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

Thank you for the warmth that has come our way since daughter Sage arrived. Ellen and I are tired in the very best way, and the messages, meals and good wishes from this community have meant a great deal. It has been a good reminder that DDEC is not only an organisation that does things — it is a set of relationships that hold people up.

I also want to say publicly how glad we are to have Holly with us. Holly has been doing an amazing job bringing her warmth, intelligence, honesty and passion for nature into our work.

We are busy preparing for October, when the draft planning scheme — tree and habitat protections included — reaches the Planning Minister's desk. In Ipswich and again in Gympie, locally proposed protections were wound back from Brisbane after the local work was done. Whatever else the planning scheme is, it is a test of whether decisions about this region are made in it.

If you care about nature in our region there has never been a more important time to get involved and ensure our local MP's know we are taking a stand and we want them to stand up for our community.

Which brings me to the Annual General Celebration and Meeting

As usually this is a chance to reflect and celebrate what has been achieved. We again will be giving awards for individual and group annual achievement and a lifetime achievement award.

Please consider nominating — for the committee, or let me know if you are interested in one of the working groups where the on the ground action gets planned.

More Tree planting coming up

We have been busy going for grants from TRC and the State Government for more tree planting events. A big thank you to everyone who donated and helped us raise \$10,000 for our upfront contribution for tree planting grants.

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Power in a region like ours isn't something a community simply has or doesn't have. It is built, slowly, out of relationships, evidence, organisation and our ability to act together at scale.

Together we have built a great deal of it this year. Come and help decide what we do with it.

With thanks,

Ahri Tallon

Coordinator,

Darling Downs Environment Council



DDEC Events

DDEC Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Date: Wednesday 16th September

Time: 5:30pm

Address: Bu'ru Dain'dan Eco Hut, 1a Heller Street, Rangeville QLD

Join us for DDEC's Annual General Celebration and Meeting. DDEC will provide food, and members are welcome to bring a dish to share.

Please renew your membership using this link [Become a member - The Darling Downs Environment Council \(DDEC\)](#) and complete the online membership renewal form <https://forms.gle/q6JVgQfFHCNXBz1x5> for individuals and <https://forms.gle/kqoavCQJMNJCPwAS7> for groups.

Please also use the online *Membership Renewal Form* to update your details.

You can also nominate environmental champions and groupd for awards at the AGM.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd7ok4WQWhY4oFlet7BVOcs9zKaiNylxkxHHh77VQa3NrcbuQ/viewform>

Tree Planting on Country- Gummingurru



Date: Saturday 17 October

Time: 10:00 am start

Location: Gummingurru, 148 Old Homebush Road, Gowrie Junction, 4352

Join us on Jarowair Country at Gummingurru — an ancient ceremonial place and gathering point on the old pathways to the Bunya Mountains, to plant 150 native trees and help care for this living cultural landscape.

The morning opens with a Welcome and Smoking Ceremony, then we get our hands in the soil together. This day is supported by Stroud Builders.

Spots are limited at 25 so the site can be cared for properly. Book in fast if you'd like to be part of it.

RSVP

Tall Trees Highfields Forum

Date: Wednesday, 23rd September

Time: 6:00pm

Location: 12 Highfields Rd, Highfields QLD 4352

Protect Trees Toowoomba is bringing together communities from across the region to discuss increasing State Government intervention in local planning decisions and what this may mean for local democratic control, landholder rights and community participation in planning.

The forum will focus on Minister Jarrod Bleijie's planning interventions and their implications for communities on the Darling Downs and beyond.

Speakers, including Gympie Councillor Gordon Maudsley will share their experiences and analysis of recent planning decisions — including what has been lost, what may be at stake, and why transparent, accountable planning processes matter.

The forum is open to landholders, community members, local advocates and anyone interested in how planning decisions are made in our region.

It will also provide an opportunity to hear different community experiences, ask questions and better understand why local voices and local knowledge need to remain part of decisions that shape our towns, rural areas and environment.

