



**CONSERVATION  
COUNCIL**  
ACT REGION

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

**Yellow-Box Dispatch**  
**August 2013**

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## Executive Director's Letter

Hi everyone,

**[Conservation Councils of Australia Launch 'Our Living Heritage – National priorities for nature conservation, environmental protection and climate action in Australia'](#)**

The Conservation Councils of Australia, representing nearly 500 local and regional environmental organisations from each state and territory in Australia, came together this

month to launch their national priorities for conservation, environmental protection and climate action this federal election year. We believe a strong, resilient Australia is totally dependent upon functioning ecosystems such as freshwater, oceans, land, forests and climate. These provide the services and materials for our economy and are tremendous natural assets, giving deeper meaning to our lives as Australians. This document outlines the priority actions that should be taken in the next term of government to create a safe, smart and secure country for every Australian and all living things.

[Read the report on our website here.](#)

We are very lucky to have starting with us a fantastic team of interns who will be working with us at our new office location. We have an events management intern working with us on delivering some of our key signature events over the next few months, a database and website intern, and a intern from the ANU Intern program researching biodiversity indicators for the ACT. The Conservation Council will also be involved in the Fenner School third year course "Solving Complex Environmental Problems" and will be taking on a team of students to research the interesting issue of solar farms in the ACT.

Cheers,



**Julie Melrose**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (ACTING)**

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## Federal Election Forum

[Register for this free Q&A here.](#)

It is our favourite time here in the ACT - Federal Election time! And for the environment, climate and sustainability of our great nation we have all types of policies and promises on offer. Emissions trading schemes, green armies, a 100% renewable energy future, green jobs. Do you have burning questions? Come along to our Federal Election Q&A to ask



your questions of the candidates, experts in the field of economics, hear what youth has to say about their future. and Dr Bob Brown will impart his wisdom having been there, done that and learnt a lot. This is an election forum for all and everyone!

#### Who is on the panel:

- Dr Bob Brown, Bob Brown Foundation, Former Senator for Tasmania & Former Leader of the Australian Greens
- Josh Creaser, Australian Youth Climate Coalition and 350.org Australia
- Indra Esguerra, Greens Support Candidate for the Senate
- Stephen Howes, ANU Professor of Economics & international climate change policy expert, Garnaut Climate review
- Merinda Nash, ACT Liberal Senate Candidate

When: Thursday 22 August @ 6:30pm - 8pm

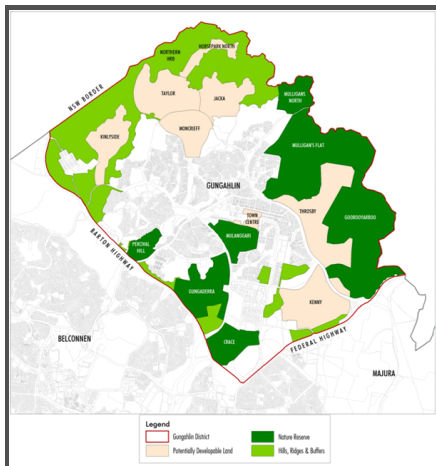
Where: Manning Clark Lecture Theatre, ANU

Cost: FREE

[Register for this free Q&A here.](#)

Learn. Act. Then vote!

## Gungahlin Strategic Assessment approved



On the 8th August, the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan (final) was approved by the Commonwealth. The Conservation Council is pleased that most of Throsby and Kenny are being protected as new nature reserves. However, the Conservation Council and key interested member groups preference was to have no development, particularly no residential, east of Horsepark Drive in Throsby where there is substantial nesting habitat for the Superb Parrot.

While a buffer of 100 metres has been put in place between the residential development and the reserve, this has no scientific basis aside from a very outdated report from a completely different area of Australia, and has never been evaluated for its effectiveness in ensuring the survival of species in the ACT. The threatening process from invasive and feral species, such as the Common Mynah, is of concern as studies and surveys suggest they penetrate into reserves from the urban edge and compete with native species for nesting habitat - interrupting the breeding success of native species.

[View the report here.](#)

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## 400 trees planted at Mount Majura for National Tree Day



Between two and three hundred enthusiastic volunteers turned out for National Tree Day 2013 to plant, water and mulch nearly 400 local trees, shrubs and ground cover plants. This spectacular effort built on last year's tree day planting near the new development of "The Fair", North Watson. Mass plantings like these are vital for improving degraded

grassy box-gum woodland, an important habitat for local native plants and animals. They are also a great way for residents to get their hands dirty and make a difference to the bush in their backyard.

