



0455 619 454  
PO Box 6323, Clifford Gardens, Toowoomba QLD 4350  
[info@ddec.org.au](mailto:info@ddec.org.au) | [www.ddec.org.au](http://www.ddec.org.au)

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

Welcome to our April 2026 newsletter! It's been a busy and inspiring start to the year at the Darling Downs Environment Council, with so many opportunities for learning, action, and connection.

We're excited to **welcome new volunteers and student placements** to our team—your energy, curiosity, and commitment are what make our work possible. Thank you for joining us in protecting our region's environment and strengthening community action.

#### Upcoming DDEC Events:

- **Forest Fever Disco & Gourmet BBQ Fundraiser** – Saturday, 11 April at Wilsonton Lutheran Church Hall. Boogie for trees, enjoy classic tunes, and support *Protect Trees Toowoomba*. More details below.
- **Gowrie Creek Rubbish Clean Event TBC** Saturday 25th of April 3pm
- **Koala Corridor Tree planting event** Tuesday 28th 8.30am at Linthorpe

#### DDEC Updates & Resources:

- **Save Our Darling Downs and Lock the Gate** are fighting to protect the Downs from Gas on our prime farmland.
- **Homes and Trees Forum Recap** – Insights from the 4 March forum on balancing housing growth with tree protection for cooler, healthier, and more liveable communities. Recording and fact sheets are available online.
- **Koala Map Posters & Tea Towels** – Huge thanks to Alex for creating these beautiful local koala habitat maps. Available for purchase to support our tree and wildlife protection work.

#### Community Initiatives:

- LUCI Autumn Walk, Glossy Black Cockatoo workshops, and Fire Management workshops offer hands-on opportunities to learn about local ecosystems and sustainable land management.
- *Imagining 2040: Pathways to Flourishing Futures* podcast invites reflection on sustainable futures for our communities.
- Campaigns such as *Make Polluters Pay* and *Protect Native Woodlands* highlight avenues for advocacy and action in climate justice and habitat protection.

Finally, we extend our heartfelt **thanks to our Committee Members**, whose guidance, dedication, and leadership underpin every project, forum, and campaign we undertake. Your commitment allows us to continue making a meaningful impact across the Darling Downs.

We hope to see many of you at our upcoming events and encourage everyone to get involved in our programs, workshops, and campaigns. Together, we can continue to nurture a greener, healthier, and more resilient region.

In solidarity,  
**Ahri Tallon**  
Coordinator, Darling Downs Environment Council

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## DDEC Events

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### Protect Trees Toowoomba Fundraiser: Forest Fever Disco and Gourmet BBQ





Join us for a dance at Wilsonton Lutheran Church Hall on the 11th of April to raise money for protecting our trees in Toowoomba. Branch out and boogie!! There will be separate space for the gourmet BBQ. Music will also be 60s, 70s and 80s themed for the golden oldies!

Buy tickets here!



## YOU ARE INVITED

Tree Planting Day with  
*Stroud Homes Toowoomba*

TUESDAY

APRIL | 28 | 8:30 AM

 326 STOWER RD, LINTHORPE 4356

- Light catering provided, including cold drinks
- Comfortable clothes and closed-toe shoes are recommended

  
Scan the QR code to RSVP



RSVP Here



# DDEC Updates

Last week, the Queensland LNP broke their promise to protect QLD's best farmland from coal seam gas. They proposed legislation they said will protect it which does the opposite, removing prime cropping farm land from the Regional Interests Planning Act

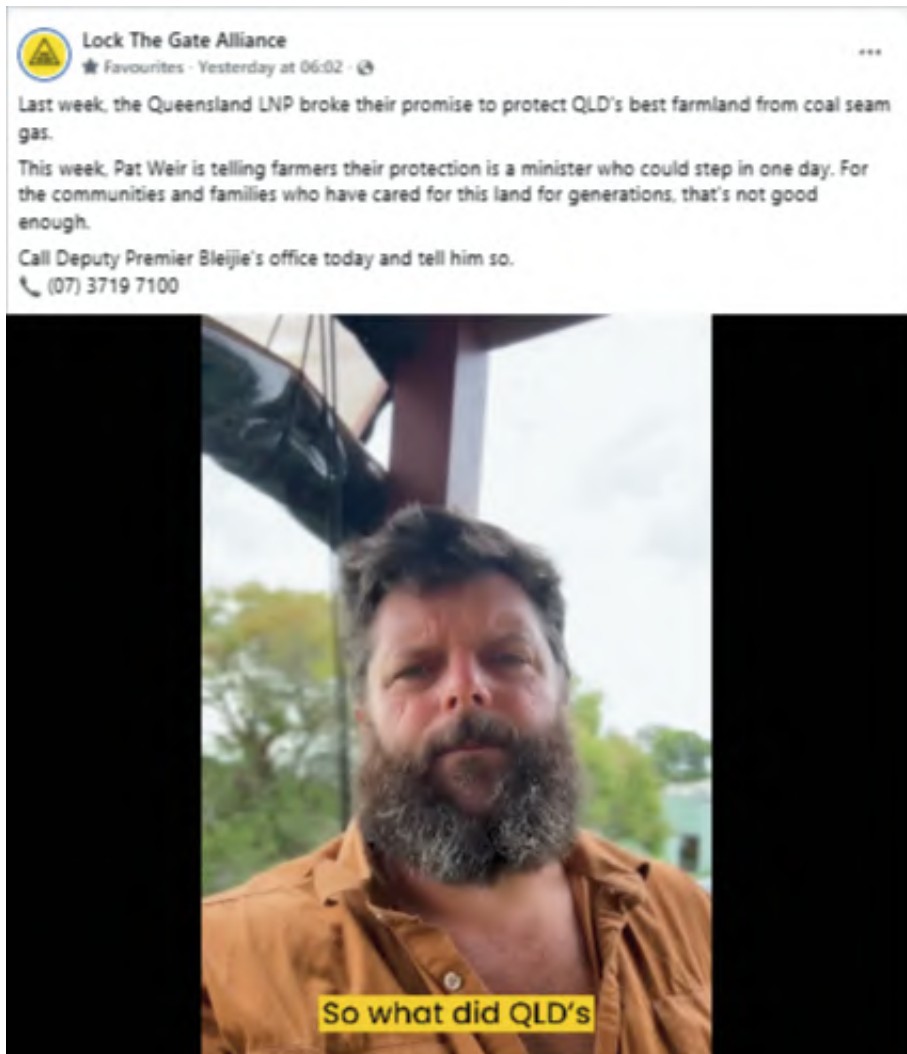
This week, Pat Weir is telling farmers their protection is a minister who could step in one day. For the communities and families who have cared for this land for generations, that's not good enough.

