

June 2017

# Village Eco News

A publication of Bangalow Land and Rivercare.

Welcome to Village Eco News. For more information about how you can subscribe or contribute see page 4



## Native Bees Under Threat

By Noelene Plummer

*"If the bee disappears from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years to live" Albert Einstein*

The global bee population is in serious decline. European bee hives are increasingly at risk of attack from predatory mites and beetles and we are also losing our population of native bees as well.

The importance of native bees to Australia's food chain and biodiversity of native vegetation is extremely important. Some plants are pollinated by only one species of native bee. Australia has over 1600 species of native bees 10 of these species are stingless. Stingless bees are the only native bees currently available for sale.

We need bees, they carry pollen from flower to flower fertilising plants to produce seeds. They help our food grow. More than 75% of the plants we harvest rely on bees to pollinate them.

Our native bees are under threat from the widespread use of insecticides, diesel fumes and loss of habitat. Major climatic disruptions such

as floods, droughts and unseasonal hot weather reduce the number of flowers bees rely on as well as bushfires which destroy habitats.

### How can you help:

Every small action can make a difference. We need to improve the environment in which they collect food and create a haven for bees by planting lots of flowering plants. Bees especially love purple flowers e.g. lavender, salvia and forget-me-nots. Conserve or create places for them to nest and reproduce. Urban bees do very well as they have less distance to travel to collect pollen.

Build or install a native bee hive and importantly avoid using pesticides and chemicals. Contact your schools and pre schools, there are projects to place bee hotels in school yards to teach children about biodiversity and the importance of pollinators. Visit [beehotel.weleda.com.au](http://beehotel.weleda.com.au)

### Why keep stingless bees?

- they are proven pollinators of Macadamias, Lychees, Avocados and various other fruits and vegetables increasing the size and yield .
- they improve biodiversity through cross pollination of plants
- they do not cause anaphylaxis
- they produce small quantities of unique honey

**Aboriginal Significance:** Called the "Sugarbag" they were used as a sweetener and also given as a sign of respect at ceremonies. The wax was used in the construction of tools and also applied externally for medicinal uses very similar to Manuka Honey. For more information about renting or to purchase native bees contact [stevesnativebees@hotmail.com](mailto:stevesnativebees@hotmail.com)

### Landcare Working Bee

Our team of friendly volunteers work every Saturday morning, weather permitting from 8.30am to 10.30am rotating through the various sites around Bangalow. All welcome.

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# Household Food Waste

Why is waste and especially food waste a very HOT topic at the moment?

Australia produces enough food to feed approx. 60 million people, yet two million people still rely on food relief every year but nearly 90% of food agencies reported not having enough food to meet total demand with 6 in 10 agencies requiring at least 25% more food with almost 3 in 10 agencies requiring double the food.

In 2013 it was estimated that food waste cost Australia more than \$8 billion each year or 4 million tonnes nationally.

The environmental cost is also significant, when food rots with other organic matter in landfill it gives off a greenhouse gas called methane which is 25 times more potent than the carbon pollution that comes out of your car exhaust.

An estimated 6.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide is released as a result of sending organic waste to landfill.

When you waste food you also waste water, fuel and resources that it takes to get the food from the paddock to the plate and needs 450 000 garbage trucks to transport the 4 million tonnes of food waste to landfill sites.

## **Broken down it relates to:**

\$2.67 Billion or 33% of fresh food  
\$2.18 Billion or 27% of leftovers  
\$1.17 Billion or 15% packaged and long life products  
\$727 Billion or 9% of drinks  
\$727 Billion or 9% of frozen foods  
\$566 Billion or 7% of take aways

## **What does this Mean to the Average Household?**


- ❑ We generate more than 361 kilograms of food waste annually per person.
- ❑ \$1 036 worth of food is thrown away each year per household.
- ❑ Up to 40% of the average garbage bin is food.
- ❑ One out of every five shopping bags of groceries is discarded.

## **What you can do to help?**

There are a number of steps you can take to reduce food waste in the home:

1. ALWAYS MAKE A SHOPPING LIST and don't be tempted to buy what is not on the list.
2. Regularly check the contents of your pantry to avoid buying what you may already have.
3. Check the fridge before you shop and only buy what you need.
4. Do smaller shops or on a needs basis.
5. Plan your meals and portion sizes. It save time, money and reduces food waste.
6. Use leftovers and be creative with your next meal. There are any number of interesting recipes.
7. If you can not finish a restaurant meal take it home.
8. Shop locally, and frequent your local market for food grown locally and in season
9. Make your freezer you friend by storing leftover food in labelled air tight containers
10. Get a compost bin or a worm farm. This means less landfill and it's great for the garden.

