

## FROM THE EDITOR

In his landmark book “The Weather Makers”, (2005) Tim Flannery features the tale of the Golden Toad once abundant in the Costa Rican rainforests, now feared extinct due to climatic changes. But the dangers of climate change are not limited to exotic species in far away lands. Common sea plankton, the food source of sea creatures that supports life in the complex food web on our amazing planet, is also under threat from climate change as higher ocean temperatures and increased CO<sub>2</sub> absorption are causing our oceans to become more acidic. This acidification affects the shell formation in crustaceans, and along with decreasing fish stocks, the delicate balance of nature is becoming dangerously upset.

Conserving and promoting biodiversity is a way to help tip the scales back in Mother Nature’s favour. So read on for this month’s look at how we can lighten our footprint on the planet by considering the “connectedness” of things, from palm oil in the chocolates we buy to the Orangutans in Borneo and Sumatra.

Yours as we work together towards a greener future,

*Kirsten Kennedy*

Editor and Co-Chair,  
Pine Rivers Climate Action Network

*Renewable is Do-Able!  
Sustainable is Attainable!*

## SIMPLE SCIENCE

### What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things; the different plants, animals and micro organisms, the genetic information they contain and the ecosystems they form.

It is estimated that there are 13.6 million species of plants, animals and micro-organisms on earth. Australia has about one million of these, which represents more than 7% of the world's total and is more than twice the number of species in Europe and North America combined. Megadiversity describes countries with very high levels of biodiversity. Twelve of the megadiverse countries, including Australia, contain about 75% of Earth's total biodiversity. As a 'developed' nation, Australia has a special responsibility for biodiversity conservation and management. Other megadiverse countries include Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia.

The best way to conserve biodiversity is to save habitats and ecosystems rather than trying to save a single species. Many high profile conservation campaigns focus on rescuing a single endangered species from extinction ... blue whales, bilbies, koalas. No organism, however, exists in isolation. If a species is at risk, then the habitat in which it lives is probably under threat too.

**Australian Museum, Sydney**

To learn more about Australia’s Biodiversity, the threats it faces and how we can preserve it through more sustainable living, visit the Australian Museum’s website [www.amonline.net.au](http://www.amonline.net.au).



**Australian Museum**  
nature culture discover

*It is now clear that climate change is the major new threat that will confront biodiversity this century, and that if greenhouse gas emissions run unchecked until 2050 or beyond, the long term consequences for biodiversity will be disastrous.*

**Climate Change and Biodiversity edited by Thomas E. Lovejoy, Lee Jay Hannah – 2006.**

## Last Chance to win a Blanket Box! Raffle will be Drawn Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December

Get your ticket stubs and money in to Lesley, Kirsten or Rebecca by the final meeting for the year.

Last minute tickets will be available on the night, but the winning ticket will be drawn at the end of the meeting.



## Member's Piece

### BIODIVERSITY

I recently read an article in National Geographic relating to the destruction of old growth forests for the palm oil plantations. I have attached pictures detailing the destruction of an amazing amount of forests. To cut a long story short, the problems are:

1. Clearing old growth forests & leaving nothing behind but palm oil plantations
2. Ruining the Biodiversity of the region by leaving nothing at all but palm trees
3. Destroying the environment of the local people who aren't involved in palm oil production, but who depend on the land & animals for their survival
4. Obviously destroying the habitat for the wildlife in these areas including Orangutans
5. Short term economic growth, but future generations will suffer because of these actions.

Obviously a compromise needs to be reached so that the community can benefit from the monetary gain associated with these plantations. However, the article states comments from leading scientists studying the current destruction and their opinion is that this practice can still be maintained with respect to the Biodiversity, by using the existing land destroyed after years of logging instead of cutting into the old growth forests.



After reading this article it got me thinking about our own Biodiversity dilemma. I have recently discovered, after writing into a local newspaper, that there is a lot of division and anger on our own Biodiversity issue. It seems a lot of farming people are worried that their farming practices will come under major scrutiny that will lead to restrictions on their current methods. It seems to me that compromise is the essence in this debate. Surely protecting the environment that we have left is crucial in these current times. Farming can still take place with respect to the habitat without the need to destroy it completely as is the case in Borneo. The science is telling us we need to act now to be considerate of our Biodiversity.