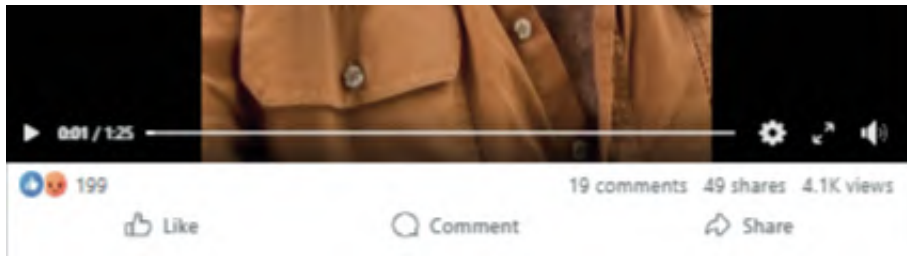
Call Deputy Premier Bleijie's office today and tell him so.  
(07) 3719 7100

The Knitting Nannas are also outside David Janetzki's office weekly from 8am -10am on Fridays. Please join in.

We need more volunteers to help support Save our Darling Downs farmers to get the message out in the community so please call out to help.

Watch the update from Lock the Gate here!





## Tree Protections Forum Recap

Thanks to everyone who came to our forum on tree protections and affordable housing.

If you did not make it here is a fact sheet that was distributed:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1F8h-XStkvjTRNTGi930UxrDraEZ1skR/view?usp=sharing>

Watch News Footage Here





## Response to Rainforest Reserves Feedback on Renewables Booklet

This blog post serves as a direct response to recent criticisms regarding DDEC's renewables booklet, clarifying that the information provided is based on existing legislative frameworks and factual operational data. By addressing concerns ranging from the limitations of environmental offsets to the nuances of energy costs and supply chain safety, the text emphasizes that DDEC advocates for renewables as a more sustainable alternative while acknowledging the necessity of ongoing regulatory oversight. Ultimately, the blog reinforces that while no industrial development is without risk, transparent mitigation strategies and technical improvements remain the most effective path forward for the energy transition.

For those interested in reading the blog, a link of the full blog is included below:

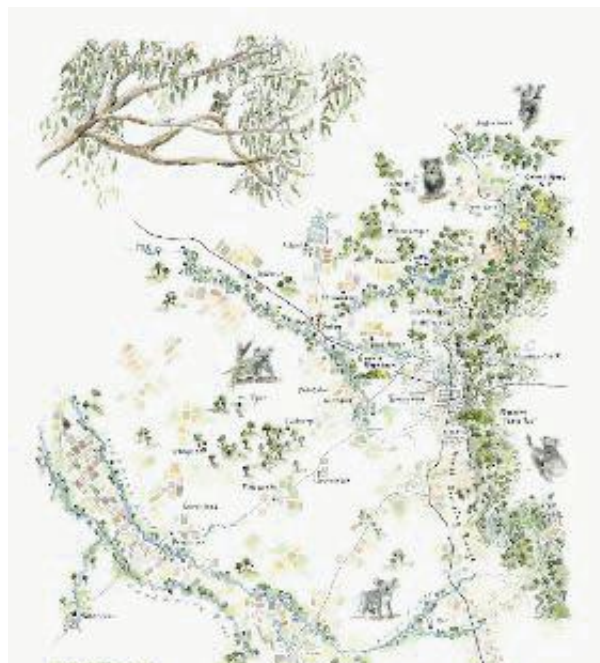
<https://ddec.org.au/renewables-feedback-feb/>

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## Artistic Downs Region Koala Map Posters and Tea Towels

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Alex for creating this incredible map representing koala habitats in our Darling Downs region. Your expertise and attention to detail are greatly appreciated, this map is incredible!!

You can now buy these maps as posters \$6 and tea towels \$20 to help raise funds for our work to protect trees and Koalas.







# QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

## TOOWOOMBA: 2026 Listening Action

Tuesday 19 May

5:30-8pm

Lifeworks Uniting Glenvale

Have your voice heard!

Join others in your community to listen, share, and build trust and relationships.

Real change starts when people come together, listen deeply, and find common ground.

Together we can lay the foundation for a stronger, more connected community.

On the night:

- Connect with others
- Share what matters to you
- Learn how to influence decisions
- Shape next steps on local issues

Free event, dinner provided



**Register here**

Register to attend here.

**Sponsorship Opportunities: 2026 State Landcare  
Conference**

## CONFERENCE



Sponsorship opportunities are now open for the 2026 State Landcare Conference, taking place 16–17 October 2026 in Murray Bridge. Hosted by All Occasions Group on behalf of the organising committee, the conference will bring together landholders, environmental leaders, researchers, industry representatives, community groups and policymakers committed to building resilient landscapes across South Australia.

