

From: Darling Downs Environment Council info@ddec.org.au
Subject: DDEC's December Newsletter
Date: 5 December 2025 at 7:08 am
To:

AT



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

As we head into the final weeks of the year, I want to begin by sharing DDEC's response to the Coalition's recent climate policy changes — you can read it here: <https://ddec.org.au/14-nov-25/>. These shifts remind us why strong, community-led advocacy is more important than ever.

This month's newsletter captures just how active and engaged our region has been. From our Protect Trees Toowoomba nest box program expanding into schools and Landcare groups, to important media coverage of DDEC's bushland funding report, to the re-activation of Climate Action Toowoomba — our community continues to show what determined, grounded environmental leadership looks like.

We've also shared updates on the EPBC reforms, understorey clearing concerns in local reserves, community rallies, new renewable energy programs, and the incredible 2025 Koala Count effort led by Toowoomba Region Koala Habitat Project.

A huge thank-you to all our volunteers, member groups, supporters, and campaign partners — your contributions, from advocacy to on-ground restoration to event organising, are what make this work possible. Your care for country is showing up everywhere across the region.

Over the Christmas–New Year period, the Eco Hut will remain open and staffed (except public holidays), as we welcome Hannah, a student on placement who will be supporting our summer projects and community engagement. Drop in if you need a quiet workspace, want to get involved, or simply want to connect.

As we close out 2025, I'm deeply grateful for the generosity, courage, and solidarity shown by our community. Thank you for everything you've done this year — seen and unseen.

Let's keep building momentum together in 2026.

[P.s. Here is a link to some extra info that did not fit in the newsletter email.](#)

In solidarity,
Ahri Tallon
Coordinator, Darling Downs Environment Council

DDEC Events

Carols for the Canopy- Final Event for the Year

Carols for the Canopy

Start: Saturday, December 13, 2025•07:00 AM

End: Saturday, December 13, 2025•08:30 AM

Location:Queens Park Botanic Gardens•Corner of Lindsay and Campbell St, Toowoomba, 4350 AU

Host Contact Info: 0455619454

*Dress in green with a bit of red and bring something to share for a breakfast picnic.

Join us for a morning of music, hope, and community action to protect our trees and wildlife! We will be singing to the park run participants, market goers and to ourselves.

We will then be distributing flyers for people to letterbox to educate the community about the need for tree protections in the lead up to the new planning scheme expected in 2026.

Use this RSVP link: <https://ddec.org.au/events/>



DDEC Darling Downs Environmental Council Inc.

PROTECT TREES - TOowoomba

Carols for the Canopy

Songs for Tree Protection this Christmas

Saturday 13 December
7:00 AM

The poster features a green background with a blurred Christmas tree and lights at the top. A decorative border with red and yellow diagonal stripes separates the top image from the text. The text is centered and includes the event title, subtitle, and date/time. On the right side, there is a stylized Christmas tree with musical notes. At the bottom, there are small icons of trees and a star.



Defeating Disinformation Workshop

Is it possible to manage environmental disinformation?

FREE Workshop at DDEC

Presented by Dr Barbara Ryan

Thursday, Jan 22 at 5.30pm at the Toowoomba library, 5.30 – 8.15 pm finish.

Open to all members and supporters

You've heard it before — wind farms kill whales. The climate has always changed. The Greens stopped the fires from backburning/doing preparation burns. Renewables generate incredible amounts of waste.

Each claim is false. Each claim looks grassroots. But under the surface lies coordinated disinformation working to derail environmental progress.

*This interactive workshop will help you understand how disinformation works — who spreads it, why it takes hold, and what you can do to stop it. You'll explore and share real-world examples of climate and environmental disinformation in Australia, learn tools for detecting and defusing falsehoods, and understand how to build **proven and simple***

'inoculation' strategies into your organisation's communication and messaging. Designed for professionals and community advocates who support our environment, this session turns frustration into confident action. Together, we'll learn how to respond constructively, communicate evidence clearly, and protect genuine public dialogue from manipulation.