RSVP Here

Gowrie Creek Clean Up Saturday 26th of September

Gowrie Creek Clean Up Saturday 26th of September

Our next Gowrie Creek clean-up will be held on Saturday, 26 September, and we'd love to see you there. We will be meeting at the corner of Weale Street & Goombungee Road

Come along and help us continue removing rubbish from Gowrie Creek and surrounding areas while supporting a healthier environment for local wildlife and the wider community. Safety equipment will be provided, so all you need to bring is yourself, suitable clothing and closed-in shoes.

Every extra pair of hands makes a difference, and new volunteers are always welcome.

P.s. We have been going for lots of grants lately to do more tree planting events so hope to have some good news on this front soon.

RSVP



Tall Trees Celebration Picnic

Date: Saturday, 10th October

Time: 3:00pm - 5:00pm

Location: Peacehaven Park, 56 Kuhls Rd, Highfields QLD 4352

After years of community advocacy, Toowoomba Regional Council's draft Planning Scheme — including important new tree and habitat protections — is expected to be referred to Queensland Planning Minister Jarrod Bleijie in October.

This is an important point in the process. State Government intervention has previously resulted in locally agreed tree and biodiversity protections being wound back in both Ipswich and Gympie and Protect Trees Toowoomba does not want to see the same happen here.

But protecting trees isn't only about planning provisions. People are more likely to stand up for the places they know, value and feel connected to.

That's why Protect Trees Toowoomba is holding a Tall Trees Celebration Picnic at Peacehaven Park — a chance to come together beneath some of the trees that make Highfields and the wider Toowoomba Region so special.

Planning Minister Jarrod Bleijie and our local State MPs — Trevor Watts, David Janetzki, Pat Weir and Deb Frecklington — are being formally invited to join the community, experience the majesty of Highfields tall trees and hear directly why local tree protections matter.

Scot McPhie, Birdlife Australia's Birds on Farms Project Coordinator Lockyer-Toowoomba will be speaking along with our growing panel of guests.

Whether our elected representatives attend or not, a strong community turnout will send an important message.



Bring a picnic rug



Pack some afternoon tea



Bring the family



Come and celebrate the trees we want future generations to enjoy

[RSVP Here](#)



DDEC Updates

Gowrie Creek Clean Up

Our latest Gowrie Creek clean-up was held on Saturday, 29th August, with volunteers once again putting in a huge effort to remove rubbish from the creek and surrounding areas.

More than 450kg of general waste and recycling was removed during the afternoon, with larger items including metal and tyres left for collection by Toowoomba Regional Council. This means we have now removed over 2.4 tonne of rubbish from Gowrie Creek, highlighting both the scale of the litter problem along Gowrie Creek and the difference that coordinated

community action can make.

A huge thank you to everyone who continues to give their time to these clean-ups. Beyond removing rubbish, each event helps protect the creek, reduce risks to wildlife and build greater community care for one of Toowoomba's important waterways.



August Nestbox Workshop

Following the success of our April workshop, Tiffany and Sandy hosted another nest box building workshop in August, bringing together 10 participants for a practical day of learning, building and connecting around our shared interest in supporting local wildlife.

Tiffany opened the workshop with an informative session on the importance of nest boxes and how they can provide a valuable second chance for hollow-dependent birds where natural tree hollows are limited. She also demonstrated how nest boxes can be installed to give them the best chance of attracting nesting parrots.

We were also very fortunate to be joined by Scot McPhie from BirdLife Southern Queensland, who delivered a fascinating presentation on cavity-nesting birds of the region. Scot discussed the local parrots and other hollow-dependent species most likely to use the size of nest boxes being built, helping participants better understand how nest box design can be matched to the needs of local wildlife.

A big thank you to the Men's Shed for their valuable assistance in preparing the nest box kits, and to Tiffany, Sandy and Scot for sharing their time and knowledge.

These workshops are about more than building boxes — they provide an opportunity for people to learn about the importance of mature trees and natural hollows, take practical action for wildlife, and build stronger connections within our community.

Looking ahead, Sandy hopes to continue expanding the project to support native mammals such as sugar gliders and possums as the initiative continues to grow.





