From: **Darling Downs Environment Council** info@ddec.org.au
Subject: DDEC's November Newsletter
Date: 30 October 2026 at 5:25 pm

DDEC Darling Downs Environment Council Inc.

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Protecting and promoting the environment in our region.

This month, a small farming community on the Western Downs made national and international news because of the proposal of Australia's largest AI data centre. CNN's feature on the proposed $32 billion Western Downs Digital Park at Kogan, west of Dalby, put a spotlight on what could become Australia's largest AI data centre. It also showed the people standing up to it.

First, congratulations to **Western Downs Says Pause**. This new, locally led group of farmers, families, workers and residents has stepped up to ask a simple question: why the rush? In just a few weeks they have brought people together at forums in Dalby and Toowoomba, started their own petition and spoken to national media, all while juggling farms, jobs and families.

Speaking up in a small community, where you know the people on the other side, takes courage. They are showing what it looks like when a region speaks for itself instead of waiting to be told what's good for it.

What's in the application
We've read the full 870-page development application. These are the main concerns:

- **Water no one can guarantee.** There is no secure water supply. The plan relies on coal seam gas water and on trucking in water from Brisbane, up to 14 truckloads a day at peak. Planning for drought has been left for "future project phases". The application form says the project won't use bores, but the plans show a bore on site and keep groundwater as a backup option. This is Great Artesian Basin country, and that should worry all of us.
- **Power and fuel on a massive scale.** The project would use about as much power as 1.5 million homes (25% of Qlds current power use). Whether powered by gas or renewables this would have a massive impact on finite resources for a non essential technology. It includes 20 diesel generators and more than 186,000 litres of stored diesel, and the first stage could run on gas from a well on site.
- **A fast track around the community.** The developer is seeking "prescribed project" status. That would let the State Government step in and make a final decision that can't be appealed.
- **Big impacts, missing plans.** There is no social impact assessment for a 1,500-person

workers' camp, and the housing and services plans are still "being prepared". Noise at the nearest home would exceed the limits.
- **No rules for AI yet.** Australia has no binding AI laws, national standards aren't expected until 2027, internationally China and US are in a death match risking rogue AI and there is no public off switch.

Underneath all of this is a question about power: who gets to decide? Choices about our water, our energy and a technology that could reshape work and society are being made by a developer and some of the world's biggest tech companies. Meanwhile, the people who will live with the results have three weeks to respond.

What you can do

- **Make a submission** to Western Downs Regional Council by **Wednesday 11 November** (link below). Adding a few of your own words makes it count.
- **Join the protest** on **Thursday 5 November, 5–6pm** outside the Northern Downs and Dalby Jockey Club.

Closer to home

Taking care of where we live is part of the same work. Come along to our first **Creek and Canopy Care meeting** on **Wednesday 4 November at 5.30pm** at the Eco Hut, 1a Heller St, Rangeville. We'll plan plantings at Cotswold Hills, our new creek restoration work with Riding for the Disabled, and more.

With thanks,

Ahri Tallon
Coordinator,
Darling Downs Environment Council

DDEC Events

Toowoomba Creek and Canopy Care Inaugral Meeting Wednesday 4th November 5.30pm

With over 3000kg of rubbish removed from Gowrie creek, tree plantings at Linthorpe and Gummingurru with Stroud Builders under our belt there is a lot of excitement for increased tree planting and canopy care events in Toowoomba. We are awaiting a legal partnership with Toowoomba Regional Council which will allow us to start a tree planting project (probably next Autumn) at Cotswold hills with a $9500 grant with have received from TRC.

To top it off we are excited to announce we are going to be partnernering with Riding for the Disabled Toowoomba to restore the creek bank on their leased and council owned site benath and slightly downstream from the Baillie Hendersen hosptial site.

To get volunteer involvement in planning all these projects and more we are having our first bi-monthly tree planting meeting next Wednesday the 4th of November at the Eco Hut 1a Heller St Rangeville from 5.30pm.

If you have not already please complete the watering and maintenance volunteer form, we can only plan as many plantings as we have people to maintain so this is critical.