Because truth deserves champions — especially when our future depends on it.

DEFEATING DISINFORMATION



How would you like to beat disinformation before it pokes up its ugly head?

In this 3-4 hour tailored workshop, your organisation's **media spokespeople** and **comms team** will learn how.

You will:



- Learn about the what, who and why of disinformation
- Examine the evidence base of dealing with disinformation
- Understand how to get ahead of it
- See how this looks for your organisation
- Workshop your organisation's new disinformation communication strategy



Barbara Ryan

Communication Researcher

Dr Barbara Ryan is a communicator with over 40 years experience in practice and research. She is a former journalist, communication consultant and in-house manager, and university PR teacher and researcher.

She is especially focused on translating social science research for practical application by organisations.



Book your workshop now!

barb@cicadaresearchandcomms.com.au

DDEC Updates

DDEC Bushland Funding Report Covered by Media

Important detail: in the 23/24 year TRC spent just over \$5 mill on tracks, facilities, fire prevention with mechanical spraying. No ecological weed maintenance which we no all the other councils fund. We could not separate those numbers with the other councils however, so when they say 25% less that is generous, it's more 100% less when it comes to looking after the environment.

We need a bushland strategy for our existing parks but also if we are going to protect new areas of habitat to keep the green as our town grows.

Report link here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qFW-SwRMmMsGOUMfFg5VrgtsMFjfDj3i/view?usp=drive_link

Watch News Footage



Coverage about our bushland funding report.

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Report link here:

<https://drive.google.com/.../1qFW.../view...>



7NEWS Toowoomba

5 November at 17:31 · 🌐

A new report has revealed Toowoomba Council is underfunding bushland parks, risking the town's Garden City image.

Environmental groups are urging the Council to do more to protect and maintain these areas.

#7NEWS

Download the 7NEWS app: 7news.link/7newsapp

Nest Box Building and Fundraising Drive Launched

Recently the Protect Trees Toowoomba group have started outreaching to Schools, Tafe, Scouts and Mens sheds to help build nest boxes to install in areas where development has cleared old hollow bearing trees.

We have already had our first batch of 10 built by the students at Pittsworth Highschool. PTT volunteer Elliana went to collect them and talked about the importance of hollows and nest boxes and delivered them to be used by Pittsworth Landcare.

We have already bought enough timber to last us a little while so we need help with the

following things:

-A place to store the timber we buy in future and nest boxes that are built awaiting installation (In Toowoomba preferably).

- Donations for the materials to build nest boxes. Click here:

<https://ddec.org.au/nestboxfundraiser/>

-Skilled people to build nest boxes but also help us draw up cutting lists for the designs for them. This is what info we have: <https://ddec.org.au/tree-protections/nest-box/>

-Help engaging businesses to promote the fundraising and other groups to build them



Climate Action Toowoomba Re-Activation

Last week there was a meeting of former and new community members interested in climate action advocacy in Toowoomba. We had a good discussion on what we could focus on, how we could sustain a group and have fun while doing it. **Further discussion will be had at the next meeting on Wednesday the 14th of January at 5.30pm at the Buru Dain Dan DDEC**

Eco Hut. Reply to this email if you want more information.



Solar Recycling & Battery Safety - Webinar Recording Now Available!

An illustration on a light blue background shows two workers in blue overalls and yellow hard hats. One worker is kneeling and working on a large solar panel, while the other stands nearby. In the background, there are two blue wind turbines, a bright yellow sun, and some green foliage.

Missed the Renewables Done Right
Webinar?

Watch Recording

Here!

Missed our recent *Renewables Done Right* webinar? You can now watch the full session featuring **Dr Rong Deng** and **Dr Deepak Mishra** from **UNSW**, as they share the latest research on solar panel recycling and battery safety in Australia.

