

SustainAbility News September 2021

Coming Events:

ESRAG ANZPI Chapter Meeting

Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 7.30pm
Dr Jenn Loder, Australian Citizen Science Association

31 October—12 November 2021

UN Climate Change Conference

<https://UKCOP26>

20th November

ESRAG Oceania COP26 Student Writing Competition closes.

Climate & Peace Forum

Tuesday 16 November at 6pm AEST

<https://climateandpeace.com.au>

Drive to the Future—Electric Vehicles and Transportation

ESRAG ANZPI Chapter Meeting

Thursday 18 November 2021 at 7.30pm
Report on COOP26.

Carbon Calculator Project.

Environment Days

September-October—Frog Counts

4 October - World Habitat Day

18-24 October - National Bird Week, Aussie Backyard Bird Count.

This month's resource bank:

Sunday 26 September is World Rivers Day. www.worldriversday.com

See this article about European history and the mapping and use of rivers.

<https://blogs.slv.vic.gov.au/our-stories/world-rivers-day/>

[Yarra Riverkeepers Association:](#)

[The Whanganui River was granted legal personhood in 2017](#)

[Melbourne Water Citizen Science actions Frog Census](#)

[COP26](#) [NASA Climate Time](#)

[Machine](#) [ABC News on the Ozone Layer Hole](#)

[UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

[Sustainable Development Goals Australia](#)

[ESRAG](#)

[ESRAGANZPI](#)

From our Chair, Ted Waghorne:

ESRAG Oceania Chair 2021-2022



Thanks to all who attended our last Chapter Meeting. As outlined in this newsletter, Karin Traeger CEO of the Yarra Rivers Association provided an interesting analysis of the solid waste found in the Yarra river that flows through Melbourne. This is most likely pretty typical of many waterways near urban populations and gave a real insight into the challenges faced by rivers, streams, lakes and all waterways across Australia and New Zealand.

What was surprising to me was not just the sheer volume of waste and the number of individual items, but the high levels of polystyrene that are virtually indestructible in nature.

The approach taken by the Yarra Keepers has been to:

- 1) collect data on the waste recovered in the river; and using that data
- 2) work with councils to provide places where polystyrene can be deposited for recycling; and
- 3) see if it is possible to increase processing plants to manage/recycle waste polystyrene.

I am sure there are lots of rivers and waterways across Australia that are polluted in this way and there are lessons to be learned from the methodology and the results of the Yarra River Keepers actions.

I would like to remind all members to consider taking our COP26 youth journalist competition to your local schools to raise awareness of the importance of these talks on our future climate.

Also in this newsletter, there are details of a fund raising raffle opportunity for your club in association with "ItsTime Foundation" school solar panel projects in Fiji, that you and your club may like to join.

Also reported is a presentation made to the Rotary Club of Melbourne by John Thwaites AM who outlined the Monash University Sustainability Institute's assessment of Australia's progress against the UN Sustainability Goals. It is fair to say we should be doing better.

Next month we are considering how Rotarians could get involved in a Community Science project observing what is happening in your neighbourhood or how your project is performing. I hope you are able to join us.

Welcome to the newest members of ESRAG ANZPI:

District 9455: Alexander Jayasuria, Rotary Club of Hillarys.

District 9510: Richard Bentley, Rotary Club of Walkerville.

District 9620: Michael Spice, Rotary Redcliffe Sunrise. Brian Springer, Rotary Pine Rivers Daybreak.

District 9670: Pam Dean-Jones, Rotary Toronto Sunrise. Amanda Roach, Rotary Rylstone-Kandos.

District 9685: Wendy Bowen, Rotary Lower Blue Mountains. Trudy Stevenson, Rotary Carlingford.

District 9705: Karen McKernan, Rotary Woden Daybreak. Stephen Utick, Rotary Canberra.

District 9780: Aileen Brown, Rotary Bayside Geelong. Jenny Acopian, Rotary Geelong East. Jody Duckworth, Rotary Portland Bay. Rick Hattam, Rotary Kardinia.

District 9790: Mark Slater, Rotary Belvoir Wodonga. Mary Connelly-Gale, non Rotarian.

District 9800: Gordana Arnaut, Rotary Prahran. Howard Burvill, Rotary Woodend. Anne Cobham, Rotary Brighton North. Gilly Swinnerton, Rotary Canterbury. Lindsay Jolley, Rotary Bendigo South. Isabel Armer, Rotary Richmond. Pam Norton, Rotary Kew.

District 9820: Clive Miller, Rotary Wonthaggi. Edward Mitchell, Rotary Maffra. Don Ripper, Rotary Sale. Tyrrell McGeever, Rotary Dromana.

District 9940: Hayley Burns, Rotary Port Nicholson.

