

ASEN Newsletter

Australian Student Environment Network

Edition 2, August 2012

Toolangi

CCEN takes a trip to the threatened Toolangi forests.

The La Trobe Environmental Action Forum (LEAF) recently returned from a weekend visit to Toolangi forests. A number of LEAF members visited the Toolangi Camp of the Central highlands Action Group soon after the 2012 Students of Sustainability conference was held in Bendigo.

For two days the group were treated to a host of speakers, who also guided the group around a number of forest

coups and significant forest areas.

Students were told about the impacts of forestry on the local ecology (social and environmental) from a local environmental historian, an interpretative guide, a local councilor, a key member of My Environment and other local community members.

This learning was interspersed by food,



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Whose Country?

...

ASEN seeks to work in solidarity with Aboriginal struggles for sovereignty and protection of country. This newsletter was written on the land of the Cadigal people.



networking and good old camp hospitality supplied by the CHAG/GECO camp kitchen. The visit wrapped up with a climbing skill share, a discussion/appraisal of our experiences on the trip and our plans for future actions to on the campaign.

Around 20 students came on the forest visit from a number of Victorian Universities including; Melbourne, Deakin, Albury and both Latrobe campuses (Bendigo and Bundoora). Although the first

day was misty and wet the weather cleared on Sunday and feedback from the students was positive.

Thanks to all who participated, helped organised shared and created this event we look forward to what is to come. Victorians can now look out for the upcoming POSSUM RIOT festival coming soon to Toolangi as well as much more including a concert at Monsalvate on August 25th.

For more information on the Toolangi forest campaign and upcoming events:

www.facebook.com/possum.riot

www.myenvironment.net.au

www.facebook.com/CentralHighlands

www.wilderness.org.au/regions/victoria

- Chelsea Coles

Lizard's Revenge

Hundreds came to shut Roxby Down.

In the wake of a five day mass festival protest, BHP has announced that it will delay any decision to expand Olympic Dam uranium mine for at least two years.

Over four hundred people converged on Roxby Downs in July to voice their dissent.

If expanded, the mine would be the largest open-pit uranium mine in the world. It would use 42 million litres of water from the Great Artesian Basin each day. BHP acknowledges nuclear contamination of the underwater aquifer. There is no long-term waste storage

capacity anywhere on earth.

Sleeping underneath the ground there is an old lizard. Arabana elder Kevin Buzzacott called for people to come to help the lizard shut down the mine. Hundreds heard the call, joining in with theatre, cabaret, art and music.



SASEN Roadtrip for Change

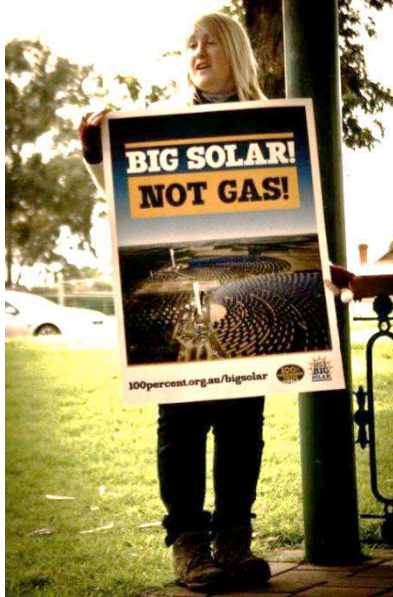
Twenty five young activists took three weeks out of their schedules to be part of the Roadtrip For Change. The trip took students to Bendigo for the Students of Sustainability conference, and then to Port Augusta, Point Lowly, Woomera and ending at the Lizards Revenge anti-nuclear festival at Roxby Downs.

Organised by the Australian Student Environment Network, the participants hoped to inspire more people to think critically about accepting the mining industry's social license.

The roadtrip participants are opposed to the expansion of the Olympic Dam uranium mine. 'Olympic Dam has a domino affect on the area around it' says Roadtrip participant Jo Seriseley.

At Port Augusta, students heard about the campaign to transition the town from

having *two* coal-fired-power-stations into Australia's first large-scale solar power energy generator.



At Point Lowly, the only breeding of the Giant Cuttlefish, the desalination plant built by BHP is likely to wipe the unique species off of the face of the earth. The group met local media and communicated why they were concerned about the desalination plant.