Discover how smarter end-of-life solutions for solar systems can help create a more sustainable clean energy future.

 Watch the recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUFBv8wdIAI>



GET YOUR GLOVES ON!

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY REGISTER NOW CLEANUP.ORG.AU BY DECEMBER 31ST 2025

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY ON THE GOLD COAST, EMAIL info@ddec.org.au

GIVE BACK TO THE PLACE WE CALL HOME

SUNDAY 1ST MARCH 2026

Clean Up  DDEC 

Community Events

Save our Darling Downs Brisbane Rally 10am Tuesday 9th Dec

It's been a busy few weeks for Save Our Darling Downs. Many of you attended our

successful screenings of "Pipe Dreams – Fractured Lives" in Dalby and Toowoomba. They were very well attended and great discussions were had afterwards as to how we can spur the government to urgently implement their promise to protect the Condamine Alluvium.

After sending a strong message with our local rally several months ago, the next step is to take our public advocacy to Brisbane:

We're rallying at Speaker's Corner, outside Parliament House, at 10am on Tuesday, 9th December. This is the last parliamentary sitting week of the year, and our last chance to get our message heard before the politicians disappear over the Xmas/January period.

We'll be taking a tractor, our signs and our produce to speak to the city media and the politicians directly – this is a really important one. We've already had strong RSVPs from our Brisbane-based supporters, so it's important that as many locals as possible come as well.

If you could RSVP as soon as possible saveourdarlingdowns@gmail.com , that would be much appreciated.

For any queries, please call Nick on 0427 711 020



Community Updates

Trains to Toowoomba or Upper Lockyer?

Here is an article explaining the issue by Andrew Reeson.

[Read Here](#)





Deongwar- It's Not Protected Until its Gazetted Petition

Petition to the Queensland Legislative Assembly. Closing 7 December 2025.

The logging of publicly owned native State forests in the South East Queensland Regional Plan area has ceased, but these high conservation value native forests are still exposed to future policy changes and ministerial decisions that may cause environmental harm. See the petition link for details - <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-the-Assembly/Petitions/Petition-Details?id=4327>



PETITION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Logging of publicly owned native forest in the South East Queensland Regional Plan area has ceased, but these areas of high conservation value native forest are still exposed to future policy changes and ministerial decisions that may cause environmental harm.

PLEASE READ THE PETITION AND 'SIGN N SHARE' VIA YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORK.

"It's not protected until it's gazetted"

Closing 7th of Decemeber 2025.



TDC Planning Scheme Reference Group Nominations

TRC Planning Scheme Reference Group Nominations

Open

Your chance to shape Toowoomba Region's future

Toowoomba Regional Council is keen to gain insights and ideas from industry representatives and local experts on planning for our future.

Industry and Community members are invited to join the Planning and Development Policy and Technical Advice Reference Group.

Council is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced professionals to become a member of the Reference Group.

Council is focused on delivering a new Planning Scheme for the community. It will serve as a key mechanism for managing population growth, housing supply, infrastructure investment and environmental resilience over the next 25 years. The Reference Group will provide a forum for collaboration and consultation between Council Officers and planning and technical professionals within our community.

The purpose of the group is to discuss, provide feedback, and exchange insights on matters relating to the Region's draft Planning Scheme and Council's planning and development functions.

If you're a planning or development professional or have technical expertise in this field, we'd love to see your submission to be part of this Reference Group.

Council are inviting expressions of interest from local professionals with experience and qualifications in the following disciplines:

- Planning
- Engineering
- Architecture, Design or related disciplines
- Economics or related disciplines
- Environmental or related fields
- Development Industry.

Up to seven members will be appointed for a 12-month term, with the possibility of extension for a further period of up to 12 months at Council's discretion with members to receive remuneration for meeting attendance. It is intended that the Group will operate under a Terms of Reference, with meetings held as required in-person at Toowoomba Regional Council offices.