Tree of the Month





This is one of my favourite trees.

She stands overlooking the pond at Peacehaven Botanic Park — one of the old remnant grey gums that still hold this place. When the sky turns pink and gold she is reflected almost perfectly in the water, as if Country is showing you both the tree and the feeling of the tree at once.

I first came to know her when we lived on Kuhls Road. Every day we walked our dog, Rufus, here. I have a clear memory of Mum looking happy and relaxed beside this tree. That memory lives in my body as much as it lives in the park.

Over many hours of standing with her I have watched the lives she holds. Tawny Frogmouths, Galahs, Cockatoos, Lorikeets and Nankeen Kestrels have nested in her hollows and along her sturdy branches, along with so many other small lives that come and go. She is not only beautiful. She is a home.

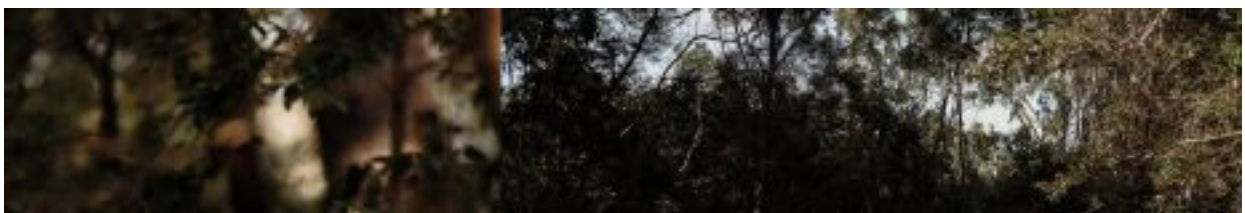
When things feel too much I still come here. She supports me. She holds me. I feel the connection in my body — feet on the ground, breath slowing, the particular stillness that arrives when you stand with an old tree that has already weathered more than you have. That is connection for me: not an idea, but a relationship I have been lucky enough to grow, one visit at a time.

I am grateful for her, and for the hours she has given me.

- Holly Paterson

If you have a tree that does this for you — a tree you return to, a tree that holds birds and memory and your own nervous system — we would love to hear about it. Tree of the Month will be a small regular space for those relationships.

Volunteer of the Month - Tiffany Gesler





'Tiffany wears a few hats around the Toowoomba community, but the biggest one that warms her heart is running Sow & Nurtured Bush School, where all her loves get woven into one supporting families and children through connection, wellbeing, bush play and time outdoors.

A big part of why Tiffany does this work is to help people create memories on Country and, through that connection, grow a deeper desire to care for the land around them.

Tiffany came to volunteering with the Darling Downs Environmental Council after a warm invitation from Jenny. She had already been volunteering with Friends of the Escarpment and caring for land for the past four years, so connecting with DDEC felt like finding more people who shared those same values.

She is particularly passionate about wildlife and grieves the loss of trees and especially those containing precious hollows.

When she heard about the vision for nest boxes and saw an opportunity to help bring it into action, Tiffany put her hand up to help run workshops, with Sandy's support.

While Tiffany had knowledge of hollows and wildlife, creating the boxes themselves was a massive learning curve. Tiffany has shared the local Men's Shed has also been a wonderful support, as have passionate nest box researchers from Nest Box Tales, particularly Alice McGlashan, who have generously shared their knowledge and guidance.

Tiffany and Sandy are keen to continue developing workshops, with a future vision of creating nest boxes to support mammals such as possums and gliders.

For Tiffany, it feels like a really meaningful way to care for Country, create homes for wildlife and get families and children involved in looking after the places they share.

Tiffany is a Gunggari woman, and being able to weave community, children and caring for Country together is something she feels deeply grateful for.'

Tree Planting Maintenance and Watering Volunteers Availability Register

Pending some of the grants we have applied for coming through DDEC is exploring the purchase of a watering trailer to support tree planting and revegetation projects across the Toowoomba area.

Our ability to plant and establish more trees depends not only on planting them, but on being able to provide reliable watering while they become established.