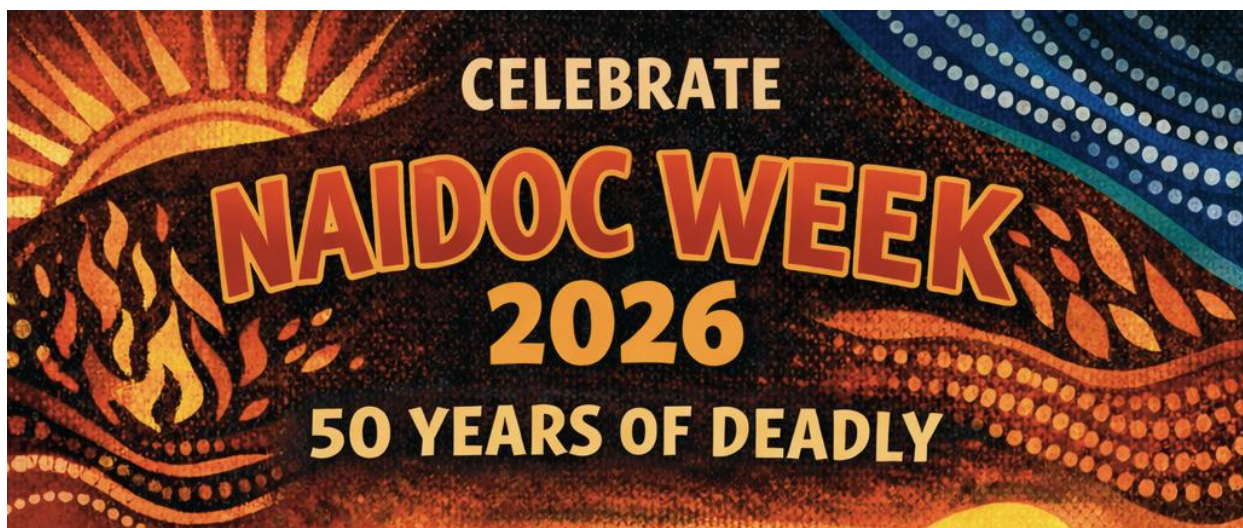
The event provides a unique platform for collaboration across community, science, industry and government, highlighting the vital role that Landcare Australia and the broader Landcare movement play in protecting natural resources, strengthening biodiversity and supporting sustainable agricultural systems.

Organisations are invited to partner with the conference to showcase innovation in sustainable land management, connect with key decision-makers and demonstrate leadership in environmental responsibility. Sponsorship and exhibition opportunities are available for organisations working in areas such as sustainability, agriculture, natural resource management, renewable energy, biodiversity conservation and regional development.

Those interested in supporting Landcare’s future are encouraged to explore partnership opportunities and access the Sponsorship Prospectus via the conference webpage.

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## NAIDOC Week





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**Questacon Science Circus: Toowoomba Pop-Up 10 & 11  
April 2026**



**FREE!**

# Toowoomba Pop-Up

Friday 10 April, 11 am - 5 pm  
 Saturday 11 April, 10 am – 4 pm  
 Clive Berghofer Recreation Centre, UniSQ Toowoomba Campus  
 20 Baker St, Darling Heights QLD 4350

With over 30 hands-on exhibits and spectacular science shows to spark curiosity, the *Science Circus* pop-up is a fantastic STEM experience for the whole family!

Contact [ScienceCircus@Questacon.edu.au](mailto:ScienceCircus@Questacon.edu.au) or 0466 922 801 for enquiries.

Book your free ticket!  
[bit.ly/QSC26QLD-NSW](https://bit.ly/QSC26QLD-NSW)

## The Planting Programme is this May!





From 1 to 3 May, Woodfordia returns to put hands in the ground together. What began with 10,001 trees in 1997 has grown to more than 135,000, a quiet, living testament to what community can do over time. Autumn is settling in now... softer light, cooler air. It is a good time to plant.

Alongside the tree planting, the weekend unfolds with music each evening and, through the days, a gentle offering of talks, walks, play and kids activities, and spaces for stillness among the trees. It remains a small and intimate gathering, shaped by care for place and for each other.

There are a few special offerings across the weekend too, Mario Queen of the Circus, bringing his playful world, Troy Cassar-Daley and Joe H Henry with their storytelling from near and afar, Sásta and Dizzy Days for that 'end of the planting day' dancing energy and of course, Costa and dirtgirlworld, ready to walk with our younger generations on the path of falling in love with nature.

*Find the full program from the link below:*

The Planting



We know times are not simple for many right now. That is felt here too. All the more reason, perhaps, to come together in something grounded, hopeful, and shared.

If you're not able to join us in person, you can still take part in this growing story. We invite you to make a \$20 plant-a-tree donation, a simple act that helps bring new life to Woodfordia. Your contribution supports the full journey of each tree, from soil preparation and planting to mulch, nutrients, and those crucial early days of care. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

[Donate Here](#)

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**Help bring Sustainable House Day to life in your community**

# Sustainable House Day

**Presented by *renew.***

Sustainable House Day is back on **Sunday 17 May 2026**, opening doors to real homes across Australia and showcasing practical ways to make homes more efficient, affordable and climate-ready.

From thoughtfully designed new builds to retrofits, small upgrades and all-electric homes, the focus is simple: real people sharing what works. The impact is clear — **70% of past attendees say they plan to make changes to their own homes within six months.**

A key part of what brings Sustainable House Day to life locally is the role of community organisations.

**Become a Community Partner** Community Partners help turn this national event into meaningful local action. Whether it's a workshop, retrofit Q&A, building tour or community talk, your event becomes part of the wider Sustainable House Day program.

In return, you'll receive:

- Promotion through Sustainable House Day digital and social channels
- Listing on the official website
- Recognition as part of the national network
- Two complimentary tickets

 [Apply to become a Community Partner](#)

While applications to showcase homes have now closed, this year's program will feature a diverse range of homes — from apartments to family houses, renters to homeowners — all sharing practical, real-world sustainability solutions.