To submit your Expression of Interest, please provide a brief cover letter outlining your relevant qualifications, experience and reason for wanting to join the Reference Group to [EOI Planning and Development Policy and Technical Advice Reference Group](#) by 12 January 2026.

In addition to the creation of a Reference Group, the first procurement packages for the Planning Scheme Delivery Program are also open. For more information visit the 'Current Tenders' page at www.tr.qld.gov.au.

2025 Koala Count Success

314 OBSERVATIONS

for the month of November 2025

across the Toowoomba Region.

Over the last 5 years, we have managed to steadily increase our number of observations from 56 in 2021, to 189 in 2022, to 220 in 2023, to 230 in 2024.

Our 2025 record is, in no small part, due to the efforts of Deb Hansen & Kylie Somerset and their KLAWS team who recorded 171 observations for the month of November. Honourable mentions to Sandy McKay, Jan Clewett and Lana Bradshaw who picked up the minor medals this year.

As we all know, this steady increase in observation numbers is due to the enthusiasm and persistence of our valued observer volunteers rather than any actual proven change in the fate of our koalas across our Region. This year it has been, however, heartening to talk with many local landholders, community members and school students keen to help promote our koalas and their habitats.

This year we were again fortunate to have the support of Koala, Land and Wildlife Support (KLAWS), Pittsworth Landcare and High Country Koala Action Group and welcomed Gomaren & Doctors Creek Catchment Landcare to run dedicated Count Days at Crows Nest, Pittsworth and Goombungee.



Add your voice: Support 1% nature



Australia's unique nature — its forests, wetlands, native animals, coastlines — is under serious pressure. According to 30 by 30, just 0.1% of the federal budget goes toward nature protection. That's far from what's needed to safeguard our ecosystems for future generations.

The 1% For Nature campaign asks something simple yet powerful: **let's commit 1% of Australia's federal budget to protecting nature.** This small shift could:

- Keep wildlife and landscapes healthy for the long term.
- Help Australia meet its global pledge to protect 30% of its land and sea by 2030 under the broader 30 by 30 framework.
- Support clean air, water, stable climate, and the many services biodiversity provides — benefits that underlie public health, agriculture, and even disaster resilience.

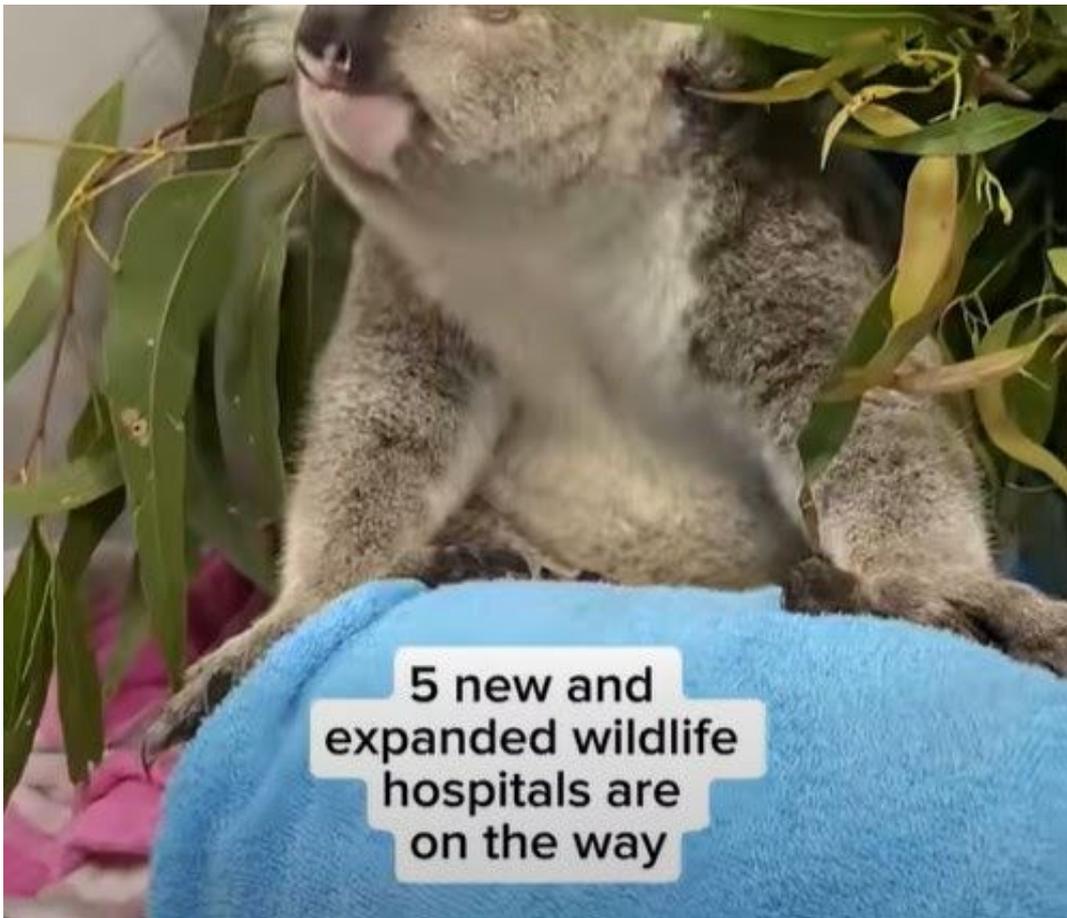
If you care about leaving a healthy environment for our kids and protecting what makes Australia special, this is your chance to act.

