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AUSTRALIA
ROCHA
Conservation and Hope

A Rocha has arrived!

A Rocha is an environmental NGO with an interdenominational Christian ethos.

In our last Alert we reported that we were in the approval process to bring A Rocha to Australia as a National Organisation, to help coordinate and promote Christian conservation projects across the country. We're pleased to announce that this has now happened, marked by a new website launched at the start of April, australia.arocha.org

The continent-island of Australia exhibits great natural contrasts: its distinctive deserts are complemented by rainforests and coral reefs; frequent droughts are interrupted by severe floods. Australia boasts extensive wilderness areas but, despite a low density of human inhabitants, it suffers from widespread landscape degradation. Agriculture, urbanisation and mining have brought water shortages, salinity, feral animals, weeds and deep scars, while many remnant ecosystems and endemic species have declined or been lost.

In Australia, A Rocha was established in 2015, after more than a decade of patient development. It will support nature conservation projects that are managed by local members and associates. Several potential projects focus on revegetation, threatened species and community education and engagement.

The directors and members of A Rocha Australia—spread over five States—are finalising how this new organisation will seek to build momentum for caring for God's creation in this country. The Tahlee Ministries (Port Stephens, NSW) and Capernwray (Southern Highlands, NSW) proposals, outlined in the Dec 2015 Alert, are being reviewed to become A Rocha Australia's first projects. Interest has been shown for other projects at other locations across Australia.



**Welcome to
A Rocha Australia!**
1st Apr 2016

From the Board of Directors

Over the past several months the Board of Directors of A Rocha Australia (ARA) has been busy consolidating the organisation, placing it on sound foundations for moving forward. Our team, together with other members who have taken up key roles, has applied its diverse abilities to legal and financial arrangements and building membership. We thank God for all these voluntary investments of time and energy by his people, committed to care for his creation.



At another level, ARA's relationship with A Rocha International has been fully defined and ARA has now been publicly welcomed as part of the expanding worldwide family. In practical terms, this is evident in the establishment of our own pages on the A Rocha global website and provision of email addresses using the @arocha.org domain, for ARA's key contact points.



Locally, projects on nature conservation managed by Christian organisations at Tahlee and Capernwray, both in NSW, are in advanced stages of accreditation as A Rocha Australia Associated Projects. We are patiently building or exploring relationships with additional Christian-led projects in Victoria and South Australia.



A Rocha members and contacts are meeting in small groups in three cities, planning to volunteer support to community conservation activities and spreading the news about A Rocha in Australia.



We hope you will join us in our mission of *“showing God’s love for all creation, committed to environmental action through community based conservation projects”*.

Roger Jaensch, President/Chairperson
australia@arocha.org

Introducing our logos:

In line with A Rocha International style guidelines, logos with Australian distinctiveness have been designed. We have chosen to use a map of Australia and a kangaroo for our logos. We had shortlisted some other unique Australian fauna, but the kangaroo won because it is spread across Australia, like the members of A Rocha Australia are!



Introducing our directors

Nine A Rocha Australia volunteer directors were elected in Dec 2015, from four states. Here are their bios:

Stuart Blanch - Newcastle, NSW

Roger Jaensch - Brisbane, QLD



Raised on an orchard on the Murray River, SA. 35 years of professional NRM work through projects on wetlands and waterbirds across Australia, Asia

and Pacific Islands. The first CEO of the Partnership for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway, based in South Korea, previous employment in Malaysia. Many activities have been in cross-cultural situations including with Indigenous People. Presently self-employed in Brisbane as an ornithology and conservation adviser.

John Anderson - Tahlee, NSW



Agricultural Scientist, Aid and Development worker in Pakistan and Indonesia, Agronomist for DPI NSW.

Served for 18 years as a Baptist Minister in QLD. Currently Director of Tahlee Ministries/ Tahlee Bible College. Has served on the Board of SIM at both State and National level, currently on National Leadership Team of Missions Interlink.

Grew up on Mid-North Coast in a banana farming family. BSc with Hon in Ecology and Botany, PHD on wetland plant ecology of the Murray River,



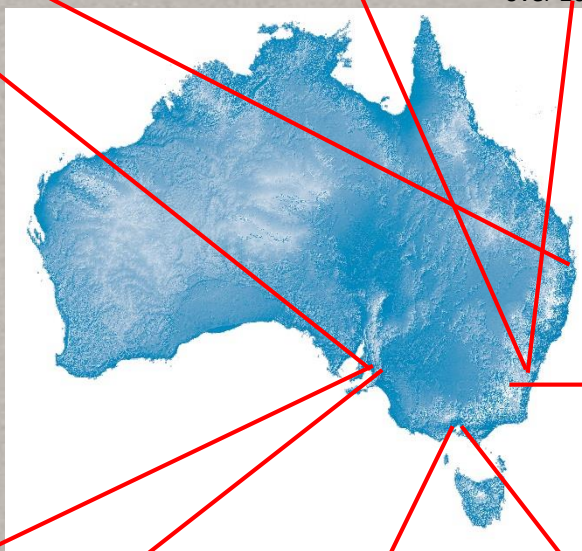
Masters in Enviro Law. Work experience at France's Camargue wetlands. Has worked for: Inland Rivers Networks, Australian Conservation Foundation NSW NPWS, World Wildlife Fund for Nature, Environment Centre NT, currently CEO of Hunter Wetlands Centre Australia. An independent candidate for the NT electorate of Nightcliff in 2012. Has represented environmental concerns on over 20 committees and Boards.

