

## ESsential News October 2020

### E&S Committee:

#### Co Chairs:

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Anne Frueh, RC Balwyn

Brenda Innes, RC Camberwell

Donna Martin, RC Bacchus Marsh

Lesley McCarthy, RC Flemington

The environmental theme this month is 'Plastics'. Brenda Innes' insightful article outlines the environmental impact and how we can be part of the solution.

We continue to provide Clubs with environmental project ideas and activities. David Dippie and Rob Edwards provide two ideas related to plastic solutions. Peter Berg reinforces the *Colour your World* message with a focus on the importance of bio-diversity.

Further ideas can also be found on the ESRAG Regional Chapter – Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands (ANZPI)'s website [esraganzpi.org/project\\_tag/9800/](https://esraganzpi.org/project_tag/9800/) as well as the District Website Environment page [rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/environment-sustainability](https://rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/environment-sustainability) (see the ESRAG Handbook). We encourage you to submit your Club's environmental projects to be included on the website.

Following last year's Rotarian for Bees successful Pollinator event, this year's celebration of the Australian Pollinator Week will be an online event on 26 November 2020. Keynote Speakers will be Costa Georgiadis (ABC Garden Show presenter) and Fiona Chambers (CEO of Wheen Bee Foundation). Registration details to follow.

Finally, it is gratifying to have Prince William and Sir David Attenborough take the lead to address the global awareness, interest and urgency of implementing environmental solutions, with the launch of the 'Earthshot Prize'.

This is the biggest environmental prize ever of £50m to be awarded over a decade. This is hoped to become the Nobel Prize for environmentalism. More details <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-54435638> <https://earthshotprize.org/>

Co- Chairs, Environmental Sustainability Committee  
*Fabienne Nichola                      John McCaskill*

[https://esrag.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_8zMzLTkzQ26B2Ri2RhucQg](https://esrag.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8zMzLTkzQ26B2Ri2RhucQg)

### Dates for your calendar:

#### ESRAG ANZPI Chapter Meeting

November 1st, 2020 01:30 PM  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84902521635>

November 2nd, 2020 3am AEDT  
Operation Pollinator  
[https://esrag.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_VorMt0qqSqG7u6wS1djo7w](https://esrag.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VorMt0qqSqG7u6wS1djo7w)

November 6th, 2020 6.30pm AEDT  
The Great Debate: Rotary Clubs of Melbourne & Sydney.  
'Reversing Climate Change is Mission Possible'  
<https://events.humanitix.com/the-great-rotary-debate-2020-rotary-melbourne>

November 7th, 2020 8am AEDT  
Planning for Success and Environmental Sustainability  
[https://esrag.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_8zMzLTkzQ26B2Ri2RhucQg](https://esrag.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8zMzLTkzQ26B2Ri2RhucQg)

Rotary Clubs of Sydney –  
[Climate and Peace Forum](#)  
10th November at 6pm

[Australian Pollinator Week](#)

[DAW&E Environmental Calendar](#)



### Planning for Success and Environmental Sustainability Workshop - 7 November 2020, 8 AM AEDT



**Liz Stinson**  
Chair Phillip Island Nature  
Parks



**Clare Caulfield**  
District 9810 Rotaract  
Representative



**Pat Armstrong**  
Director Communications  
ESRAG

**Quick links:**

<https://rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/environment-sustainability>

Re-usable produce bags:  
[onyalife.com/product/reusable-produce-bag-8pack/](https://onyalife.com/product/reusable-produce-bag-8pack/)

[onyalife.com/stockists/](https://onyalife.com/stockists/)

<https://seedsprout.com.au/collections/fruit-vegetable-bags>

<https://www.redcycle.net.au/>

[Clean Up Australia](#)

[WHEEN Bee Foundation](#)

[Bee Friendly: A planting guide for European Honeybees and Australian native pollinators.](#)

[Powerful Pollinators:](#)

[Australian Environmental Events Calendar](#)

[Sustainable Beeswax Wraps](#)

<https://www.esrag.org/esrag-unep-handbook>



<https://www.esraganzpi.org/>

Share the ESRAG 2 minute video introducing the new Area of Focus: 'Supporting the Environment.'

[The Green Event checklist](#)

**Join ESRAG:**

<https://www.esrag.org/membership-form>

US\$30 per year or  
US\$125 for 5 years.  
US\$15 per year for ages 17-25.



Can you remember the first time you cling wrapped your lunchtime sandwich and opened it several hours later to discover it wasn't stale or dried up but still fresh? Or being able to hold your 6 pack of drink in one hand because of the plastic links holding them can together? This by-product of the petroleum industry has enhanced the convenience our daily lives in so many ways we have taken for granted. Who would have thought back in the 1960's how the Plastics Industry would be responsible for so much 'hidden' environmental damage?