We are currently seeking expressions of interest from people who may be willing to occasionally help with tree watering — either by towing a watering trailer and or assisting with watering as a passenger/volunteer.

Completing this form does not commit you to volunteering. It will simply help us understand the level of community interest, availability and capacity before developing the program.

[Complete the Expression of Interest](#)

Planning Scheme Expert Advisory Committee - Members Wanted

The Planning Scheme is not far away with it likely to be on the Planning Ministers desk in October, then back with council over the summer and publically consulted upon likely in February or March next year.

To ensure DDEC covers the full spectrum of issues in what is likely to be a 900 page plus document we are seeking expressions of interest in our planning scheme submission working group to help inform what feedback we give to the draft planning scheme to best consider the needs of nature, community and sustainability as our region changes.

Manage Your DDEC Email Preferences

Do you get overwhelmed by emails?

DDEC has upgraded its email subscription settings so you can now choose to only receive newsletters- [to do so click here.](#)

If you are in one of our many google groups there is always a link at the bottom for you to click through to and adjust your emails to digest emails if you choose (summary every few days or each week). [Another option is also exploring how to set up priority inbox that helps a lot managing emails.](#)

How DDEC's Work Fits Together

DDEC has developed a draft document showing how our projects and operations connect with our vision, mission, and strategy.

We welcome feedback and questions from our members as we continue to develop it.

[View the Draft](#)

Community Updates

Tiny Home Living - A Positive Step Forward



On Tuesday, 18 August, Toowoomba Regional Council voted unanimously to review its local subordinate law restricting tiny home living. It is great to see Council listening and voting to review the local laws.

From an environmental view, this is smart. Smaller footprints mean less land clearing, lower

energy and water use, and more space left for trees, wildlife corridors and regenerating Country.

Flexible, low-impact housing options can help people stay housed while also protecting the places we all care about.

Progress worth celebrating.

Seed Collection - Crows Nest Community Nursery



The Crows Nest Community Nursery is calling on the community to help collect locally sourced native seeds for propagation.

The nursery manager, Lisa Churchward, has developed a seed collection kit to make it easier for everyone to get involved. The nursery grows native plants found within the region for use in local parks and for sale to the community.

The use of these plants, in public or private spaces, contributes significantly to habitat creation and environmental sustainability.

Interested in helping? Find out how you can get involved below.

[Learn More About Seed Collection](#)

H5 Bird Flu in Queensland





H5 bird flu continues to be detected across Australia, with 78 confirmed detections reported nationally as of 3rd of August 2026.

Confirmed detections include 58 in South Australia, 10 in Western Australia, 7 in Victoria, 2 in New South Wales, and 1 in Queensland.

[Further Information](#)

Fire Ant Eradication Reaches a Turning Point



Australia is making progress in the fight against fire ants, with eradication efforts now covering 208,000 hectares across Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Logan, Scenic Rim and Somerset, with Brisbane and Gold Coast to follow.

This progress is threatened by a funding cliff in 2027. If left unchecked, fire ants could have serious impacts on agriculture, native wildlife, the economy and outdoor activities across Australia.

The Invasive Species Council is calling on Commonwealth and state governments to commit to a multi-year funding agreement through 2032 to finish the job once and for all.

Take action and sign the petition to tell governments to fully fund the fire ant fight before time runs out.

[Sign the Petition](#)

National Lobbying Act Campaign

The Australian Democracy Network (ADN) is calling for stronger lobbying laws to improve transparency. The campaign advocates a National Lobbying Act to strengthen lobbying rules and ensure government decisions serve the public interest.

Proposed reforms include stricter revolving-door rules, greater disclosure of lobbying activity, and effective penalties for breaches

[The campaign follows an ABC Four Corners investigation into corporate lobbying and calls for stronger lobbying reform across Australia.](#)

Queensland Environment Budget Highlights

The 2026-27 Queensland State Budget includes investment in protecting the environment, improving recycling and waste management, as well as supporting Queensland wildlife and protected areas.