Sustainable House Day is more than just an event. It's about communities learning from each other and taking the next step toward more comfortable, affordable and climate-ready homes.

**Learn more below:**

[SHD Website](#)

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## **Fire Management in Grassy Woodlands: Science & Practice Workshop**

**Fire management in grassy woodlands:**

- Presenters UQ's Dr Annabel Smith and Danyel Wolff (Turner Family Foundation) have been undertaking on-ground fire research over the past couple of years at Hidden Vale.
- Learn how different natives and exotics respond to different fire regimes and applications for your property management.
- Morning tea provided and attendance is free for LUCI members and \$10 for non-LUCI

members.

If you are interested in becoming a LUCI member, contact LUCI secretary [Pam Murphy](#) to find out more or check out our Get Involved Page on the LUCI website.

We look forward to seeing you at the workshop!

**April - Saturday 11th 9:30 am**

LUCI Website



SCIENCE & PRACTICE WORKSHOP

# FIRE MANAGEMENT IN GRASSY WOODLAND

**Time:** Arrive 9:00am for 9:30am start

**Location:** At property in Iredale, directions available on booking

**Food:** Morning tea provided (limited numbers)

*Free for LUCI members, \$10 for non-LUCI members*

	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
	10	11	12	



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## Community Updates

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We are sharing **two recent developments in Australia's energy system**, one raising concerns and the other highlighting a path forward.

The **Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC)** has proposed [increasing fixed daily electricity charges](#), so households would pay more in unavoidable costs regardless of how much energy they use. While framed as a fairer way in cost sharing, it actually reduces incentives to save energy or invest in rooftop solar and batteries.

Independent modelling by Green Energy shows that:

- A household with solar and a battery could be **\$400 to \$700 worse off every year**
- Low income households could pay **\$100 to \$200 more per year**

Those most impacted include renters, apartment residents, retirees and low energy users. The proposal also benefits network service providers by locking in more stable, guaranteed revenues while shifting the greater costs onto households who have less ability to reduce their bills, even when investing in solar or cutting energy use. This **contradicts** Australia's clean energy transition, especially as households have already invested over **\$25 billion in roof top solar**, now contributing more than **14% of national electricity supply**.

At the same time, the [Unlocking Solar for Renters](#) report highlights a key gap in the transition. With **1 in 3 Australians renting**, many miss out on around **\$1,400 in annual energy bill savings**.

**The challenge is known: [split incentives](#)**

Landlords pay. Renters benefit

The report draws on a [Pol.is](#) campaign with **717 participants**,

## Imagining 2040: Pathways to Flourishing Futures





Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE) Inc. has launched the Imagining 2040 – Pathways to Flourishing Futures podcast series, inviting Australians to reflect on what a thriving and sustainable future could look like by 2040.

The series creates space for hopeful conversations about environmental and social challenges, encouraging citizens, community leaders, educators and decision-makers to explore how collective action can shape a more just, resilient and sustainable Australia. By highlighting diverse voices and practical ideas, the podcast emphasises that meaningful change happens through many small actions taken together.

Through accessible discussions and community-focused storytelling, Imagining 2040 aims to inspire reflection, strengthen public imagination and support citizen-led advocacy for a flourishing future for people, communities and the environment.

Interested in learning more? You can find the website and podcast series at this link: <https://www.hopeaustralia.org.au/continuing-imagining-2040-pathways-to-a-flourishing-futures-podcast-series/#:~:text=In response to an encouraging,by actively enriching the conversation.>

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## Tax Wealth, Not Work Campaign



Sign the open letter here!

## **The rich are getting richer while the rest of us struggle.**

On March 14, a new grassroots campaign, ***Tax Wealth Not Work***, launched via Zoom, calling for a shift in how wealth is taxed in Australia. The campaign argues that extreme wealth should be taxed more fairly, rather than placing the burden on working and middle-class Australians, as inequality and cost of living pressures continue to rise.

The campaign builds on the strong response to British economist [Gary Stevenson's Australian tour](#). He warned that inequality in the UK has worsened, with declining working-class wealth, a struggling middle class, and fewer young people able to afford homes. He also highlighted how years of austerity have weakened the government's ability to respond.

### **The key warning:**

If wealth becomes too concentrated, governments can lose real power.

Even if people vote for change, governments struggle to act because wealth is controlled by a small minority.

At a global level, UN expert Olivier De Schutter has criticised the current system for serving the "[frivolous and destructive demands of the ultra-rich](#)", instead of prioritising ordinary people.

The campaign also highlights the influence of wealth on climate action and politics, including the role of powerful industries and wealthy donors such as Gina Rinehart, and ultimately proposes solutions like a Citizens' Assembly to give Australians a stronger voice.

**Tax wealth, not work.**

**It's time for people power.**

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## **A moment to celebrate – Renewables deliver!**

It can be hard to pause when there's so much going on but moments like this are worth recognising.

New figures show that in the December quarter, renewable energy including wind, solar and batteries supplied **more than 50% of electricity** in the National Electricity Market for the first time.

This milestone had a real impact. Wholesale electricity prices dropped by around **44% compared to a year earlier**, falling to approximately \$50 per megawatt-hour. At the same

time, coal output fell to its lowest seasonal level on record, gas to its lowest since 2000, battery discharge nearly tripled, and emissions declined.

According to the Australian Energy Market Operator, this marks a “**landmark moment**” for the grid demonstrating how sustained investment in clean energy and storage is reducing reliance on higher-cost fossil fuels and putting downward pressure on prices.

While the system still relies on coal and gas at times of peak demand, these results show that renewables are delivering as intended.