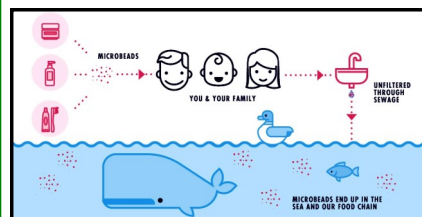
On Luskenytre Beach in Scotland, a juvenile sperm whale washed up onto the shore with 220 pounds worth of plastic bags, gloves, tubing, netting, cups, and rope. The Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme reported that the whale "sort of exploded," and that "there was a load of marine debris in its stomach."

This is just one of the few instances of whales washing up on beaches with huge chunks of plastic inside them. At least fifteen washed up on UK shores in the last year (2019) alone. Every year, roughly 8 million metric tons of plastic gets into our oceans each year. That's the combined weight of 80 million blue whales (also 822,000 Eiffel Towers, 25,000 Empire State Buildings, or one billion elephants).

Because so much plastic ends up in our oceans, whales often ingest bits of plastic by accident. It can also enter their digestive systems from eating prey that has itself ingested plastics and microplastics. Even True's beaked whales, which dive about 1,400 meters deep to feed near the seafloor, have been found dead and beached with plastics in their stomachs.

Pollutants from plastic, like DDT, contaminate the water. They then enter the whale's body when ingested, and from there are stored in their blubber. They're also likely to accumulate the highest amounts of chemicals passed on from their prey. It's not just whales at the top of the food chain; we humans are also at the top and ultimately can ingest the microbeads that have been broken down into nanoparticles which include oestrogen and other chemicals that have consequences on human health

**Fig.1: How Microbeads Enter the Food Cycle**



Microbeads are in the plastic products we use daily and include items like facial cleansers, toothbrushes and paste, plastic bottles and bags.



**What can you do?**

Ditch single-use plastic in your daily life and make the switch to durable, reusable alternatives, or their biodegradable counterparts. For example, every cloth shopping bag you use can save the earth about 100 to 700 plastic bags per year.

Switching to silicone food bags, used to replace sealable plastic bags and cling wrap, can keep even more hundreds, or even thousands of plastic bags from entering our oceans every day. Plus they're safe to boil and don't contain any BPAs harmful to our bodies.

Cotton produce bags are a wonderful alternative to plastic bags for carrying and keeping your fruits and veggies fresh. And for your packed lunches or bakery runs, use a biodegradable beeswax wrap.

To reduce microbeads, choose products without these ingredients: Polyethylene PE, Polypropylene PP, Polyethylene terephthalate PET and Polymethyl methacrylate PMMA

Brenda Innes  
Camberwell Rotary

What and where to REDcycle—<https://www.redcycle.net.au/>



### Soft plastic recycling

The REDcycle Program makes it easy for consumers to keep plastic bags and packaging out of landfill.

#### Do the scrunch test



### YES PLEASE

Some of the most commonly recycled items include:



Please make sure your plastic is dry and as empty as possible. For a comprehensive list of what can be REDcycled and more information, check the website.

### NO THANKS

We cannot accept the following:

- X Plastic bottles
- X Plastic containers
- X Any rigid plastic such as meat trays, biscuit trays or strawberry punnets
- X Glass
- X Rubber
- X Paper and cardboard
- X Tin cans
- X Food waste

\*Contact your local council to check if it can go into your kerbside collection.

### Adopt a Road— Victoria

Adopting a Road or part of a Highway is a great way to clean up your community and to promote Rotary and your Club. A good form of exercise, an excellent fellowship opportunity and an easy way to provide people who care about the environment, to get involved in a Rotary Project.



The Adopt a Roadside program aims to reduce litter on Victoria's roadsides to stop pollutants from entering local waterways, improves the quality of vegetation, and prevents soil degradation and erosion. It also promotes civic responsibility, community pride and fellowship. Adopt a Roadside volunteers help remove roadside litter and/or undertake revegetation works including the removal of weeds within Victoria's arterial road network in regional Victoria. A similar program works in metropolitan Melbourne.

[www.kvb.org.au/adopt-roadside/](http://www.kvb.org.au/adopt-roadside/)

[www.cleanup.org.au/](http://www.cleanup.org.au/)



David Dippie, Keilor Rotary

#### Have you heard of plogging?

What saves the planet, brings communities together and improves your overall health? Plogging of course! A portmanteau of "jog" and the Swedish for "pick up", "plocka upp", it means, you guessed it, to pick up litter as you jog (or plod - walkers are encouraged!). Started by a Swedish community incentive to pick up rubbish in Stockholm this is now, no surprise to its good marriage between exercise and environmental action, a global craze.