Key Commitments include \$975 million over five years for the Less Landfill, More Recycling 2035 strategy, \$330.5 million over five years for reef and catchment water quality, and \$139 million over four years to grow and improve Queensland protected areas.

Budget also includes funding for wildlife hospitals, threatened species, koalas, national park management and grassroots environmental initiatives.

Glenvale Planning Appeal Highlights the Importance of Community Voice

A local resident has lodged an appeal in the Planning and Environment Court following Toowoomba Regional Council's approval of a proposed development at 300 and 390 Drayton Wellcamp Road, Glenvale.

The development covers approximately 67.9 hectares and attracted 59 submissions during public consultation before being approved by Council in July, subject to conditions. Importantly, the appeal is not seeking to stop the development. Instead, it asks for stronger conditions around how the new development transitions into the neighbouring rural residential area.

Concerns raised include the potential for private access between the development and existing residential streets, and the lack of a required transition in lot size, density and built form along the boundary with rural residential properties. The appellant argues these measures are needed to protect the amenity, privacy, quiet enjoyment and character of the

existing neighbourhood.

For DDEC, cases like this highlight why meaningful community participation in planning matters. Local residents often hold detailed knowledge of their neighbourhoods and are directly affected by decisions about how development occurs.

Planning for a growing region requires new housing and development, but it also requires transparent processes that genuinely consider the people, places and environments already there.

Free Online Grant Writing Course

Looking to improve your grant writing skills? iClick2Learn offers a free online Introduction to Grant Writing course for community organisations and individuals looking to strengthen their grant writing knowledge.

The online course provides practical learning that can be accessed at your own pace.

[FREE Course](#)

Podcast Recommendation



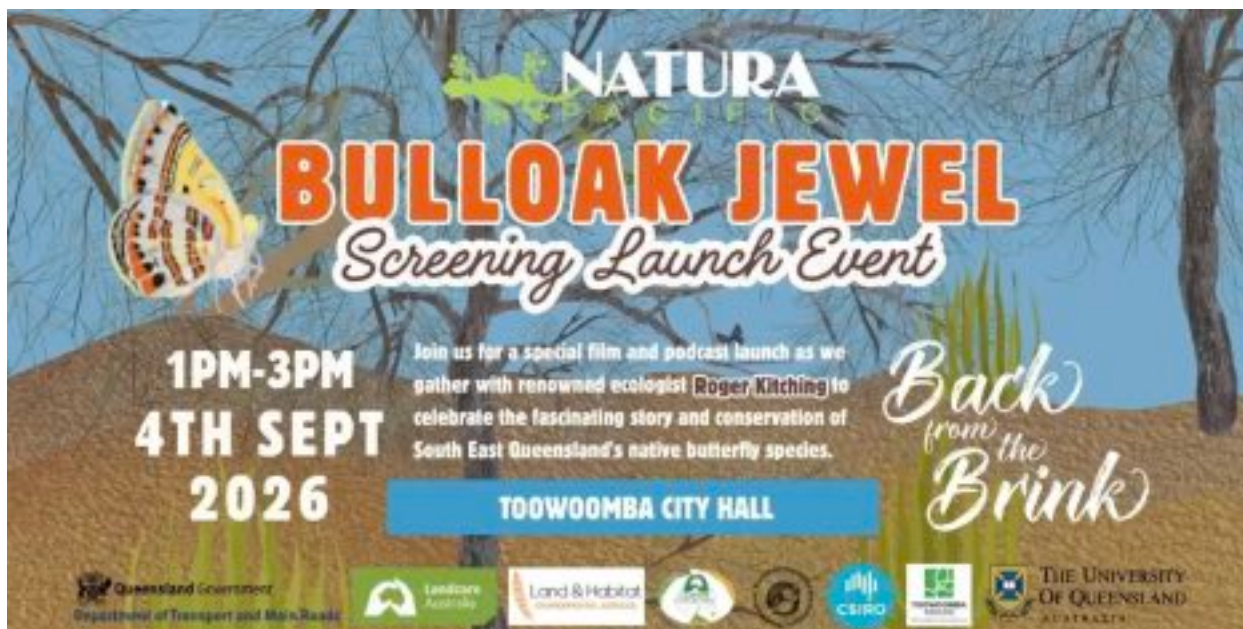
Looking for something thought-provoking to listen to?