'We believe that the government has taken too much interest in BHP's profits and not enough interest in the health of

South Australians' says organiser Cristel Chambers. 'We are disappointed with the Environmental Impact Assessment process because it only looks at the short term impact of the mine and the desalination plant.' The EIS itself states that the expansion will create significant environmental harm, but the South Australian government has accepted this. Ms Chambers said that the group does not accept this harm.

'We wanted to see the beautiful South Australian coastline before it is desecrated by industry' said Ms Seriseley. 'Seeing it for ourselves has helped us to understand what we are fighting for'.

'We wanted to see the beautiful South Australian coastline before it is desecrated by industry'



Sea Shepherd Comes to Sydney

Our oceans are in a state of serious decline. With overfishing and exploitation occurring in every corner of the globe it is little wonder, yet all is not lost! Sea Shepherd Conservation Society is an international non-profit, marine wildlife conservation organization. Their mission is to end the destruction of habitat and slaughter of wildlife in the world's oceans in order to

conserve and protect ecosystems and species. From tuna to dolphins, turtles to seals, sharks to whales, SSCS is there protecting our marine life.

Sea Shepherd is a completely donation-based, volunteer run organisation. As part of the Sydney onshore chapter's fundraising this year we are holding free ship tours at the Overseas Passenger Terminal in Circular Quay. Visitors will have the opportunity to tour both the M/Y Steve Irwin and

the M/V Bob Barker, chat to the crew members and peruse the merch on sale by the onshore vollies.

Dates and Times

Fri 31st August 12-7pm

Sat 1st September 10am-7pm

Sun 2nd September 9am-4pm

- *Alana West*



ASEN Mentors

ASEN has an exciting new Mentor program underway! You can register to be a mentor or mentee, ask a question, express interest in a particular campaign or request a workshop or skill share in your state. The ASEN network is made up of amazing people with a wealth of knowledge and skills, so jump online, register for the program and start connecting with an activist near you! Check out <http://asen.org.au/learn/mentors/> for more info.



Fossil Fuel Road Trip

It has been said that climate change is the biggest challenge of our time. It is also essentially a theory or concept which has consequences over such vast spatial and time scales that it can be difficult for us to get our heads around. As a society, we may connect with the problem at a thinking level but not emotionally and often we do not experience the problems first hand and meet the people who will be most disaffected.

Last year we decided we wanted to change this and a group of students from the Canberra and NSW branch of ASEN went on a road trip out of our cities and to the Hunter Valley and Liverpool Plains to experience first-hand the impact of fossil fuel mining. We saw the smoky open cut coal mines and superficial rehabilitation efforts. We saw the world's largest coal export terminal in Newcastle and heard about local campaigners fighting not only to shut it down but to stop its expansion. The T4 terminal proposal, if it goes ahead will increase the export capacity by 260%. The site they want to build it on is a critical and rare habitat for endangered frogs and multiple migratory birds.

We attended a rally outside a court hearing for a farmer who was refusing to leave his land to allow mining and got some media attention. We spoke with Drew Hutton, president of Lock the Gate to discuss how the organisation was established, where he believed it was heading, and the potential he saw to radically shift the political consciousness of rural communities. We met Lorraine, a permaculturist who had helped lobby the local council to stop a coal mine proposed in the upper Hunter. We met people living in the centre of the Hunter valley alienated by the divisions the mining companies had sown

in the community and the insidious coal dust which settled on everything.

We travelled to the Liverpool Plains and met a couple of inspiring women who had helped set up and run the Save the Liverpool Plains campaign, a large, long running and effective blockade that mobilised the whole community. We also saw the beautiful and fertile farming land which was under threat, not only from CSG but coal as well.

We were shown coal mine after coal mine by

'We saw the smoky open cut coal mines and superficial rehabilitation efforts. We saw the world's largest coal export terminal and heard about local campaigners fighting'

Graham, ex-coal miner turned renewable energy activist as he shared his own personal knowledge about mining practices. We also shared a meal with some wonderful people from Rivers SOS and heard about their constant battles in the courts to make mining companies accountable.