**Adrienne Hopkins**  
PR CAN Member



#### Action You Can Take

Write a letter or send an email to companies that produce items using palm oil. Voice your concerns over the loss of biodiversity and habitat destruction for species like the Orangutan. Look for the consumer feedback email address or phone number on the packaging and ask them where their palm oil comes from and what plans they have to switch to a more sustainable option.

**Note:** Many items labelled simply as vegetable oil actually contain palm oil. Other pseudonyms under which palm oil fall include glyceryl stearate and stearic acid.

Items that commonly contain palm oil are: chocolate, ice cream, biscuits, crackers, low fat dairy products, margarine, soaps, detergents, cosmetics, and more.

A great place to find products on Australian shelves that use alternatives to palm oil is the Borneo Orangutan Survival website, [www.orangutans.com.au](http://www.orangutans.com.au), and scroll down to the "Helping You Buy Responsibly – Palm Oil Free Alternatives" link. It is quite an extensive list and should point you in the right direction to help protect these lovely creatures, their habitat, and the biodiversity of the region.



## From Australian Conservation Foundation and the Who On Earth Cares Team:

Another year bites the dust, and the festive season is here once more!

Often the best time of year for catching up with family and friends, it's also the biggest time of spending - on presents, food, alcohol, parties and holidays. Unfortunately, all of our spending and consumption results in significant environmental damage and carbon pollution.

However, you don't have to be a scrooge to reduce your carbon footprint at Christmas!

**Here's our top five tips for a more sustainable festive season:**

### 1. Buy a service, not a product:

To reduce embodied carbon pollution and water consumption, think about buying someone a service - say a voucher for a massage, rather than a massaging appliance. Vouchers for other services, (such as gardening or house-cleaning) or film and theatre tickets are also good.

### 2. Buy gifts that give twice:

Give your friends and family membership to charities, overseas aid groups or environment organisations - such as the Australian Conservation Foundation!

Get someone an [ACF membership](#), see [Karma Currency](#) for charity gift voucher ideas or visit [Oxfam Unwrapped](#).

### 3. Buy [carbon offsets](#):

You can choose the amount you want to spend and offset someone's car travel, household energy use or airline travel, once-off or for a year. A great gift for people coming from interstate to celebrate the festive season!

### 4. Get a really green Christmas tree:

Go for an Australian native tree in a pot which you can use year after year, or can plant in the garden after Christmas. Tip: Support the campaign to revive the native [Wollemi Pine](#), an endangered Australian native which makes a great Christmas tree!

### 5. If you're organising a get-together with family or friends, check out what you can do to make your event more sustainable [here](#).

To see how your local area rates in its consumption, check out ACF's [Consumption Atlas](#).



[www.acfonline.org.au/emailer/emailer\\_view.asp?eid=2712798&cid=920](http://www.acfonline.org.au/emailer/emailer_view.asp?eid=2712798&cid=920)

## Did You Know?....

It may be a challenge sticking to your green principles over the "silly season" with endless advertising and expectations to (over) consume with end of year festivities, but PR CAN is proud to bring you a *Guide to a Green Christmas – End of Year Ideas That Won't Cost the Earth*.

Check out our website [www.pineriversCAN.org](http://www.pineriversCAN.org) for a great list of green ideas for...

- *Him*
- *Her*
- *Children*
- *Teens*
- *Food Lovers*
- *Gardeners*
- *Everyone*
- *Those people who have everything*

## PINE RIVERS CAN DECEMBER MEETING WITH SWAP & SAVE PARTY



**Time: 7pm start**



Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Last get together for the year! Bring along your swap items and a plate of food to share for a light supper, to reflect on 2008 and discuss plans for 2009.