That is 26 new members this month!!

There are now 208 ESRAG members in 25 Districts across Zone 8:

9455, 9465, 9510, 9550, 9570, 9600, 9630, 9650, 9670, 9675, 9685, 9700, 9705, 9710, 9780, 9790, 9800, 9810, 9820, 9830, 9910, 9920, 9930, 9940, 9980



September Chapter meeting:

We welcomed several new members and guests to tonight's meeting.

ESRAG Oceania Chair Ted Waghorne reminded everyone to share the flier for the COP26 Young Journalist competition with schools. He also provided an update on the Environment Ambassadors Program which is underway led by former Chair Pat Armstrong and Thelma Raman.

Our Guest Speaker for this meeting was Dr Karin Traeger, CEO of the Yarra Riverkeeper Association. Karin is originally from Chile and earned a Masters Degree in Environment focusing on sustainable fisheries and climate change and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in Wildlife; focussing on monkeys and sloths in Costa Rica. She has also worked on the Great Barrier Reef as a divemaster tracking coral bleaching. In her spare time she is an ultra marathon runner and practices "plogging" picking up plastic waste while running.

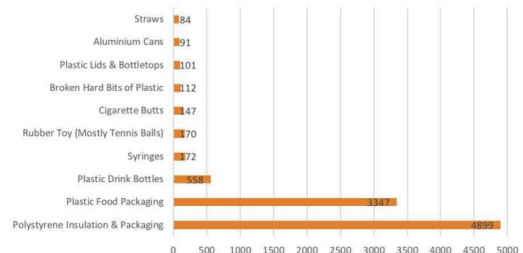


Karin's talk tonight focussed on polystyrene and the damage it does to our waterways and the environment. During research undertaken by Yarra Riverkeepers in September-October 2019 and checked in January 2020, they have identified that polystyrene particularly EPS is the predominant pollutant in the Yarra with both large pieces and microplastics. The Yarra River then feeds this litter into Port Phillip Bay. It is estimated that 828 million items of litter enter the bay annually and over 74% of this is microplastics.. Polystyrene is more harmful than other plastics as it is composed of relatively hazardous chemicals which can leach into the soils.

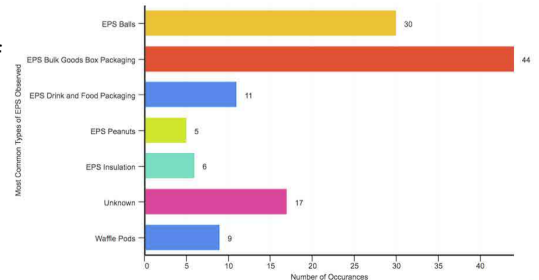
EPS is expanded polystyrene and is a derivative of ethylene and benzene, made using a polymerisation process which produces translucent spherical beads of polystyrene, about the size of sugar granule. www.epsa.org.au

Litter collections from the river and weed banks between Church Street Bridge and the McRobertson Bridge in April 2018 showed that of the top 10 items surveyed, polystyrene and plastic food packaging far outnumbered all other rubbish.

EPS is it is low cost, lightweight, moisture resistant and shock absorbing making it an excellent product for packaging and construction: the 2 main sources of litter. But it is also lightweight, meaning it is easily transported by wind and water, and takes hundreds of years to decompose.



EPS is recyclable but there are few locations offering this service and it is not allowed in council recycling bins so most goes into landfill. There are a number of Waste Transfer Stations which accept [clean white polystyrene waste](#) including Booroondara, Brooklyn, Monash, Moonee Valley, and Green Wheel Recycling at Sunshine West and Geelong North. [Find your local recycler here.](#) Recycled polystyrene is used in building materials.



So what can we do?

1. Reduce our use of polystyrene and plastics. Replace with recyclable/ reusable materials such as plant fibre or mushroom based compostable materials.
2. Recycle: take your polystyrene and plastics to a drop off/collection point for recycling.
3. Write to your MP asking for a ban on polystyrene and single use plastics.
4. Report the problem of litter, leaks into waterways via the EPA website or hotline 1300 372 842 or [EPA Interaction Portal](#)
5. Organise clean up events at your local river, creek, water way or at one of the many [litter hot spots beach/bay clean up](#) events. It doesn't stop the problem but it help to prevent further problems - and it makes volunteers feel good.
6. Communicate: spread the word and tell others about the problems with litter in our waterways.
7. Read the full report [here](#).
8. Join one of the Friends groups working in your local waterways. Gardiners Creek, Moonee Ponds Creek, Friends of the Barwon.

Yarra Riverkeepers hold regular river clean ups and planting events along the river. They are currently working on 10 new sites for tree and groundcover planting to restore river ecosystems.