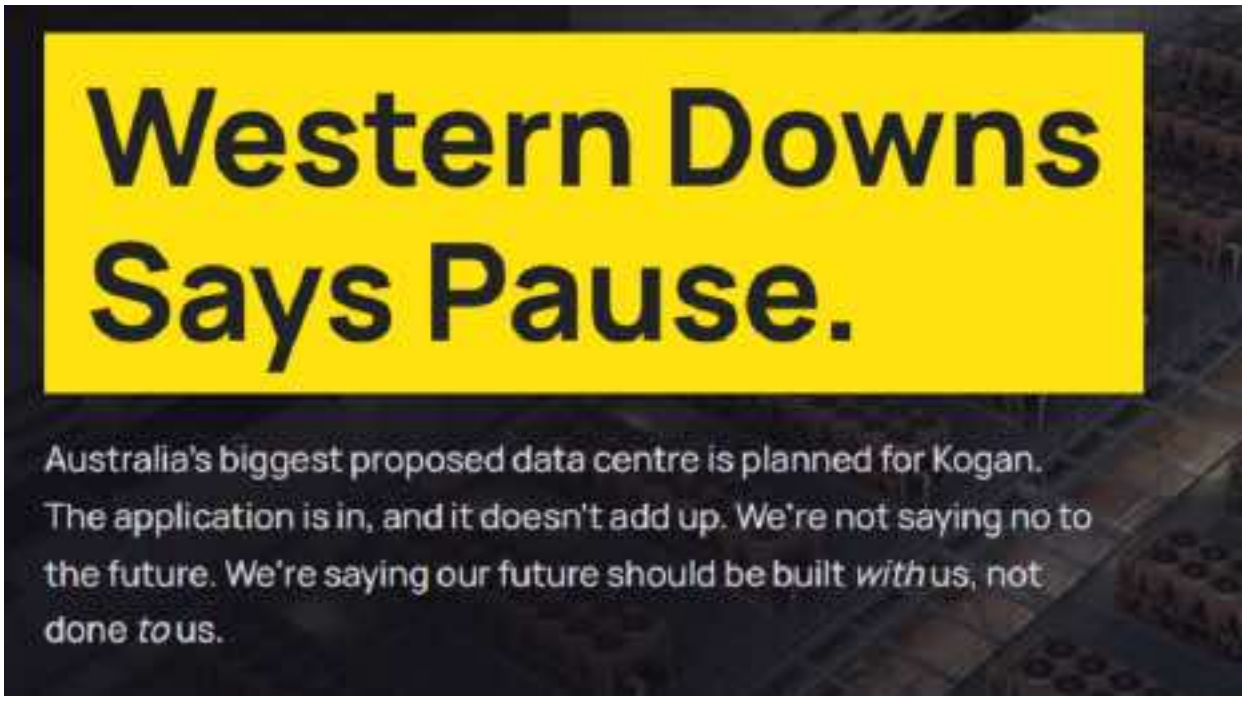
Important Events

Western Downs Says Pause Data Centre and AI Protest

Where: Northern Downs and Dalby Jockey Club
When: Thursday 5th of November 5pm-6pm

Join us outside the Toowoomba Surat Basin Enterprise $165 per head forum with Zerra the developer of the Kogan Data Centre.
Make your sign and join us standing outside the event to make Zerra and our politicians know we want a pause on data centres and AI.
We will have a open mic, music play list and some of us will be going into the forum to ask questions.

RSVP Here



DDEC Updates

Make a submission against the Kogan AI Data Centre

Fill in your details via the link below to make a submission, edit the letter to add your own words, and send it straight to Council by Wednesday 11 November.

Make a submission here!

Volunteer of the Month: Jill Warner

At the beginning of this month you might have seen the media coverage of Protect Trees Toowoomba at Trevor Watt's Office. Jill Warner, a staunch tree protector was very brave and courageous in standing up for common sense and her rights in communication with Trevor Watts MP.

Then in recent weeks Jill and her family hosted a student placement who came from Townsville to start her placement in person for the first week. Here is the email from Anjin about their stay. DDEC is not just running projects and campaigns standing up for trees, its connecting people and building community thanks to volunteers like Jill.

Dear Ahri,
I hope you are doing well.
I just wanted to express my heartfelt appreciation for Jill Warner, who generously provided free accommodation for me and my husband during my placement in Toowoomba.