Pencil into your diaries these next events:

- Fridays 10am - 12pm Friends of Mount Majura Working Bee
- 1st Sunday of the month 9am - 10am National Tree Day Follow-Up care
- 20 October 11am - 2pm Picnic in the Park
- 30 November 10am - 12pm Sustainability Fair and Book Launch

[Contact Bec at the Conservation Council for more information.](#)

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## An ecologically sustainable community at West Belconnen?



On 8 August, the Conservation Council and its Biodiversity Working Group were given a field trip tour to the site of a proposed development at West Belconnen, on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River. The Riverview Group Director David Maxwell has high hopes for the project to become Canberra's

first truly sustainable community, with a community conservation trust, protected areas, solar farms and community gardens being some of the ideas to make this idea come to life. The West Belconnen project could deliver housing options to accommodate approximately 12,000 people. The 670 hectare site which spans right up to the ACT/NSW border would be at the forefront of sustainable design, proposing 100 percent green electricity, 100 percent recycling of water and innovative approaches to housing sustainability and affordability. The Conservation Council is pleased to be involved in consultations at this early stage of the process in what is expected to be a 15-20 year project.

More about the Riverview project can be found here:

<http://www.riverviewgroup.com.au/projects-3/west-belconnen/>  
<http://www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au/>

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## Fossil Free ACT Divestment Campaign kicks off



On the back of the famed environmental activist, Bill McKibben's tour, new fossil fuel divestment campaigns focused on the ACT are under way - [Fossil Free ACT](#) and [Fossil Free ANU](#). A divestments forum is being organised for 24 September at the Legislative Assembly.

Key strategic aims are to (a) get the ACT Government to acknowledge, investigate and disclose their exposure to carbon risk (b) commit to phase out investments in fossil fuels over 5 years (c) to uphold this commitment. More broadly the campaign wants to educate the ACT community on unburnable carbon and carbon risk.

This campaign follows the ongoing success of the [Fossil Free ANU](#) campaign to have the ANU Council divest from Metgasco in particular. They are currently asking for you to write a submission about the ANU's proposed socially responsible investment policy. [You can make a submission here.](#)

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## Landcare Week 2013 – Be part of it!

Landcare groups across the country are getting ready to celebrate Landcare Week 2013, which takes place from 2 -8 September, 2013. This annual celebration of Landcare encourages everyone to get involved in the Landcare community and help protect and restore our country's valuable natural resources.

There is lots on in Canberra in Landcare Week:

- Winners of the ACT Landcare 2013 Awards will be announced at a Breakfast Awards Ceremony on Thursday 5 September. This is a great opportunity to celebrate all the great work our local Landcare heroes are doing to protect and improve our environment.
- "Bushcare's Major Day Out" also occurs in Landcare Week on Sunday 8 September.



This is an annual national event to encourage us all to take part in the restoration and maintenance of our remaining bushland by joining forces with our local Landcare, ParkCare, Bushcare or Friends of Group. It's a fun day where community members can work alongside and learn from experts and experienced volunteers. To register your activities or to find out what is going on, [go to the Bushcare's Major Day Out website](#).

To find out about other activities in our region in Landcare week go to <http://actlandcare.org.au/> and [like us on the Landcare ACT Facebook page](#).

You can also follow [Landcare Australia](#) or add an event to the Landcare Australia calendar [here](#).

By sharing details of your Landcare Week event, you can inspire others to get involved, tell them about your achievements, and help make Landcare Week 2013 a week to remember!

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## Member Group Feature - Australian Youth Climate Coalition Canberra



The Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) is "building a generation-wide movement to solve the climate crisis". The Canberra branch of AYCC is active, enthusiastic and action orientated, and is all about educating, empowering, inspiring and mobilising young people.

AYCC believes that climate change is the single greatest threat facing humanity, and that young people – as the inheritors of this planet – are the key stakeholder in humanity's response to the climate crisis. AYCC aims to create the groundswell of support and momentum needed to inspire a transition that will get politicians to support the policy changes needed.

Here in the ACT, through 'Switched On Schools', AYCC supports students to make their communities more sustainable and provides many opportunities for them to share their learning through a broad schools network. They also participate in national campaigns.