Many of us came away reinvigorated and inspired to do more, particularly after meeting and hearing about what other people were up to across the country and seeing for ourselves what was at risk. It was such a successful trip that we are now beginning to plan concurrent trips across Victoria, Queensland, NSW and Canberra at the end of the semester to learn, take action and connect with people struggling against the fossil fuel industry on the front line.

- Jason Ray

We will not be silenced

Like thieves in the night, they proposed the cuts at La Trobe University. During the first semester exam period, the University Council released the OCIS document, outlining the proposed cuts of 45 full time staff positions and more than 500 subjects, 60% of the Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty. The cuts include the axing of whole departments and areas of study, decimating the Bachelor of Arts at La Trobe's regional campuses.

From its inception, La Trobe University has fostered an ethic of openness and a commitment to liberal arts and liberal thought. The University was founded in 1967 as a progressive educational institution, and since that time it has maintained a reputation for being a place where critical thinking is highly valued.

The current restructure of the Faculty betrays this rich history of open and free discourse.

Students have met the proposed cuts with letters of distress and pleas for consultation and explanation. We've aired our concerns through official channels, we've stressed the importance of Humanities and Social Sciences at universities and in society, and we've stood by our teachers in the hope that their jobs would be saved.

The university's responses to our letters and emails have been dismissive. They reluctantly engaged in official consultation with staff and students where they scoffed at our questions and failed to provide adequate answers.

We have been called the "colour" of the university and "violent" all in the same week. We are encouraged to air our concerns but we may be expelled for protesting. We're invited to

discuss the proposed cuts with the Vice-Chancellor, yet he runs and hides every time we try.

We've been tackled, assaulted, intimidated and threatened by security guards, whilst peacefully protesting on the university grounds.

Where can we go from here when our university does not value our education above profit? When our leaders refuse to engage with us or listen to our reasonable, legitimate concerns. When we are threatened with being excluded from the education that we are fighting to protect.

We are presenting intelligent arguments in favour of saving Humanities and Social Sciences. We value subjects and courses that help us develop the ability to think critically and foster a culture of openness and diversity. What is logical or intelligent about cutting \$3.6 million from the budget of one faculty, while spending \$94 million on one new building? What is reasonable about cutting staff and subjects in order to resolve issues of low enrolment and low retention rates? The university has claimed that the Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty has a budget shortfall. Why has no external report of the faculty been made publically available?

We have been consistently vocal against these cuts and we urge you to join us, support us, and fight back against the attacks on education occurring across the country, and indeed the world. We will continue defending the educational institutions where we should feel safe to exercise free thought and free speech.

- Emma Mezzatesta

Upcoming ASEN Projects

ASEN Mix Tape:

At the Sydney Swarm we thought about making a mix CD. Music is an awesome way of communicating radical ideas and we want to share these songs with our new members. If you have a song that you would like to contribute that would be super great. Email Sally to get involved: sally.j.stuart@gmail.com.

ASEN Mentoring Program:

At SoS there was excitement about starting an ASEN mentoring program. There'll be a National Phone Link up on Tuesday 28 August at 5pm to discuss ideas. Email our newest Membership Officer, Emma Mezza, for more info: emezzatesta@students.latrobe.edu.au.

ASEN Training Camp:

ASEN training camp happens every January near Canberra. This year it might broaden to include students from the queer, education, women's and anti-racist movements. Join the discussion at a National Council, or contact seanmunro@asen.org.au.

ASEN National Council:

Below are the National Council dates for the rest of the year. Contact seanmunro@asen.org.au to find out how to join in.

- Tuesday, September 4 @ 5pm
- Wednesday, October 3 @ 5pm
- Thursday, November 1 @ 5pm
- Friday, December 7 @ 5pm

Lock the Campus:

An awesome project by the ASEN Coal and Gas group. Check out www.lockthecampus.com for information on how to shut your university to the fossil fuel industry.

Coal and Gas Tours:

Travel around your state with radical activists, visiting communities affected by and campaigning against the fossil fuel industry. Planned for December in NSW, Victoria and South Australia. Contact Jason for more info rustic_groove@hotmail.com

Get Involved

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Join your local and state network, get active in campaigns on coal and gas, renewable energy, nuclear free, food co-ops, oceans, forests, climate justice and more!

DONATE: givenow.com.au/asen

asen.org.au/getactive

asenincubate.tumblr.com

twitter.com/#!/ASENenviro

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info@asen.org.au