It's a strong reminder that progress is happening and that the transition to a cleaner, more affordable energy system is well underway.

So, take a moment to reflect on how far we've come and let's keep building momentum.

**Read more about this below:**

'Landmark moment': Renewables' record surge sends power prices tumbling

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## **AAFCS Wealth Solutions Club**

Your money shapes the world — even while you sleep.

In Australia, most of us interact with money through super, banking and everyday financial decisions. These systems help fund what gets built next, including energy and infrastructure. But for many people, understanding where their money goes and how to align it with their values can feel complex and overwhelming.

The **Wealth Solutions Club** by AAFCS is designed to change that.

This is a **90-day, peer-supported online program** that helps participants take practical, achievable steps to align their money with a cleaner, more sustainable future. It's built for

professionals looking for a low-pressure, beginner-friendly way to take climate action through everyday financial choices.

Across the program, participants learn:

- What their super and banking may be funding
- How to ask better questions and make informed decisions
- How to build simple, repeatable habits that stick over time

The program is co-designed with **UNLESS Financial** and supported by **Market Forces**, ensuring the content is practical, credible and grounded in real-world insights. It focuses on education and habit-building — not personal financial advice — so participants stay in control of their decisions.

With a time commitment of around **30–60 minutes per week** and a cost of \$50, it's an accessible way to build confidence and take meaningful action.

**Learn more or join the program below:**

AAFCS Wealth Solutions Club

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## Koala Alliance Calls for Stronger Protections in Queensland

A coalition of conservation organisations and community groups has urged the Queensland Government to strengthen its proposed koala conservation strategy to better protect the state's declining koala populations. In a letter to Environment Minister Andrew Powell, the Queensland Koala Alliance welcomed the government's focus on koala conservation but warned that the current plan lacks the scale, enforceable protections and long-term funding needed to halt population decline.

The alliance highlights habitat loss and fragmentation as the biggest threats to koalas and is calling for stronger measures, including a ban on clearing core koala habitat, expanded conservation efforts beyond South East Queensland, and increased investment in habitat restoration and wildlife corridors. The group also emphasises the importance of partnering with First Nations Traditional Owners, expanding Indigenous ranger programs, and improving scientific monitoring and public reporting of koala populations.

With the 2032 Summer Olympics approaching in Brisbane, the alliance says the moment presents a critical opportunity to safeguard one of Australia's most iconic species before international visitors arrive. The coalition is seeking to work collaboratively with the government to ensure the strategy delivers real, lasting outcomes for koalas and Queensland's ecosystems.

Interested in learning more and taking action to protect koalas? Visit our Alliance page on the Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) website:

<https://www.queenslandconservation.org.au/>

## Protect Our Birdlife from Rat Poison

Scientists have released the findings of a study into the cause of death of Masked Owls collected across Perth.

All 13 birds from the south-west and three from metropolitan Perth, had been exposed to long-lasting 'second generation' anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs), commonly known as 'one-dose kills' poisons available in common household brands.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is currently seeking submissions on the proposed regulation of dangerous rat poisons that kill wildlife. Join us in calling for all SGARs to be removed from public sale, to protect our wildlife into the future.

[Sign the Birdlife Petition](#)



**Fix our feed- From Teach Us Consent**

## FIX OUR FEED FROM TEACH US CONSENT

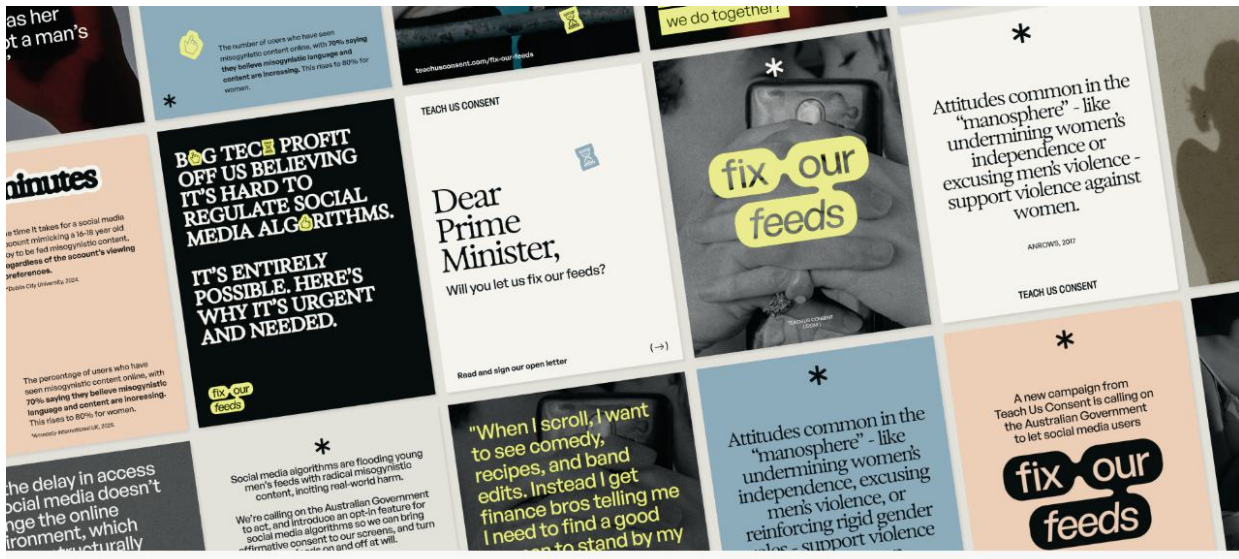
Social media is a tool that was designed to bring people together; today, its algorithm promotes misogyny, causes political polarisation and a tidal wave of mental health challenges and loneliness. The algorithm is designed to maximise engagement, provoking strong emotional reactions, this is creating new levels of exposure to prejudice mindsets and behaviours.