Rob Edwards, a member of the Corrimal Rotary Club, Australia, has just launched [Sustainable Social](https://sustainable-social.org/pages/inforotary) to help businesses such as resorts, cafés, and hotels market their green practices and services via social media, catching the eye of customers who care about the environment. <https://sustainable-social.org/pages/inforotary>

Rotary Clubs can join and attract new members by publicizing their environmental projects. The site has a fun [video pitch](#) to inspire clubs to start an environmental project.

#### 3 things your club can do to immediately deliver on the new area of focus:

1. Identify a club member to be your environment and **sustainability representative** and ask them to present a short report each month sharing examples of Rotary sustainability activities.
2. Sponsor a member to join [ESRAG](#) (Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group) - it's only \$US30. Their newsletter keeps your club up to date and provides some good ideas for some projects you can replicate.
3. Identify a simple project your members can start now. Start small, local, include fellowship, help make your part of the planet a better place.
4. Looking for more ideas—check out the ESRAG ANZPI website: <https://www.esraganzpi.org/>

## SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Be a friend to the environment - it helps make the world a healthier and safer place

In this article we look at the ways in which trees and gardens favourably impact on our environment. This also coincides with the **Colour Your World** project being promoted by the District 9800 Environmental Sustainability Committee.

### Importance of Trees and Gardens

Planting trees and creating a garden of plants and shrubs at home, in courtyards, on balconies, and community reserves has important environmental and **health benefits**.

Plants and trees provide food, and shelter for Australia's unique wildlife,

They create and **restore healthy landscapes** for people to live, work and play in.

Over time, we've lost a significant amount of our native habitat – putting thousands of trees and plants at risk of extinction.

Trees and gardens support **biodiversity** and contribute to a healthy eco-system fundamental for life.

### Trees:



Tree planting by sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere **reduces carbon emissions** which improves the health of our planet.



A tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year and can **sequester 1 tonne of CO2** by the time it reaches 40 years.

For every 15 trees planted, 1 tonne of carbon is taken from the atmosphere.



Whether surrounded by bushland, or in a built-up urban environment, planting trees improves the quality of land, and creates a **flourishing habitat that attracts native wildlife**.



Trees help **cleanse our water systems**, prevent soil erosion and combat salinity in the soil.

Planted in areas that help block the sun, trees are incredibly efficient in **keeping living spaces cooler**.



Trees help to **reduce noise pollution** by absorbing sound.

A community effort that involves a tree planting on degraded land can be a great way of harnessing resources, and **bringing people together**, while improving the habitat and biodiversity in their area.



### Gardens:

◇ Plants are considered a **critical resource** because of the many ways that they support life on Earth.

◇ They release **oxygen** into the atmosphere and **absorb carbon dioxide**. The result is cleaner air that is exactly what we need to survive.

◇ Scientific evidence proves that the **colour and beauty** in gardens, connects with nature and creates a **biodiversity** that has enormous personal health and wellbeing benefits - a real positive in this challenging time of the global pandemic.

◇ Plants encourage insects, **butterflies, birds, bees** and other pollinators, essential in the reproduction of plant life.

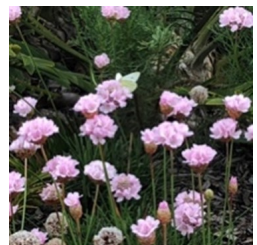
◇ Plants can be grown in front or back gardens, on balconies, rooftops or pots and **in community reserves**.

◇ The roots of plants help bind soil together thus **preventing soil erosion**.

◇ Plants help to filter chemicals and bacteria from the water in the ground and water regulation is improved as about 10% of the moisture in the atmosphere is released by plants.

◇ In planning and preparing for a healthy garden it's recommended to use fully composted yard waste, apply the correct fertiliser, water properly and choose appropriate sites to plant.

◇ Growing food for your family **decreases the pollution** that is put into the atmosphere, by reducing the amount of fruit and vegetables that need to be transported and delivered to stores and markets.



### What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the amount of variety of life on Earth. It is the number of different species of plants, animals, and microorganisms. Biodiversity supports a larger number of plant species and, therefore, a greater variety of crops providing a crucial role in food nutrition as well as protecting freshwater resources.

Peter Berg and Ari Talantas  
Rotary Club of Melbourne  
{Peter's granddaughter who took the photos}

### References:

[Trillion Trees](#)

[Trees for Life](#)

[How Gardens Help the Environment](#)

[7 Ways Gardening Helps the Environment](#)