Despite facing her own health challenges, Jill went above and beyond to make us feel comfortable and welcomed. She and her husband were incredibly kind, friendly, and supportive throughout our stay. Their home had such a beautiful and peaceful environment, and we genuinely enjoyed our time there.

I was particularly touched by Jill’s love for nature, wildlife, especially koalas, and her passion for environmental activities. She also shared wonderful insights about DDEC and its people, which made me feel even more connected to the organisation.

Jill is truly one of the kindest and most inspiring people I have ever met. Her generosity and warmth made my Toowoomba experience incredibly special.

I also want to sincerely thank you, Ahri, for taking the time and effort to arrange this accommodation for us and connecting us with Jill. I genuinely appreciate your kindness and support in making our stay so comfortable and memorable.

Kind Regards,
Anjin





Naomi Lam lands prestigious graduate role

We are extremely proud of our volunteer Naomi Lam for being accepted into a prestigious graduate role with The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action in Victoria. She will be with DDEC up until December, and we want to give her a shoutout for all her hard work and dedication during her time with us. We wish you the best in this amazing new role!

Planning Scheme Expert Advisory Committee - Members Wanted

The Planning Shceme 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 planing 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?

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

Have your say on Queensland's draft Renewable Energy Developer Code of Conduct

Queenslanders are being invited to provide feedback on a new draft Code of Conduct for Renewable Energy Developers and supporting industry guidance.

The draft Code sets expectations for how developers of large-scale wind, solar and battery projects engage with affected stakeholders, manage project-related impacts and deliver benefits to communities across the development, construction and operational phases.

Consultation is open until 31 October 2026, with feedback accepted through an online questionnaire or written submission.

Have your say





RE-Alliance Regional Leaders Summit



RE-Alliance hosted their Regional Leaders Summit in Toowoomba last month, where more than 100 leaders across Australia came together to discuss local renewable energy shifts.

The report covers what was heard from leaders, particularly what is and isn't working for communities, and what they need from industry and governments.

The importance of locally-led coordination was one of the most significant themes discussed, and they have further developed their approach to manage and plan large-scale renewable energy development. To uncover the challenges and wins, you can read more in the report.

The Webinar linked below shares the highlights of the Summit outcomes.

Summit Webinar

Mining objection rights under review in Queensland

The Queensland Government has introduced a bill that would change who can object to new or expanded mines. The Mineral Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 was

introduced on 15 September 2026. Under it, only people within 125 km of a mining lease boundary could lodge objections, and ministers would decide which objections go to the Land Court, rather than every objection being referred to automatically.

The government says the changes will make approvals more efficient. Lock the Gate Alliance argues that mining's effects on water, land, biodiversity and climate reach well beyond 125 km, and that independent review shouldn't depend on ministerial discretion.

If you believe that the right to object to coal and gas projects should be retained, you can sign the petition below.

Sign the Petition

This group of 60+ year old Americans are fighting for modern change



Third Act is an admirable American organisation that treats older people as an asset rather than a demographic to be looked after. The organisation mobilises Americans over sixty, now more than 70,000 of them, to draw on a lifetime of skills, experience and resources to tackle climate change and defend democracy.

"...anyone past their early 80s, has literally been around for one third of [modern America's] 250 year span, which gives them a kind of baseline credibility for understanding how these moments are remarkably different from the other parts of our lives."

Third Act has a comprehensive approach to community mobilisation, with Working Groups all over the country and actions that range from in-person protests to virtual petitions.

We want to highlight Third Act's incredible advocacy and community efforts, especially due to their focus on elderly and experienced perspectives in the face of change.

Read more about this great organisation below.

Third Act Website

NSW Passes Bill to Oversee Coal Region Transition

The NSW Legislative Council has just passed the Future Jobs and Investment Bill, which would create an authority to oversee the “realignment” of the state’s four coal mining regions. The bill was amended, so it must return to the Legislative Assembly before becoming law. Lock the Gate Alliance expects this to go through without difficulty.

The Future Jobs Investment Authority would plan and deliver economic diversification in coal regions, with a focus on rehabilitated mining land. Each region would have a Local Economic Structural Adjustment Plan, starting with the Hunter and Central West. The bill also requires three years’ notice before a coal mine closes, and mines must have plans to transition their workforce.

