government halted assessment on new wind farms, and now they're withdrawing support for Queensland's largest proposed green hydrogen project. *It's death by a thousand cuts.*

If the anti-renewable members within the Queensland Government are allowed to keep calling the shots, Queensland has no chance of meeting our climate goals and securing a safe climate future for our communities and wildlife.

But there is a ray of hope: we've met with a number of LNP MPs who do support renewable energy – and they need our help to show the rest of the party that Queenslanders do too.

[Can you write to Treasurer and Energy Minister David Janetzki today to show your support for our renewable energy targets?](#) Together, we can send a clear message that Queenslanders know renewable energy is cheaper, cleaner and vital for our future prosperity.



Help Wanted:

Karen is currently hoping to find some interested regenerators to volunteer for FEP. All tools provided. Work wed mornings flexible with time and weather. Contact Karen 0419 101 555





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.

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.

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

An initiative of **QFF** QUEENSLAND FARMERS FEDERATION | Supported by **acciona** energy

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](#)



Pharma Cycle Locations in Toowoomba

Pharmacy 777 Toowoomba
8 Mylne Street
Toowoomba, QLD 4350, Australia
Chemist Warehouse Toowoomba
255-257 Margaret Street
Toowoomba, QLD 4350, Australia



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What happens to blister packs?



Watch our 3-part educational
mini-series on the Journey of a Blister Pack
[HERE](#)

Resources sector responsible for one third of Queensland's emissions

Queensland's resources industry – primarily coal mining and coal seam gas extraction – is responsible for a staggering one third of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions, according to a new report by the Queensland Conservation Council.

The report exposes how toxic fugitive methane emissions from coal mining are the biggest source of climate pollution within the resources sector. Without a proper plan to tackle it, Queensland communities and our vital ecosystems like the Great Barrier Reef and the Channel Country are paying the price.

Addressing fugitive methane emissions through strong climate targets, accurate measurement and on site mitigation is a huge opportunity for both the Federal and State governments to achieve climate action and ensure the state remains competitive in a rapidly decarbonising global economy.

[The full report is available here.](#)



Community Events





Amaroo Microforest Maintenance Day

On 11th November 2023 we planted approximately 900 seedlings in a micro forest. It now needs some maintenance, so if you have an hour to spare to remove weeds and add mulch please come along.

Event by [Amaroo Environmental Education Centre](#)

Date and time: Sunday 9th of March, 7.30am to 11.30am

Address: 90 Kleinton School Road, Kleinton, QLD, Australia

RSVP Here

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Friday

9am till

Workshop #1:
Windows 10,
Word Excel

9th May	2 pm	PowerPoint
Friday 16th May	9am till 2 pm	Workshop #2: Windows 11, Word Excel PowerPoint
Saturday 31st May	9am till 2 pm	Workshop #3 Individual Support/ Troubleshooting

Register Now → Email: glenysbowtell@bigpond.com
Phone 0428 751 070

[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.

Parks Week

Saturday
8th March 2025

Friends of the Escarpment Parks
Toowoomba invite you to

Williams Park Open Day

Please

- wear covered shoes
- wear a hat, sunscreen and be sun safe
- BYO water bottle



Cecil Crescent, Highfields

7.30am - 8.30am

Bird walks led by experienced bird-observers. Bring your Binoculars.

9am - 9.30am

9.30am - 10am

10am - 10.30am

Guided Plant Identification Walk

Guided Plant identification walk

Guided Plant identification walk

These walks will be led by experienced Botanists who will identify endemic plants and also weeds

11am - 11.30am

Guided Butterfly/ Invertebrate Identification Walk

11.30am

Geology. A talk by Edwin Willey (Hon. nr-Lecturer UQ) on the degradation and formation of Klein Creek

8.30am - 12pm

Static Displays by Friends of Escarpment Parks, Birdlife Australia, Power Art, Crows Nest Community Nursery and other natural history groups. The Dancing Bear will provide refreshments.

7pm - 8pm

Guided Spotlight Walk to discover the nocturnal animals of the park. Bring headlamps, spotlights and torches.

Regular Volunteer workers needed for Williams Park. If available please phone

Karen 0419 101 555 to discuss.

Please book by phoning Council 131 872 or emailing change@tr.qld.gov.au



Friends of Peacehaven Botanic Park - TAVERN TALK – 13 March 2025

Speaker: Trish Gardner

Topic: Acacias Around the World and in your Garden

Date: Thursday 13 March 2025

Time: 6 pm for 7 pm presentation

Place: Highfields Tavern

Cost: Nil (but purchase your own dinner and drinks)

Trish Gardner – Acacias Around the World and in your Garden

Patricia Gardner, one of the authors of the field guide, *Wattles of Toowoomba and the Condamine Catchment*, will talk to us about Australian wattles and their overseas relatives.

They are interesting in the wild, adding beauty to our region's landscape, and some (but not all) make good garden specimens. Trish will touch on subjects such as where does Acacia honey come from, what insects they bring in to your gardens, and whether you can eat Acacia gum.

Register: <https://register-for->

<https://event.memberwizard.com.au/3df01e2c299c475b8ce67f250f2d007f>



Renewables in the regions: Getting on with the job

Are you curious to know more about the cleantech propelling Australia into our clean energy future? Register for [Beyond Zero Emissions Tech Talks](#), a webinar mini-series connecting tech experts, renewables advocates, and curious minds to unpack what clean technologies are, how they work, and what they mean for Australia.

You'll hear from the experts and have the opportunity to ask about anything from how the grid works, why prices are changing in our energy market, and the science behind the tech, policy and the green economy.

[Register here](#) for Renewables in the regions - Getting on with the job





In the first webinar of the series, join me and Dr. Amanda Cahill, CEO of The Next Economy and co-editor of the recently published book *Regional Energy Transitions in Australia: From Impossible to Possible*. How are regional communities across Australia meeting the challenges and opportunities that renewable energy presents? What are the real stories and proof points of the benefits that renewables can bring to the regions? Find out what's happening on the ground and the lessons learned that can be applied to your region.

Join us for: [Renewables in the regions - getting on with the job:](#)



Date: 6 March
Sydney) via Zoom link.



Time: 2pm AEDT (Canberra, Melbourne,

[Register Here](#)



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".

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