23 minutes for a new account posing as a teenage boy to receive misogynistic content. 73% of Gen Z have received misogynistic content. Teenage boys have recently overtaken men as the most likely perpetrators of child sexual abuse. In the past year sexual violence has increased by 10% in Australia. This is not a coincidence.

We plead with the Australian Government to implement a required 'opt-out' option to algorithms on social media. Restoring user agency and consent is crucial to the safety of social media users and society.

Sign the letter to our Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to 'Fix Our Feed'.

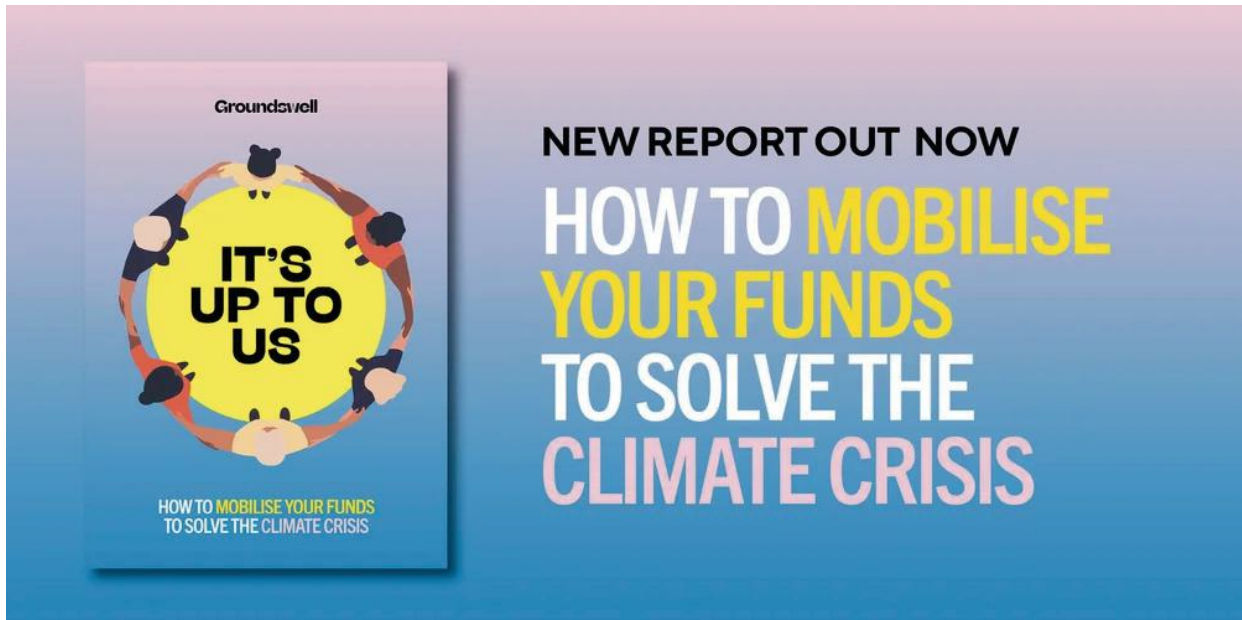
Sign The Letter





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## Join Groundswell and Vote for DDEC to Get \$40k



Groundswell Giving has released *It's Up To Us*, a powerful new guide designed for philanthropists ready to increase their impact in climate action. The publication highlights emerging trends in climate philanthropy and offers practical guidance on how donors can invest strategically to support transformative solutions.

With the global climate window rapidly closing, the guide stresses the urgency of mobilising greater philanthropic support to strengthen the climate movement and challenge the influence of the fossil fuel industry. Without a significant increase in climate funding, efforts to shift political, corporate and social momentum toward stabilising global heating may fall short.

To help drive meaningful action, Groundswell provides a range of opportunities for funders to get involved — including lifetime memberships, a Major Giving Circle that co-funds high-impact climate initiatives, and immersive learning trips with climate experts and fellow philanthropists.

For those ready to take their climate giving to the next level, *It's Up To Us* is both a call to action and a roadmap for investing in the solutions our planet urgently needs.

Interested in knowing more? The website link is below:

<https://www.groundswellgiving.org/its-up-to-us-report>

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## How to start your energy transition journey?

### Step 1: Audit and Compare (Cost: \$0)

- The Utility Bill: Check your bill for the "Could you save money on another plan?" box. Retailers are legally required to show their cheapest offer.
- Energy Made Easy: Use the federal Energy Made Easy website to compare your actual usage against every available plan in your area.

### Step 2: Low-Hanging Fruit (Cost: Low)

- Seal the Leaks: Use draught stoppers ("snakes") and weatherstripping for doors and windows. This can cut heating/cooling costs by 25%.
- Laundry & Bath: \* Wash clothes in cold water (saves 80% of laundry energy).
- Install a low-flow showerhead and a kitchen tap aerator.
- Vampire Power: Plug your TV and entertainment gear into a power board with a master switch to kill "standby" power instantly.

### Step 3: Major Efficiency Upgrades (Cost: Medium-High)

- Hot Water: Swap a resistive electric heater for a Heat Pump Hot Water system. It uses roughly one-third of the electricity for the same amount of hot water.
- Insulation: If you own your home, top up your ceiling insulation. It can reduce climate control bills by 15–20%.

### Step 4: Right-Sized Technology (Cost: High)

- Solar PV: Install a system sized to your daytime needs first.
- Battery Sizing: Don't just buy the biggest one. Calculate your average overnight usage ( $\text{Daily Imports} \div 30$ ) and add 20%.