Wendy Hoare - Adelaide, SA



B.Arch (Hons), B.Th (Hons) and MBA. 33 years working as a registered architect in SA,

lecturing in architecture at Adelaide Uni and working in heritage conservation of the built and natural environment. Old Testament Theology lecturer at a SA theological college. Keen interest in the preservation of endangered wildlife species and the restoration of natural habitats.



Jenny Schabel - Goulburn, NSW



BSc (Hons). Has worked for 15 years as a bio incentives officer in

governmental positions around NSW. Recently qualified as a secondary school teacher and completed post-grad studies at SMBC. Has worked for the Bush Church Aid Society of Australia and is currently a Christian SRE coordinator for two state schools in Goulburn alongside part-time NRM work.

David Williams - Adelaide, SA



LL.B., Dip.Ed., B.Th. Raised on a farm on Ngarrindjeri land near Coorong wetlands.

Practiced law for 18 years – Australian Govt Solicitor, private practice and in legal aid. Extensive involvement with Aboriginal communities, advising on governance issues and native title claims. Lectured for the School of Aboriginal Education (TAFE). Has served on boards of AFES, Scripture Union, Lawyers' Christian Fellowship and Barnabas Fund. Regional Director of CMS-SANT since 2007.

Sally Shaw - Stirling, SA



Originally from UK, worked as a nurse/ midwife in refugee camps in Thailand and Cambodia from 1985-2007. Moved to Adelaide in 2007, obtained a post grad dip in Creative Writing and a Masters of Education (2013). Studying Theology at Tabor Adelaide. Also teaches improvisational drama at Raukkan Aboriginal school and promotes conservation and permaculture in groups such as Transition Towns.

Anna Radkovic - Melbourne, Vic



Grew up as a missionary kid in Kenya, spending holidays ringing birds and helping A Rocha in Kenya. Volunteered ringing swallows with A Rocha in France. Has a Bachelor of Environmental Science with honours, and worked for an environmental management company for 2 years. Moving to the country to learn about agricultural management.

Philip Hughes - Melbourne, Vic



Grew up in Ballarat, developing a lifelong interest in bird watching and appreciation of Australia's biodiversity. A volunteer for BirdLife Australia, formerly a research scientist with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation. BSc in Optometry, MSc and PhD degrees for research in visual conspicuity and human eye movement behaviour, Grad Dip of Ornithology.

Happenings around Australia

Queensland Creation Care network – 3rd April

We held our third Queensland Creation Care network gathering at Downfall Creek Bushland Centre. A special thanks to those who spoke (Richard Leo, Roger Jaensch and Dr. Clive Ayre) and to Brisbane City Council for allowing us to use their facilities. We were also glad to hear insights from John Wrench, representing Angligrreen.

Some of the main points that were concluded:

- There is a great need for Christians to be *active in conservation* - if we are passive, the environment will continue to be abused/plundered or the current issues will continue to be 'hijacked' by non-Christian alternatives;
- Caring for God's Creation is Biblical and is a good platform for Christian unity (which aligns with ARA's non-denominational distinctive);
- We need to keep reflecting on where we stand with respect to the Environment as this informs how we live; one response (offered by Rev Clive Ayre) is 'theistic biocentrism'.

Ross Jansen-van Vuuren, QLD

Our next gathering will be on 16th July. Email Ross for more details: rossvanvuuren@gmail.com

South Australia - 14th May

Thirteen of us met at Oaklands wetlands in Marion Council, Adelaide on 14th May. Paul Green (ecologist and tour guide) gave an excellent talk and walk, even bringing wellies and magnifying glasses for those who wanted to catch water bugs. We shared about our ecological interests and backgrounds, including an impressive range of professional environmental experience in both Australia and overseas. We discussed possible A Rocha projects and ideas for future gatherings. We hope to keep meeting to build relationships, learn from each other and progress project ideas.

Sally Shaw - SA

If you are interested in South Australian events please email Sally Shaw: sallyashaw@gmail.com



Queensland gathering



Cumberland Plain Woodland, Sydney

In NSW and VIC, ARA directors have recently visited some Christian conference centres to provide ecological advice and to discuss opportunities for future A Rocha involvement.



South Australia meeting