The initial commitment of $22.5 million a year is, in the Alliance’s view, far short of what is needed. Its attention now turns to securing more funding, strong regulations that put communities and the environment at the centre of the Hunter’s renewal, and a framework for long-term management of rehabilitated land.

Article: *From “The personal is political” to One Nation’s “the political is personal”* by A. Tattersall

In this Substack essay, community organiser and researcher Amanda Tattersall argues that One Nation’s appeal lies partly in the story it tells about political agency.

Public problems become personal stories of blame, with a leader who will fight on your behalf. Tattersall suggests that countering this takes more than rebutting its ideas. It means creating real opportunities for people to act together, build organisations and work across differences. The piece is a thoughtful read for anyone interested in community organising and how movements can build lasting public engagement.

Full article here

Bleijie Moves on Workplace Laws





"Approaching the midway point of the term, the LNP has finally decided to show its teeth."

The Queensland LNP government, which has so far avoided issues that burn political capital, has announced sweeping and controversial changes to workplace laws. The proposals would let Deputy Premier Jarrod Bleijie break public-sector strikes in certain circumstances, including where action is deemed “in the public interest”. Workers with psychological injury claims, including emergency services workers, would only be supported if they can show their workplace was the primary cause.

Reactions have been mixed. Slater and Gordon and the United Workers Union say the changes will make it harder for workers to get support, while several business groups welcomed them. Opposition leader Steven Miles called the package a “Newman-era attack on workers”.

Read the full Guardian article below.

Full Article

Short Film: *Move Fast, Break People*





“In a world where AI and automation are supercharging the speed and scale of conflict, Move Fast, Break People is a documentary that exposes a pipeline of harm — how our personal data is being used to train algorithms for mass surveillance and target profiles in war. The film explores the impacts of the rapid integration of AI and automation in the use of force and what the international community can do to stop it.”

Watch the full short film below!

"Move Fast, Break People"

Australia’s Largest AI Data Centre Proposed for the Western Downs



A proposed $32 billion data centre, the Western Downs Digital Park, is attracting national and international attention, including this recent CNN feature. The Western Downs Digital Park is set to be the largest facility of its kind in the country, planned to consist of “four buildings each the size of five football fields, and temporary accommodation for 1,500 workers during the construction phase.” The power draw is comparable to 1.5 million average Australian households.

This article features important local perspectives from farmers, residents, and DDEC’s own Ahri Tallon. Will this proposed development set Australia ahead in the AI expansion race, or will the dry paddocks and spirited locals stand up to the AI giant?

Full Article

Stay alert – protect your birds from H5 bird flu

Primary producers play an important role in helping protect the state's livestock industries through strong biosecurity practices and surveillance.

To protect the health of your birds:

- prevent or minimise contact between kept birds and wild birds, including their feed and water
- maintain good hygiene and biosecurity practices
- keep records of bird movements and sales
- report signs of disease, reduced production or increased deaths in birds to your veterinarian

On-farm biosecurity practices are crucial to protect the health of your flocks.

While there have been no detections in poultry in Australia, producers should look for signs of illness in birds, including:

- sudden increases in deaths
- drop in egg production
- respiratory signs
- changes in feed and water consumption
- swelling around the head, wattle, comb, neck or eyes.

If you suspect your birds have H5 bird flu you must report it to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Early reporting is critical. It helps authorities investigate potential cases quickly and protects Queensland's poultry industries. Check the website for more information about H5 bird flu.



Australian Pollinator Week

This year's theme, Pollinator Education: Inspiring the Next Generation, celebrates the role of learning in protecting Australia's pollinators. Communities, schools, councils, Landcare groups, and neighbourhoods are invited to join in with activities like the Australian Pollinator Count, Pollinator Picnics, bee-friendly gardening, art activities, webinars and more. Register and event and more **7 - 15 November**



National Glossy Black-Cockatoo Forum bringing together researchers, practitioners, community groups, citizen scientists, policy-makers and government agencies from across Australia to share knowledge, showcase projects and discuss priorities for Glossy Black-Cockatoo conservation.

