

July 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

## The Finkel Report at a Glance

The **Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market** handed to the Federal Government on 9 June 2017 by Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Alan Finkel proposes a transition to low emission energy. Currently the energy industry produces 35% of Australia's green house gasses and 87% of our electricity is generated by fossil fuels.

### Orderly Transition

Within the first 6 months of implementing this Review a **Clean Energy Target (CET)** is to be agreed to by State, Territory and the Federal Government. This Target is based on the *Paris Agreement Emissions Reduction Target* of

**-28% by 2030 to -100% by 2070**

Target emission power generators will be required to give 3 years' notice of closure to allow for investment opportunities for new energy generation.

### System Planning

A system wide grid across the energy market (5 states and 1 territory) will form the basis of future investment decisions and help secure national efficiency. This will be based on regular regional assessments to secure the reliability for each area along with a list of priority projects for renewable energy to be formulated in key areas.

### Stronger Governance

A new **Energy Security Board (ESB)** to deliver the Review's recommendations headed by a Chair and Deputy Chair appointed by *COAG Energy Council*. This new authority will coordinate the three existing market bodies (AEMC, AER, AEMO). An annual public check of performance, risk and opportunities to be delivered by ESB to COAG.

### The Next Steps

In the next 6 months the Federal and State Governments to agree on a Clean Energy Target

Within 6 to 12 months energy market bodies (AEMC, AER and AEMO) to recommend a mechanism for 'on demand response' in the wholesale energy market.

12 months to 3 years (2020) *COAG Energy Council* and governments to develop a whole of economy emissions reduction strategy for a 2050 target. *Source; various news items edited Dawn Lotty*



"The National Electricity Market is 5 000km long, spans five states and one territory and has more that 9 million metered customers. It's essential that we get it right" Dr Alan Finkel

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### 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.

## Plastic Never Dies

by Noelene Plummer

Locally Santos Organics supported by Byron Shire Council are running a

### Byron Plastic Free July.

Join the challenge to refuse single use plastic during July and join hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. Go to 'Plastic Free July' website to register and get ideas, or just do it anyway, it's not too late.

Remember every piece of plastic ever made is still in existence. This makes plastic one of the earths most serious pollution problems.

Plastic bags don't biodegrade in a hurry; they simply break into smaller pieces adding to the oceans plastic soup. 50% of the worlds plastic goes into items only used once e.g. coffee cups, bottles, bags and straws.

Think - is a moments convenience worth the destruction of our planet, plastic is killing millions of marine animals every year. Once you start trying to avoid using plastic you realise that its everywhere. The good news is, this is entirely preventable.

Remember bring your own reusable bags, coffee cups and water bottles and say no to plastics. Become part of the simple solution to avoid plastic pollution.

Warning it becomes addictive. I actually enjoy the challenge as it makes me become more creative. I make drawstring veggie bags, see below, and shop at the farmers markets or bulk food supplies and take my own containers.



A quick google search will turn up many different re-usable products like this hand made light-weight draw string bag. Find them on <http://www.biome.com.au/302-onya-weigh-bags> or <http://www.jillbyeco.com.au>



## Green Your Diet

By Noelene Plummer

A lengthy study recently published by the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* from the *Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine* has shown that the more you substitute plant based foods in your diet the healthier you will become.

But there is also a benefit for the planet. Eating a plant based diet can cut the water needed to produce your food by as much as 80-90%

Factory farms consume more food than they produce - on average it takes 6kg of plant protein to produce 1kg of animal protein

An estimated 1/3 of the worlds cereal harvest is fed to animals. That would be enough grain to feed 3 billion people

Animal agriculture produces more greenhouse gas emissions than all the worlds transport combined

Nearly 80% of the land cleared in the Amazon is used for grazing.

The results of the study mentioned above showed a plant based diet can reduce your risk of developing diabetes and can cut your chances of death from heart disease by 32%

On average vegetarians have lower rates of obesity because of the high fibre from plant based food.

Western culture has seen an increase in meat consumption over the last 50 years to the point where some people are eating meat 2 to 3 times a day every day. Surely this is not sustainable.

By eating less meat you can help combat climate change, save countless lives of animals suffering and do your body a favour.