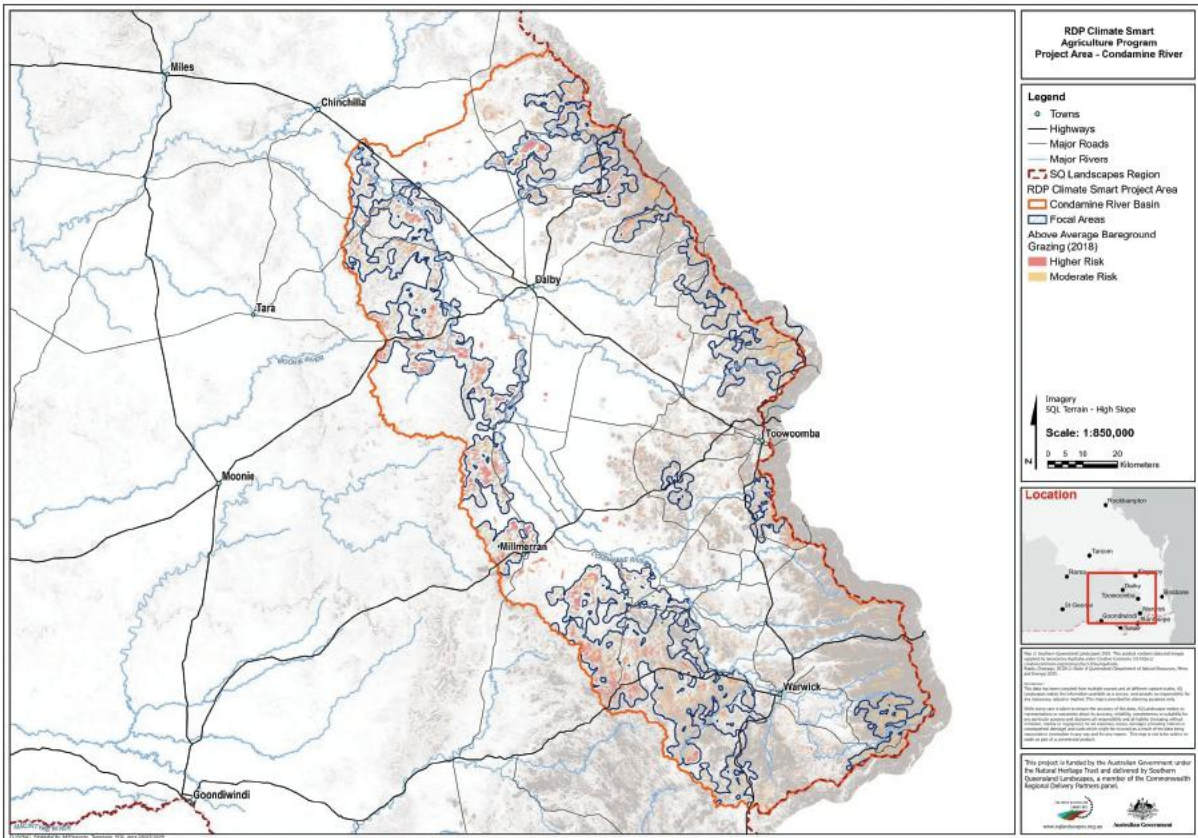
Note for 2026: From May 1st, government rebates (the Cheaper Home Batteries Program) will begin to "taper" for systems larger than 14 kWh. Staying under 14 kWh often provides the best value-for-money.





Read more about energy transition here:  
[https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/our-network/future-energy/energy-transition#:~:text=Everyone has a role to, and generation \(rooftop solar\).](https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/our-network/future-energy/energy-transition#:~:text=Everyone has a role to, and generation (rooftop solar).)

## Condamine Climate Smart Grazing



The Growing Climate Smart Grazing in the Condamine River Basin project is a four-year initiative delivered by Southern Queensland Landscapes and funded by the Australian Government through the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program. The project aims to help landholders in the Condamine River Basin develop more sustainable, productive, and climate-resilient grazing systems. It provides on-ground support, training, and collaboration with First Nations partners to improve land management practices, increase soil carbon, enhance ground cover, and strengthen the long-term health of agricultural landscapes.

The program supports practical actions such as improved grazing management, pasture upgrades, innovative ground cover strategies, better water management, and the use of

traditional First Nations cool-burning techniques to regenerate pasture and reduce bushfire risk. Landholders can also attend workshops and field days to build knowledge and learn about opportunities in emerging carbon and biodiversity markets. Overall, the project focuses on improving environmental outcomes while supporting farm productivity and long-term sustainability in the region. 🌱🌍

Interested in knowing more, see the link of Southern Queensland Landscape below:

<https://www.sqlandscapes.org.au/Growing-Climate-Smart-Grazing-in-the-Condamine-River-Basin>

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## Developer Donations Ban Under Review: What It Means for Queensland

Queensland's ban on political donations from property developers may be lifted. This is a move the state's corruption watchdog warns could increase corruption risk.

According to the **ABC**, the Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission says removing the ban could reopen pathways for undue political influence, particularly in planning and development decisions.

The ban was introduced to prevent conflicts of interest following past corruption cases and has been a key safeguard for transparency in government.

With growing development pressure across the state, integrity experts warn that weakening donation laws could undermine public trust and impact community and environmental outcomes.

Staying informed and engaged is essential as this issue continues to unfold.

[Read More](#)

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## TRC's Community Grants Revitalised



Toowoomba Regional Council has endorsed a simplified and revitalised Community Grants

Program, making it easier for eligible community and not-for-profit groups to apply for funding.

From the **2026/27 financial year**, Council will move to **one clear Community Grants Policy and Guideline**, replacing multiple former grant programs with a streamlined application process. Applications for the new funding round open on **1 July 2026**.

The updated program introduces clear funding categories:

- **Micro grants:** up to \$1,000
- **Minor grants:** \$1,001–\$10,000
- **Major grants:** \$10,001 and above

The new approach removes previous funding caps, offers clearer guidelines, and prioritises fairness, transparency and accessibility—particularly for regional applicants. Preference will be given to new applicants and projects that support community connection, partnerships, facility upgrades or new services.