Sign the 1% For Nature petition today and add your name to the growing call for bold investment in nature.

[Click here to sign](#)

Queensland boosts wildlife hospitals with \$39.6 million investment





The Crisafulli Government has committed **\$39.6 million** to expand and establish **five state-of-the-art wildlife hospitals** across Queensland, providing specialist care for sick and injured animals.

Three of these facilities — at **Redlands, Southport, and Moreton Bay** — will also be **open to the public**, offering unique ecotourism experiences as part of the landmark **Destination 2045 tourism strategy**. Visitors will have the chance to witness real-time wildlife treatment, learn about conservation, and engage with the state's passionate carers and veterinarians.

The redevelopment includes:

Currumbin Wildlife Hospital continuing its immersive visitor experience.

Sea World Marine Wildlife Hospital and **Green Island Turtle Rehabilitation Centre** serving as public education hubs.

A new **RSPCA Wildlife Hospital at Redlands**, supported by \$12 million in government funding and additional contributions from donors and the Saving Koalas Fund.

Each year, RSPCA Queensland treats over **27,000 injured or orphaned animals**, highlighting the critical need for more resources and facilities. Minister for the Environment and Tourism Andrew Powell said the funding will **ensure better care for thousands of animals**, inspire future conservationists, and strengthen Queensland's position as a global ecotourism destination.

These investments mark a **fresh start for wildlife protection and ecotourism in Queensland**, preserving native species for future generations while creating unforgettable

Queensland, preserving native species for future generations while creating unforgettable experiences for visitors.

[Read More](#)

Fire hazard reduction and ecological restoration update



Recent works carried out by Council across several small bushland reserves in Toowoomba have drawn **concern from community members**. Residents report that **large sections of native understory**—including shrubs, small trees, and groundcover plants—have been removed or bulldozed, particularly in the **Stenner Street park**, where wide swaths of vegetation were cleared around the reserve.

Locals worry that **further clearing may soon occur in JE Duggan Park**, one of the city's last intact bushland areas with a thriving native understory. Many believe the scale of clearing appears excessive and risks damaging valuable ecosystems that provide essential wildlife habitat and support biodiversity.

In response, the **Council has confirmed** that the clearing was undertaken as part of a **fire hazard reduction program** intended to minimise bushfire risk and improve safety ahead of the summer season.