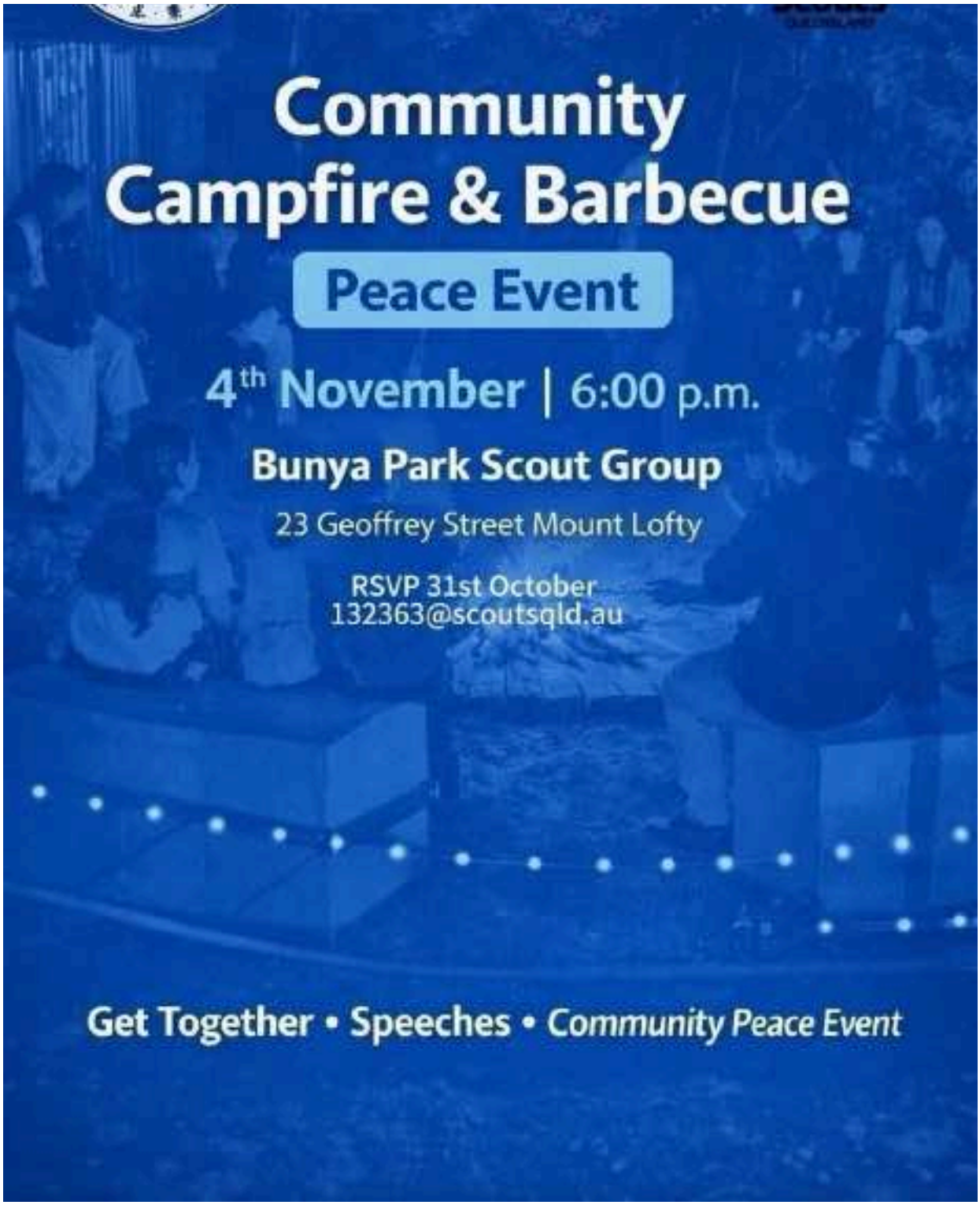
Across two days, 23 speakers and 8 sessions will explore what we currently know about Glossies, what we're learning, the challenges ahead and how we can turn that knowledge

Glossies, what we're learning, the challenges ahead and how we can turn that knowledge into better conservation and recovery outcomes. Read more **Forum 18-19 November**



Community Events





Queensland Community Alliance - Common Good Convention





This is your invitation to join the Queensland Community Alliance at the Common Good Convention in Brisbane, Townsville, Gladstone or Toowoomba on Thursday 5 November!