Community information sessions will be held in **March and April**, with application support available through Council's Grants & Sponsorship Officer and Community Development Officers.

[Learn More on Council's Website](#)

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## The Quarterly Quail: Summer Highlights (Feb 2026)

We're pleased to share the latest update from the Birds on Farms Lockyer-Toowoomba project, delivered in partnership with BirdLife Australia.

Since December, the team has completed 23 bird surveys across 10 local properties, recording an impressive 226 individual birds. The most commonly observed species was the Noisy Miner, followed by Torresian Crow and Red-backed Fairy-wren, highlighting both the diversity and challenges within our regional landscapes.

### Project Highlights:

Camera & Acoustic Monitoring Success:

- A major highlight was footage of a Black-breasted Buttonquail pair with two chicks, an exciting and encouraging record.
- Audio monitoring detected species including Barn Owls, Sacred Kingfishers, Leaden Flycatchers and Lewin's Honeyeaters, revealing activity even when surveyors aren't on site.

World Wetlands Day – Seven Mile Lagoon:

- Over 200 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers recorded
- 250 native plants planted

- 15 volunteers supporting habitat restoration alongside council partners

#### Community Voices:

This edition also features profiles of participating landholders and volunteers, showcasing the shared commitment to improving habitat connectivity and biodiversity on working farms.

#### Upcoming 2026 Survey Dates:

- Autumn: 21 March – 3 May
- Winter: 13 June – 26 July
- Spring: 19 September – 1 November
- Summer: 12 December – 7 February

This project continues to demonstrate the importance of private land conservation in protecting regional birdlife and strengthening ecological corridors.

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## Protecting trees in QLD

Felecia and local environmental groups in Kingaroy & South Burnett are campaigning to protect native woodlands and local habitats, which are under threat from land clearing.

During a recent land clearing event in Taabinga, they discovered that updated mapping from the Queensland Herbarium, which provides greater protection for trees and wildlife habitat, is being withheld from public release.

To address this, Felecia has launched a Queensland Parliament petition calling for the updated mapping to be released and for native woodlands to be preserved.

 Support the petition: Preserve native woodland for climate & biodiversity

“We hope the Toowoomba region can support this so all of Queensland benefits.” — Felecia Heirdsfield

Interested in knowing more? More information is in the link below:

<https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-the-Assembly/Petitions/petition-details/4377-26#:~:text=The Petition of residents of,native species,including the koala.>

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## Dirty Data: Fossil Fuel Donations and the 2025 Federal Election

A new analysis by Climate Integrity reveals that millions of dollars from coal and gas companies helped fund political campaigns ahead of the 2025 federal election. According to disclosure data from the Australian Electoral Commission, at least \$3.98 million in fossil fuel donations flowed to major political parties during the 2024–25 financial year.

Major donors included companies such as Adani/Bravus Mining, Hancock Prospecting and INPEX, while powerful industry lobby groups like the Minerals Council of Australia and Australian Energy Producers also contributed significant funding. The report highlights concerns that these donations may provide companies with greater access and influence over political decision-makers, particularly around approvals for major fossil fuel projects.

The analysis found that both the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal–National Coalition received substantial contributions from the industry, alongside funding directed to lobbying groups and third-party campaign organisations. In contrast, no fossil fuel donations were reported to have been received by the Australian Greens or Climate 200.

Climate Integrity is now calling for stronger political donation laws, greater transparency and a ban on fossil fuel donations, arguing that reducing industry influence is essential to ensuring climate policy decisions are made in the public interest. 🌍

Interested in knowing more? The link of the full report is below:

<https://climateintegrity.org.au/latest/coal-and-gas-2025-election-donations>

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## Federal Government approves **Origin Energy's** massive new gas project as cyclone rages in Far North Queensland

The Queensland Conservation Council has criticised the Federal Government for approving a new Australia Pacific LNG project that will allow 1,695 additional gas wells in the Surat Basin, arguing it locks the state into decades of higher emissions and worsening climate impacts. QCC's climate lead, Jenny Brown, says this is the third major fossil fuel project approved in Queensland this year, amounting to an estimated 555 million tonnes of future emissions, more than Australia's annual domestic output:

"This is the third major fossil fuel project Murray Watt has approved in Queensland this year. In less than three months, he has already signed off on 555 million tonnes of new climate pollution in his own backyard, far more than Australia's annual domestic emissions."

"This approval condemns Queenslanders to ongoing climate destruction, while people in Cape York shelter from a cyclone and many others around the state are cleaning up from a summer of climate change-driven extreme weather."

"Whether it's groceries, petrol, insurance premiums, or the constant threat of another climate disaster and the financial and mental strain that puts on families - Queenslanders are feeling the crunch right now."

"Approving projects like Origin Energy's 1,695 gas wells will only make that crunch worse. Today the Federal Government has demonstrated they are turning their back on Queenslanders in a time of crisis to focus on lining the pockets of fossil fuel corporations."

The decision addresses real pressures Queenslanders are already facing, from cyclones and

extreme weather to rising living costs and insurance premiums and argues that expanding gas development will deepen those burdens. According to QCC, the approval shows the Federal Government is prioritising fossil fuel companies over communities still recovering from climate-driven disasters.

**Queensland coal and gas projects, Murray Watt approved this year:**

Project	Emissions	Operating Until
Origin's gas project in Surat Basin	119 million tonnes	2061
Yancoal and Peabody's Middlemount coal mine in Bowen Basin	236 million tonnes	2044 (additional 7 years)
Stanwell's Meandu coal mine near Tarong	200 million tonnes	2039 (additional 4 years)
TOTAL	555 million tonnes	



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