*Source; Dept Environment & Energy, WWF, Oz Harvest - compiled Dawn Lotty*



## Antibiotics in Agriculture

For some time medical experts have been concerned about the growing use of antibiotics prescribed for humans believing it could lead to a resistant strains of bacteria or super bugs.

Concern has now turned to the use of antibiotics in the animal industry and agriculture. Australia imports about 700 tonnes of antibiotics annually. More than half of that goes to agriculture.

Antibiotics are used widely in food animals as growth promoters and to prevent and treat infection in pigs, chickens and feedlot cattle.

As well as oral administration and injection small amounts are mixed into animal feed for weeks or months at a time. Antibiotics are also sprayed onto fruit trees to prevent and treat infection. Traces of antibiotics that remain after the initial use may encourage emergence of resistant strains of bacteria.

There is a growing body of evidence that these antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria are transferred to humans. The UN reported that, after the introduction of the fluoroquinolone antibiotics for use in food animals, strains of Salmonella with decreased susceptibility to this class of antibiotics were found in humans in France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Russia Federation, Spain and United Kingdom.

*"There is fairly convincing evidence in Europe that the vancomycin-resistant Enterococcus (VRE) germ may be related to the use of Avoparcin and probably developed in animals, pigs and chickens in particular, and this was acquired by the general population through the food chain,"* says ANU Associate Professor Collignon. This has led the European Union and Australia's National Registration Authority to put extensive restrictions on the use of Avoparcin and another widely used animal antibiotic known colloquially as *Pen-Strep* and leading to several large well know fast food organisations to advertise their chicken to be antibiotic free.

We are NOT advocating that readers stop eating meat.

Talk to your local butcher. Many advertise the source of their pork, meat or poultry and know the conditions under which they have been produced as their livelihood depends on your custom. *source ABC - edited Dawn Lotty.*

## Bangalow Masterplan: update

by Noelene Plummer\*

Byron Shire Council is currently preparing its strategic plan for Bangalow which will lead to a Masterplan. This process includes representatives from most of the community and special interest groups from Bangalow, known as 'The Guidance Group'.

The Group first met in March 2016 for a two day workshop on "Place Creation" which covered creative ideas for making our town a more liveable place with lots of ideas discussed. Since then the Guidance Group have attended numerous 1/2 day workshops and meetings.

The Council has recently held events for the broader Bangalow community to explore ideas for improving 'Access, Movement and Parking' in the town. The Masterplan for Bangalow is still in the planning stages and nothing yet has been finalised.

There will be lots more community consultation before the final Masterplan is decided. If you have any questions or ideas now is the time to contact your local community group and find out who your representative is and have your input.

All members of the Guidance Group are putting in a lot of their spare time to help prepare Bangalow for the future.

*\*Noelene is our representative on the Group*



The popular Bangalow Billy Cart Derby

## A Hidden Success

Tucked away behind the houses in the Cedardale Estate at Bangalow is a 200m stretch of about 500 trees and scrubs planted on the eastern side of Little Maori Creek by Landcare and neighbourhood volunteers in September 2001.

Today it provides a healthy native corridor alive with birds, lizards and small mammals while protecting the Creek bank from erosion.

The land was donated by the neighbouring landholder. Byron Shire Council financed the trees, provided the mulch, water saving crystals and tree guards.

The use of tree guards was necessary to prevent rabbit damage. They also proved useful against the regular frosts that occur along the Creek and kept a moist microclimate around plants during the drought of the spring of 2002.

Losses on this site even during some extreme weather conditions have been low in number and weed infestation has not been a problem due to minimal use of spraying at the start and the good maintenance it receives from the neighbours ie: mowing etc. and our regular Saturday morning working bee.

It is hoped to continue this planting further down the Creek and onto the opposite bank when the initial planting is beyond needing maintenance.



Noelene at the Cedardale planting 2001

## Support Your Local Landcare Group

It's simple to join our Patrons Program and support our work by depositing your donation via Summerland Credit Union at:

Bangalow Land and Rivercare Inc.  
BSB 728-728 Ac 22209164

Find out more about what we have been doing for Bangalow for the last 20 years at:

<http://www.bangalowlandcare.org.au/about/>

and all about our Patrons Program at:

<http://www.bangalowlandcare.org.au/about/patrons-to-the-environment-2/>

Every little bit helps us to fight climate change, create the green spaces of our town and provide habitat and good water quality for the creatures we love so well.



Landcare volunteers, Cici, Robert, Liz and Don

### *Village Eco News*

Our aim is to inform, interest, amuse and educate our readers on all things environmental. We welcome you to submit your contributions or to subscribe to this free Newsletter send your name and email address to:

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

Please pass this publication on to your family and friends. Receiving your Newsletter online will help to save the environment we work to preserve.

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