Screw This...Let's Try Something Else explores communities that are finding new and practical ways to approach challenges around food, energy, housing, and decision-making.

[Listen on Spotify](#)

Community Events

Conservation Documentary Screening - Bulloak Jewel Butterfly



Date: Friday 4 September

Time: 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Location: Community Rooms, Level 3, Toowoomba City Library, 155 Herries Street, Toowoomba City

Join Natura Pacific for the premiere of a new Black from the Brink episode, uncovering the remarkable story of the Bulloak Jewel butterfly, one of Australia's rarest butterflies.

The documentary explores the butterfly's unique relationship with the Goldilocks Ant and the threats facing its remaining habitat, including habitat loss, invasive species, climate change and fire.

The event will be co-hosted by renowned ecologist Professor Roger Kitching, alongside a panel of experts, who will share their collective knowledge and insights in an engaging discussion.

More than a screening, this is a call to action, bringing science, stroytelling, and community together to help protect one of Australia's hidden natural treasures. Light refreshments will follow.

[Tickets & More Information](#)

Remnants - Rachel Favelle & Erica Eurell



Date: 2 September - 4 October 2026

Location: Crows Nest Gallery, New England Highway & William St, Crows Nest

Remnants explores land, memory and belonging through surreal painting, sculpture and fibre art. The exhibition brings together flora, fauna and ornate objects to examine the impact of introduced species and our connection to place.

Meet the Artists - Sunday 13 September | 12pm–2pm

Meet artists Rachel Favelle and Erica Eurell and discover more about the ideas behind the exhibition.

Growing Beyond the Usual Suspects: How Change Spreads with Damon Centola



Date: Saturday 12 September

Time: 9:30 am - 11:00 am

Location: Online via Zoom

Why do some ideas and behaviours spread while others struggle to reach beyond their existing supporters?

Internationally renowned network scientist Damon Centola will share insights into how change travels through social networks. His research explores how trusted relationships and connections between different communities can help create lasting behavioural and social change.

For community groups, the session offers practical ideas for reaching new audiences, building stronger connections and encouraging lasting participation and collective action.

[Register via Humanitix](#)

Friends of the Escarpment - AGM



Date: Saturday 12 September

Time: 2:00 pm

Location: TRC Library Room

Friends of the Escarpment (FEP) are invited to attend the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

The afternoon will include a special presentation from local photographer and film maker Mitchell Roberts, who supports the Bunya2Borders corridor initiative, with a particular focus on the Greater Glider and Glossy Black Cockatoo projects.

Following the presentation, FEP will hold the election of officeholders, with refreshments to follow. Members are also encouraged to consider joining the FEP Committee and sharing their ideas, skills and experience to help support the organisation's ongoing work.

Members will receive further information about the AGM and the nomination process for the committee positions.

FREE Starting a Community Organisation Workshop





Date: Saturday 12 September

Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Location: Toowoomba City Library, 155 Herries Street

Interested in starting a community organisation? Join this free practical workshop to learn the key steps involved in creating community-focused group that can make a positive impact.

Presented by the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) in collaboration with Toowoomba Regional Council, the workshop is open to community leaders, volunteers, committee members, community groups, multicultural organisations and anyone interested in making a positive change.

A Microsoft Teams option will be available for multicultural community groups unable to travel to Toowoomba.

To register, contact Fatima-Zahra Blila, Community Development Officer - Multicultural, on 131 872.

[More Information](#)

National Tree Day





Date: Sunday 13 September

Time: 8:00 am - 10:00 am

Location: Adams Park, via Coolana Ct, Harristown

Join the community this National Tree Day for a morning of tree planting and help make a lasting difference to our local environment.

Trees and planting guidance will be provided. Participants are asked to bring their own gloves, towels and drinking water. Also encouraged to wear enclosed shoes, sun-protective clothing, a broad-brimmed hat and sunscreen.