They are also developing resources for children—Little Critters, Wildlife and Weeding toolkits and creating a Healthy Waterways toolkit in conjunction with Melbourne Water. [These resources are available here.](#) [See Salvatore the Yarra Seal.](#)



Their work on the Yarra River is being replicated along the Maribyrnong River with the appointment of a leader, Dr Nicole Kowalczyk. Nicole is an ecologist and her PhD focussed on the St Kilda Little Penguin colony and the importance of the Yarra River in the predator/prey dynamics. She will be working with environment groups along the Maribyrnong in coming months.

There were a number of questions which Karin kindly answered or provided links to. The Break Out sessions found that many of us were already participating in or holding events to clean up rivers and waterways, Clean Up Australia Day or regular litter days.

One recommendation was the Litterati APP. [Litterati - Creating A Litter Free World | Litterati](#)

Thank you to all attendees for their enthusiastic participation in the break out rooms, their suggestions and comments.

Many thanks Karin for an inspiring presentation and some excellent ideas on how we can all make a difference to our rivers.

Are You a Young Aspiring Journalist?

Would you like to share your environmental perspective?



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021**

Imagine you are a journalist at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021 and write your report for us!

We are looking for entries from those in year 7-10

ESRAG Oceania Young Journalist Competition

(ESRAG is Rotary's Action Group for the Environment)

TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

<https://esraganzpi.org/cop26-competition>

PRIZES

The winning entry will be awarded AUD \$100

Runner up will be awarded AUD \$50

Winning entries will be published in the ESRAG Oceania Newsletter, on the website and in other Rotary publications.



Rotary



ESRAG
ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY
ROTARY ACTION GROUP

OCEANIA
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
PACIFIC ISLANDS

Raffle in support of the Its Time Foundation—and your club

Paradise Taveuni Resort is giving you the chance to win a holiday of a lifetime on the beautiful island of Taveuni, Fiji. The Fijian people will make you feel welcome like no other.

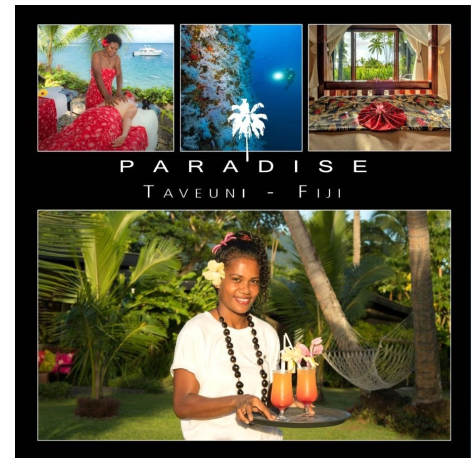
The prize is fully donated, so the \$20AUD per ticket is split:
50% to the Rotary Club you select to spend on their community projects.
[Register your club here.](#)

40% to Its Time solar schools projects & 10% to Plastic Free Oceans (an initiative of Its Time Foundation). After the prize is drawn you will get an update showing the school you helped.

Its Time Foundation installs solar panels on school roofs in Fiji and the Pacific Islands. To date 20 schools have been supported. [See the reports here.](#)

[Buy a ticket](#) and share this offer with your members, friends and family.

The [Its Time Foundation](#) is led by Rob Edwards, OAM, a member of the Rotary Club of Corrimall, and a member of the ESRAG Oceania Executive Team. He is also one of the Rotarians behind the Climate & Peace Seminars organised by the Rotary Clubs of Sydney.



The Rotary Club of Melbourne hosted Professor John Thwaites AM as a speaker this week. John is Chair of the *Monash Sustainable Development Institute* and *ClimateWorks Australia*, and is a Co-Chair of the Leadership Council of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network launched by the Secretary General of the United Nations to provide expert advice and support to the development and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. He is also the Chair of the SDSN Association, which operates the SDSN network around the world.

John was reporting on Australia's progress against the Sustainable Development Goals. The targets help us shift from short term to long term goals. They also mobilise action, crystalize priorities and hold us to account. Mid and longer term they provide a framework for thinking harder and thinking globally. The [Transforming Australia 2020](#) goals were set in 2013 and revised in 2018.

The report shows that Australia is performing well in health and education, but is failing to reduce CO2 emissions, waste and environmental degradation, and to address cost of living pressures and economic inequality.

Of the 56 indicators examined in this report, only 12 are assessed as on track to meet the 2030 targets. 23 indicators are assessed as off track, 11 are classified as breakthrough needed and 10 need improvement. The report also shows COVID-19 has exacerbated trends, including higher levels of unemployment, poverty and psychological distress that were emerging before COVID-19, and that could fracture Australian society.