## The Eastern Water Dragon

By Dawn Lotty

The Eastern Water Dragon is one of the great 'survivors'. Like Crocodiles they have been around for 20 million years but with increased urbanisation especially adjacent to local creeks their numbers are declining.

Eastern Water Dragons are naturally prey to carnivorous birds, snakes and foxes but now they must face domestic dogs, free roaming cats and cars not to mention the polluted run off that can occur from yards into the nearby creek.

Did you know that in the right environment they can live up to 20 years and the males can reach a length of 1 metre and weigh about 1kg with a tail that is mainly muscle and its flattened sides act like an oar to help them cut through the water.

Creeks and water ways are important to the Eastern Water Dragon who dive into the water to escape danger and can remain under water for up to 90 minutes. They are able eat under water and go to the toilet in the water. They also sleep in the water (with just their nostrils protruding) and in cold weather, before going into their winter hibernation, it is often warmer than sleeping in the open.

They communicate by bobbing their heads, inflating their throat pouches, doing push ups and waving their arms. This is also part of the territorial behaviour during mating season.

It's very difficult to stop urbanisation but it is easy to make your yard a friendly place for the Eastern Water Dragon. They are omnivorous and eat nearly everything. Snails, slugs, cockroaches and caterpillars enter your garden at their peril. So stop using pesticides, supply water, grow native plants and provide rocks or a few logs so they can bask in the sun and keep dogs and cats away from their territory.

## Weed of the Month Five Leaved Morning Glory or Coastal Morning Glory

This environmental weed is wide spread on the coast, including swamps and is spreading into the hinterland. It can also be found on properties and in the gardens of older homes as a feature plant.

It is a perennial climber with trailing and twining stems that in the wild smothers native vegetation. Easily identified by its funnel shaped flowers of violet to purplish violet and is very visible along road sides from Ballina to the Tweed.

Because it tolerates a wide variety of soils it germinates readily from long running stolons and seeds dispersed by water and birds.

The many infestations will require an integrated approach. Aerial vines can be cut at head height and then down low to the ground followed by scraping and painting with an appropriate herbicide. Repeat treatments will be required which will include chasing up extensive lateral runners. In certain cases you may need a permit to spray in populated areas. Further details contact;

<http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER9907.PDF>

New seedlings should be carefully prised up, and runners gathered and wound up carefully as break off points will regrow. *Source; Weeds of Byron Shire article edited Dawn Lotty*





## Home Fire Safety Checklist

At this time of year our thoughts turn to heating our home. Unfortunately too many people realise the truth in the old adage that “fire is a good servant but a bad master” disastrously losing their home and possessions and all to frequently their lives.

**The NSW Fire Services recommend this simple safety checklist to assist in keeping your home fire safe.**

Installing an adequate number of suitable smoke alarms and testing them regularly is the first step in your home fire safety plan.

Having a written escape plan in case of fire and practicing it regularly.

Make sure keys to all locked doors are readily accessible in case you need to escape.

Never leave cooking or any other open flame including candles or oil burners unattended.

Clean the lint filter of your clothes dryer each and every time you use it.

Never smoke in bed and take extra care if consuming alcohol whilst smoking.

In Winter take extra care when using heaters, electric blankets or open fires.

Don't overload power points and switch off appliances when not in use.

Always keep lighters and matches away from children and educate them that they are “tools not toys” to only be used by responsible adults.

If you live in a bushfire prone area keep the ground around your home clear of leaves and other litter and remember to clean your gutters regularly

If you have a garage or shed remember to take extra care with any stored chemicals and fuels and always refuel mowers, edges etc when they are cold and in the open.

If you have a gas, electric or wood BBQ always check that it is in safe working order before lighting and that it is always in the care of a responsible adult when in use.

### Fire safety tips

Remember that smoke from a fire will make you confused and that you cannot see in smoke. When asleep you will not smell smoke and it will in fact put you into a deeper sleep.

If you have escaped from a home fire, remember once you get out stay out and dial Triple Zero (000).

Oil, gas or wood heating units may require a yearly maintenance check. Only ever use fuses of recommended rating and install an electrical safety switch.



### 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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