If you are an experienced tree planter please let the Toowoomba Regional Council staff know so they can partner a less experienced volunteer with you

RSVP



Regional Leaders Summit 2026





Date & Time:

Tuesday 15 September, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Wednesday 16 September, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Location: The Empire, Toowoomba City, QLD

Join 150 rural and regional leaders from across Australia for two days of learning, connection and conversation about renewable energy and regional development.

The Summit is an opportunity to share stories and experiences about creating opportunities, maximising community benefits and managing the risks that come with the shift to renewable energy.

It is a great opportunity to hear from other regional communities and build valuable connections.

An optional MacIntyre Wind Farm Tour will also be held on Thursday 17 September.

Program & Tickets

Carnival in the Bush



Date: Sunday 20 September

Time: Activities from 8:00am, with a Spotlight Night Walk at 7:00pm

Location: J E Duggan Park, Leslie Street, Rangeville

For the first time, Friends of the Escarpment (FEP), in collaboration with other community groups, will be hosting Carnival in the Bush as part of the Carnival of Flowers.

The event will celebrate Toowoomba's beautiful bushland parks and recognise the work of community groups and volunteers who help care for these important natural areas.

There will be range of activities for all ages, including guided plant walks, children's nature trail, bush kindy, butterfly walks, market stalls and more.

Bookings are essential. Volunteers are welcome to help on the day. If you would like to get involved, please contact Bev at yatesbev283@gmail.com

Bookings and Activities

Ration Shed Museum Visit - Expression of Interest

Interested in visiting the Ration Shed Museum in Cherbourg? A weekday self-guided group visit is being planned, with the date to be arranged based on participants' availability.

The museum explores Cherbourg's history through exhibits covering the Protection Act, Stolen Generations, the rations system, dormitory life, sporting champions and more.

Contact Majella at members@tfna.asn.au to register your interest.

Return to the Village



Date: 20 - 26 April 2027

Location: Woodfordia, Queensland | Jinibara Country

Return to the Village is bringing the permaculture community together at Woodfordia in April 2027.

The event celebrates the strength of grassroots community and connection, with people coming together to share ideas, knowledge and practical approaches inspired by the permaculture movement.

Permaculture Australia is encouraging communities to help spread the word and build awareness in the lead-up to the event.

[More Information](#)

2026 Toowoomba Birding Festival



Birdlife Southern Queensland Darling Downs local branch and the Toowoomba Bird Observers Club are proud to invite you to the second Toowoomba Birding Festival, from September 20th to October 3rd 2026

Date: Sunday 20th September - Saturday 3rd October 2026

The festival features guided bird walks, talks on birds at the Queensland Museum Cobb+Co, special activities for kids, and a rolling slide show of stunning Australian bird photos by local photographers on the Darling Downs.

Every event is free but does require bookings because spaces are limited. Remember to BYO binoculars!

For further information please visit: <https://bsqdd.com.au/2026/06/21/2026-toowoomba-birding-festival/>

Further events for the birding festival include:

[Guided bird walk at Duggan Park](#)

Sun, 20 Sep, 7:50am - 9:30am

[Talk on Toowoomba Birds and the Festival, Cobb+Co Museum](#)

Sunday September 20th, 1pm

[Guided bird walk at Lions Park, Hodgson Vale](#)

Sat, 26 Sep, 7:50am - 9:30am

[“Did You Spot It?” – Children’s puppet show about birds](#)

Sat, 26 Sep, 9:30am - 10am

[Guided Birdwalk for Children – at the Toowoomba Waterbird Habitat](#)

Sat, 26 Sep, 10am - 10:45am

[Borders to Bunyas Project and Glossy Black Cockatoos - Talk by Mitchell Roberts](#)

Sat, 26 Sep, 1pm - 2pm

[Guided bird walk at Loveday Cove, Cooby Dam](#)

Sat, 3 Oct, 7:50am - 10am

[Talk “Austalian Parrots and Cockatoos”, Cobb+Co Museum](#)

Sat, 3 Oct, 1pm



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