Old Catholic Church Hall,

Corner Samford Road & Camp Mountain Road, Samford

RSVP appreciated to Kirsten on 0418 870 060 or

[pinersCAN@gmail.com](mailto:pinersCAN@gmail.com)

*Gold coin donation encouraged to cover venue hire*



## FEBRUARY IS...

**THE MONTH TO PUT SOME NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS INTO ACTION AND COME ALONG TO THE FIRST PR CAN MEETING FOR 2009.**

Pine Rivers CAN will re-convene in February, with nominations for key roles. More info to come in February newsletter prior to the meeting. Meeting date to be advised.

## Local Food Co-Operative For Samford

Interested in joining the movement for locally grown food to be more accessible in the Samford/Dayboro area?



Contact Peter Kearney for more details on (07) 3289 3602 or [peter@cityfoodgrowers.com.au](mailto:peter@cityfoodgrowers.com.au)

You can find out more about this group by visiting our Google Group page <http://groups.google.com/group/samford-local-food-group?lnk=>

While you're online, also check out how we can all grow more of our own food to reduce "food miles" and associated greenhouse gas emissions. Visit [www.cityfoodgrowers.com.au](http://www.cityfoodgrowers.com.au) to connect with others on reducing your eco footprint through gardening.

## Recommended Reading

**"Good News for a Change – How Everyday People are Helping the Planet"** by David Suzuki and Holly Dressel. Allen & Unwin, 2002.

Canadian environmental scientist David Suzuki has an amazing way with words. Readers will find themselves nodding in agreement and understanding as he talks through the "connectedness" of all things. Along with case studies of ecological systems around the world that are being managed holistically and sustainably, the authors also explore economic management and business models that serve as positive examples of how responsible social and business practices can work alongside capitalism to produce positive outcomes for all. Looking at "doing business without harm", restoring biodiversity, saving waterways, growing good food, sustainable fish management, and cleansing our air, this book is overflowing with sensible and practical models for governments, businesses, community organisations and individuals. Check it out at your favourite book shop or local library these holidays. It really does have some good news for a change.

### Pine Rivers Climate Action Network

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#### PR CAN CORE WORKING GROUP:

**KIRSTEN KENNEDY**  
Co-Chair, Communications & Publicity Officer,  
Fundraising Co-coordinator (Temp)

**REBECCA STOWE**  
Co-Chair, Treasurer, Solar Neighbourhoods Project  
Manager

**LESLEY HUGHES**  
Secretary, Web Master, IT Support

**HOWARD NIELSEN**  
Solar Neighbourhoods Co-coordinator

**POSITION VACANT:**  
Fundraising Co-coordinator

**PRCAN meets regularly on the third  
Wednesday of every month**

Contributions from PR CAN supporters are always welcome for our monthly newsletter. Send your book/movie reviews, seasonal recipes, stories from the community, hints and tips for saving energy/living more sustainably to [pineriversCAN@gmail.com](mailto:pineriversCAN@gmail.com).

"Pine Rivers CAN!" is a Climate Action Network started by a group of concerned local residents who are passionate about taking real and effective action on climate change. Pine Rivers CAN acts locally with residents, schools and businesses to raise awareness of climate change and create a sustainable future for the world, starting at home.

Helping residents to live more sustainably is what the network is about, especially by promoting energy efficiency and supporting renewable green power options, as well as promoting material efficiency through reducing, reusing and recycling.

#### PR Can Wishes To Thank...

All members and supporters for their contributions to the newsletter this year, as well as their attendance at all of our meetings and events during 2008. You are helping to spread the message of sustainability by your positive actions, words and ways of thinking. Thank you for your support, and we look forward to working together with you in the New Year towards a more sustainable way of life for our community and beyond.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank the very talented Lesley Hughes for her outstanding work in formatting and design of these newsletters every month. We have come a long way in a short time, and I am indebted to her for the wonderful job she does to make the newsletters look so great. ☺  
Kirsten

*I can't let the year end without a big round of applause for our dynamic leader Kirsten. Without her the network would have foundered long ago.*  
Lesley

\*\*\*\* *Wishing all our readers a Happy and Sustainable Christmas* \*\*\*\*