For more details and to become involved with AYCC Canberra visit [here](#) or [Facebook](#).

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## Environmental Events Guide

**Solutions for a Sustainable and Desirable Future**

This event is part of the Canberra Urban and Regional Futures (CURF) Centenary Seminar Series. Guest speaker is Dr Robert Costanza is Professor and Chair in Public Policy at the Crawford School of Public Policy at Australian National University.

When: Wednesday, 14 August 2013 from 5:30pm - 7:30pm

Where: Weston Theatre, Crawford School of Public Policy

Register: <http://solutionsforsustainablefuture.eventbrite.com.au/>

**2003 Canberra Fires 10 years after: What have we learned?**

When: 18 August @ 1:30pm - 5pm

Register: <http://www.csiro.au/Portals/Education/Programs/Discovery-Centre/Whats-on/2003-Canberra-Fires.aspx>

**You Can't Eat Your Words**

SEE-Change and Fusion Canberra would like to invite you to the next public event in the Our Hungry Future? campaign, a fast-paced and lively panel-discussion.

When: 21 August 2013 @ 7pm

Register: <http://youcanteatyourwords.eventbrite.com.au/>

**ECO FOCUS SEMINAR 2013**

Conservation Planning and Research annual research seminar covering a range of topics the CPR Unit has delivered this year - vegetation mapping, small mammal surveys, post-fire recovery, fish management.

When: Wednesday 21 August @ 9:30am - 12:30pm

Where: Caughley Seminar Room, CSIRO Gungahlin Homestead, Bellenden Street, Crace

RSVP: by 16TH AUGUST to [diwani.velasquez@act.gov.au](mailto:diwani.velasquez@act.gov.au)

**Symposium - Tasmania Dam Case: 30th Anniversary**

When: 22 August @ 9am - 5:30pm

Register: <http://law.anu.edu.au/conferences/tasmanian-dam-case>

**Great Green Debate**

The Great Green Debate is an annual event organised by the ANU Sustainability Learning Community and ANUgreen. The topic this year is based on the premise that 80% of fossil fuel reserves need to stay in the ground to avoid exceeding 2°C of warming. Therefore, what should our response be to unburnable carbon? The debate will take the format of a panel and speakers will address this question from various viewpoints: investors, industry, scientists, public policy and NGOs.

When: Wednesday 2nd October, 7:30pm – 9:00pm

Where: Bruce Hall, Dining Room

Email: [ANU.SLC@anu.edu.au](mailto:ANU.SLC@anu.edu.au)

**FENNER CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT 2013 - Population, Resources and Climate Change: Implications for Australia's near future**

Keynote address by Professor Paul Ehrlich. Other speakers include: Suzanne Cory, Hugh Possingham, David Lindenmayer, Chris Dickman, Bob Birrell, Mark O'Connor, Michael

Lardelli, Ian Dunlop, Sharyn Munro, Rhondda Dickson, Michael Jeffrey, Gary Jones, Ian Lowe, Michael Raupach, Tony McMichael, Paul Collins, Haydn Washington, Kelvin Thomson, Julian Cribb, Jane O'Sullivan and Roger Short. Richard Denniss is after-dinner speaker.

10, 11 October 2013

Shine Dome, Acton

Register at: <https://www.amlink.com.au/secure/html/fenner2013.html> or [www.population.org.au](http://www.population.org.au).

Further information: [president@population.org.au](mailto:president@population.org.au)

### ACT Centenary Bioblitz

Join Canberra's first ever collaborative race to identify as many kinds of plants, animals, algae and fungi at Black Mountain between Friday morning and Sunday afternoon.

Where: CSIRO Discovery Centre, North Science Road, Acton

Register: <http://www.csiro.au/Portals/Education/Programs/Discovery-Centre/Whats-on/ACT-Centenary-Bioblitz.aspx>

Information: [projects@molonglocatchment.org.au](mailto:projects@molonglocatchment.org.au)

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## Support our work

You can support our work to protect the environment here in the ACT by:

- [Donating](#)
- [Volunteering](#) - applications are accepted for interns on a regular basis
- [Leaving a Bequest gift](#)

**APPEAL ALERT!** Did you know - you can support the Conservation Council's efforts in the Canberra Fun Run - we will be sweating it out for 10 long kilometres - [donate here!](#)



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