Council also announced plans to **restore and maintain ecological integrity** in these reserves by:

- **Replanting native understory vegetation** to replace cleared areas.
- **Conducting manual weed maintenance** to prevent invasive regrowth.
- **Supporting natural forest succession** to ensure the long-term health of the ecosystem.

The replanting and weed maintenance efforts are expected to begin during the next planting season, with progress updates to be shared through community newsletters

This is a new Text block. Change the text.

EPBC Reforms Explained

The EPBC reforms have been passed with deal between Labor and the Greens.

This is a huge achievement for our movement! Here is an ABC article about it could help protect nature and speed up development: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-11-27/how-new-epbc-environment-laws-may-speed-up-housing-renewables/106051844>

Here are the details:

What's Good

- The continuing use exemption that allows for hundreds of thousands of hectares of forests and woodlands to be bulldozed each year with no assessment under the EPBC Act will be closed, ensuring land clearing in Reef catchments, which smothers corals and other marine life, is regulated under our nature laws. There are two key wins here:
 - Clearing of regrowth vegetation that is more than 15 years old (regardless of where it is located) will now need to be assessed under the laws and meet the National Environmental Standards.
 - Clearing vegetation (of any age) within 50 metres of a waterway in the Great Barrier Reef catchment, will now need to be assessed under the laws and meet the National Environmental Standards.
- There will be new National Environmental Standards on the environment, with legally enforceable rules to protect endangered wildlife and ensure ecologically

sustainable development.

- Big polluting companies will now need to disclose their emissions and fossil fuel projects will not be able to be assessed under the streamlined assessment process.
- Specific threatened species will be excluded from being offset through the Restoration Fund.
- The Water trigger has been prevented from being devolved to state and territory governments, ensuring that vital surface and groundwater impacts from projects will be assessed at the federal level.
- There will now be five yearly reviews of the Act to ensure the laws are delivering for communities and the environment, previously these were only done every ten years.

What's Missing

- Even though climate emissions will need to be disclosed, they will not actually be assessed. This is a huge gap when we know one of the biggest threats to nature and threatened species is climate change.
- The new laws will enable the handing of powers to state and territory governments who've shown that they can't be trusted to protect our nature and climate.
- The new National Environmental Protection Agency has finally been introduced, the decision making powers of NEPA are subject to the direction of the minister, impacting their independence.

Watch the EPBC QCC Webinar



Community Energy Incubator Program - Expressions of Interest
Now Open



The new **Community Energy Incubator Program** has officially launched, and expressions of interest are now open. The Incubator will support **five community groups or local partnerships** over two years to develop mid-scale community energy projects, including solar and battery initiatives.

Selected participants will receive:

- Tailored training and mentoring to progress project development
- Up to **\$10,000 in funding** to close key gaps or secure matched funding
- Investor and funder matchmaking to unlock capital
- Inclusion in an investment-ready portfolio
- Opportunities to collaborate with peers and sector experts

Eligibility:

Applications are invited from community organisations, councils, and local partnerships nationwide working on mid-scale community solar and/or battery projects. This includes community-led and community-owned projects, as well as partnerships where the community holds a legal/financial stake or participates in governance.

Timeline:

EOIs are open now and close **16 January 2026**. Shortlisting will begin in mid-January, with final onboarding expected in **February to early March 2026**.

[Learn More & Apply](#)

Land Management Survey

The National Agricultural Land Management Survey is underway.

This survey covers land management decisions, sustainable farming practices, and

participation in government programs.

Your feedback will help shape programs that support sustainable agriculture, boost research & innovation, and strengthen Australia's agricultural sector and rural communities.

Managed by ABARES for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), with data collection by The Social Research Centre. Read more **end February 2026**. **Click here:**

<https://qwalc.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=f1f1284889dab408fec34ff34&id=b88ed00761&e=87bcb056b6>



National Agricultural Land Management Survey

Your voice matters

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