'What is new is the antidote'. The Common Good Convention is a unique chance to get off our phones and make real change with our communities. Have a cuppa with your neighbour, connect in real time, and commit to taking relational action in your neighbourhood and in your organisation.

Core topics and focus areas include climate action and renewable energy, workplace justice, support for children and families, and social connection and isolation.

The goal is to build strong, transformational relationships at scale, all across Queensland.

Date: Thursday 5 November
Time: 6:00-8:00pm, starting with dinner.
Location: **Toowoomba**- Lifeworks Uniting Church
Brisbane- Albert St Uniting Church
Townsville- Kirwan Uniting Church
Gladstone - Maxine Brusch Centre

Registrations are essential, and anyone interested in building a strong social fabric is encouraged to attend.

Register Here





The Essentials: Membership, Safety & Feedback
Keeping your group connected, protected and informed.

Thursday 12th November, 12.00PM AEST
Registration essential.
Join QWaLC for a practical and informative session covering three important areas for our member groups





Looking to find funding opportunities for your organisation?

Toowoomba Regional Council is offering a free online workshop on how to use the Grant & Funding Finder, Grant Guru. Designed for not-for-profit community groups, sporting clubs, charitable organisations and small local businesses, this session will provide practical guidance on finding and applying for grants.

The workshop will be held online on
Wednesday 28 October from 12.00 pm to 1.00pm.

Bookings are essential.
Contact 131 872 to book.

Qld Environmental Roundtable (QERT)

QUEENSLAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL

The Qld Environmental Roundtable (QERT) is returning! Hosted by Queensland Conservation Council, this important event brings the environment movement together to build stronger relationships, discuss key environmental issues and share useful tools and insights on how to win together.

QERT offers an opportunity to connect, learn and collaborate with representatives of other nature and climate organisations and community groups from right across the state.

Date: Thursday 26th November 2026
Time: 9:30am - 4pm

Time: 9:30am – 1pm
Venue: Brisbane Latvian Hall, [24 Church Avenue, Woolloongabba]

Do you have ideas for discussions and workshops you would like to run? Fill out [the form.]

Register to attend



Woodford Folk Festival 2026/27



The Woodford Folk Festival returns from 27 December 2026 to 1 January 2027, with six days and nights of music, art and ideas at Woodfordia, 87 Woodrow Road, Woodford.

The festival features more than 20 venues, over 1,600 shows and 450+ acts, including concerts, dances, street theatre, writers' panels, comedy, art and craft workshops, circus performances and an entire children's festival.

Of particular interest to our members, the programme includes an environmental stream featuring talks, debates and films, as well as forums on social issues.

It is the largest gathering of artists and musicians in Australia!

To view the lineup and learn more about this amazing new years event, click below.

Event details

ORICoop: Proper Food Tour and AGM

ORGANIC AND REGENERATIVE INVESTMENT COOPERATIVE

The Organic and Regenerative Investment Cooperative (ORICoop) brings together farmers, businesses, eaters and like-minded investors for better food and farming outcomes. Its

SLOW (Slow, Local, Organic, Wholistic) initiative aims to help people reconnect with local, seasonally grown food and build community food hubs.

Come and join the ORICoop Board on a Proper Food tour. Meet local farmers, network, and understand more about ORICoop as a national organic food and farmers Cooperative.

Date: 7-8th November
Location: The Riverine Club, Wagga Wagga NSW

Speakers include:

- Zoe Lamont, VERVE super founder, and local food system expert
- Beatrice Ludwig, Environmental Lawyer and the latest on the fire ants for organic landholders

RSVP here

Creation Care Workshop



Date: Saturday 7 November
Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Location: Highfields Library, Grey Gum room 32 O'Brien Rd, Highfields

Dr Sally Shaw has been running Creation Care workshops all over Australia to help mobilise people in churches to see creation care as both an environmental responsibility as well as a spiritual calling. She was a leader of A Rocha Australia for many years, a Christian NGO that has been advocating for practical environmental care for over 40 years and has branches all over the world.

Workshop Details

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. Right now its only $555 for 7 days including a 4 day convergence with 3 meals a day vegetarian meals.

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









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