* We are strong in health and education but wealth inequality has increased significantly—we are becoming a have/have not society. Net disposable income has risen from 2000 —> 2019 although has stabilised in recent years.

* Investing for the future with Research & Development is declining: from 2.2% of GDP to 1.8% to well below world leaders and the main lag is in the private sector.

* Obesity is increasing and while indigenous life expectancy is improving it still remains well below the national average.

* Energy productivity is improving but slowly. We are not doing well on Diversity & Equity.

** Environmental findings: greenhouse gas emissions have declined only marginally since 2000 and little progress has been made since 2013. Australia is well off track to meet a 2030 emissions target that is consistent with the Paris Agreement to keep global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius. Emissions need to halve every year for the next 10 years to meet the target.

Our per capita material footprint is one of the highest in the world — more than 70% above the OECD average — and rising.

Hard coral cover on the Great Barrier Reef has declined and the trend for threatened species has worsened since 2000.

Total forest area has increased steadily since 2008 after a period of decline, but research by ClimateWorks Australia indicates that 5 million more hectares of plantings are needed by 2030 to reach climate targets

[MSDI_TA2020_Summary.pdf \(sdgtransformingaustralia.com\)](#)

Our team:

Chair—Ted Waghorne, Rotary Club of Canterbury
Rob Anderson, Rotary Club of Canterbury
David Dippie, Rotary Club of Keilor East
Faye Kirkwood, Rotary Club of Caulfield
Fabienne Nichola, Rotary Club of Camberwell

Former chair—Pat Armstrong, Rotary Club of Doncaster
Ian Dempsey, Rotary Club of Mitchell South
Rob Edwards, Rotary Club of Corrimall
Lesley McCarthy, Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington
Thelma Raman, Rotary Club of Sydney

Team Members needed:

We are seeking volunteers to work in our admin teams to undertake IT, Social Media and Project tasks.

Do you have the enthusiasm, skills or experience to participate in one of these teams?

For the website, experience in WordPress is required and for communications and distribution of newsletters and events, MailChimp experience is helpful. We are also seeking a Social Media team to post and share across FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Is this you? [E: esraganzpi@gmail.com](mailto:esraganzpi@gmail.com)

The Project team is seeking people to collect, organise and prepare materials for the 6 key focus areas and in the Zone Countries of focus projects. [E: Solatube@bigpond.com](mailto:Solatube@bigpond.com)



Recipe of the month—Meat Free Mondays for a Plant Rich Diet

Red Lentil Curry

- 2 cups red lentils
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons curry paste
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon white sugar
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
- 2 tins tomato puree or crushed tomatoes

Instructions:

Wash the lentils in cold water until the water runs clear. Put lentils in a pot with enough water to cover and bring to a boil, cover the pot, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, adding water during cooking as needed to keep covered, until tender usually about 15 to 20 minutes. Drain and keep warm.

Put oil in a large pan and add onions, cooking until soft. Then add the curry paste, curry powder, turmeric, cumin, chili powder, sugar, garlic, and ginger stirring into the onions well. Increase heat to high and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the tomato puree and when mixed well and hot, stir into the lentils. Serve with basmati rice, naan bread or bread.

Do you have a favourite recipe to share?
Send it in for next month's newsletter.



Understanding time zones:

UTC = GMT: Coordinated Universal Time or Greenwich Mean Time

AEDT = DST: Australian Eastern Daylight Time is UTC +11

AEST: Winter // non Daylight Savings Time I UTC +10

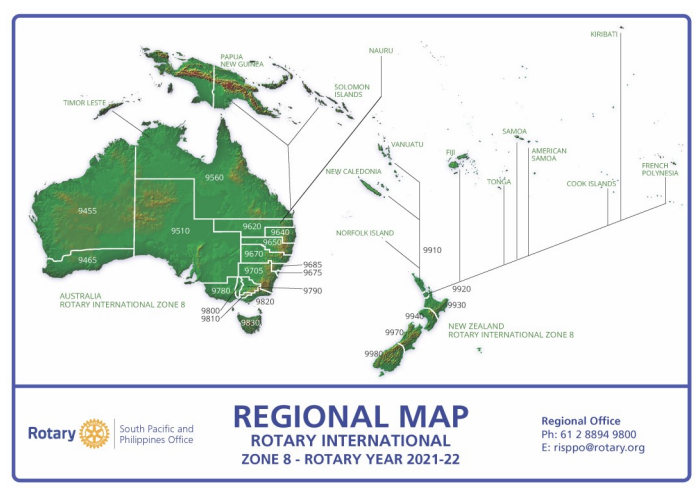
PST: Pacific Standard Time UTC -8

NZDT_DST: New Zealand and Pacific is UTC +13

www.timeanddate.com/time/map/



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I am a proud ESRAG member. Join me?



