

Newsletter no. 2 May-July 2010 of the Australian Student Environment Network

ASEN

In this newsletter:

ASEN happenings
State network news
Campaign Updates

ASEN Happenings:

The Students of Sustainability
conference (SoS) at Flinders

University - Adelaide - in July was a huge success and provided an opportunity for university environment collectives and state networks to meet with each other and discuss plans for the rest of the year. A bunch of ASEN people also discussed bigger-directional things for ASEN such as revising our membership and governance structures. We also passed some motions at our AGM, including changing our financial institution from Westpac to MECU (a more ethical and sustainable credit union). We also changed our National Convening structure to have two National Conveners (Grace Pullen & Celia Vagg) and two Convener Support people (Steve Skitmore & Peta Page). This model will be used till January 2011 when new National Conveners will be endorsed.



State Network News: **Western Australia**

The WA crew has been pretty active recently. In late June, some involved in the Perth Kulon Progo Solidaritas Collective confronted representatives from Indo Mines Ltd and the Indonesian Consulate in Perth to draw attention to the dispossession of farming land and acts of violence resulting from the involvement of a Perth-based mining company in Kulon Progo. The group delivered a message from the PPLP (Association of Shoreline Farmers) in the hope of news of the action reaching Indonesia to show solidarity to those struggling against mining projects.

Half a dozen WALiens were able to make it over to Adelaide for SoS. The conference gave the crew an opportunity to reflect on where we're at as a state network and what we can learn from the experience of other states.

In more recent news, (literally today) Underwood Avenue campaigners rallied to oppose the destruction of Underwood Ave bushland by UWA. Given the recent actions by the Barnett government in support of the university's proposal, the campaign is gaining momentum with a rally drawing the attention of the Vice Chancellor, upcoming direct action workshop and excursions.

New South Wales & ACT

Students have been out in the forests supporting the locally run campaign against logging of old growth native forest down near Eden. Some students were arrested at a blockade in Mumbulla state forest, where peaceful activists locked onto machinery and stopped the logging. SEAN has also entered submissions opposing South East Chip Export's proposed wood fired power station in Eden, which ridiculously would qualify as renewable energy by burning old growth forest to generate electricity.

Renewable energy on campus campaigns are continuing, with students getting out onto campuses across NSW, talking to people about climate change and sustainability and urging their universities to adopt more renewable energy. SEAN also supported the Rivers SoS network at the Dungog Fringe Festival. For many of the curious locals that dropped by it was the first time they had heard that mining was causing so much damage across the state. People in SEAN have also been supporting campaigns to protect Tassie forests and against the proposed nuclear waste dump in the NT.

SEAN had a great time at the Students of Sustainability Conference at Flinders University this year, for which we have spent several months promoting, fundraising and organising transport. More than 70 NSW & ACT students attended which was fantastic!

Queensland

QEAN has been getting stronger and stronger as the year progresses, and we've seen much action both on campus and off. We've seen Climate Action Groups build at both Griffith Uni and Uni of Qld, and they have been involved in ASEN's national climate campaign, helping develop renewable energy targets and scorecards for their campuses. In Toowoomba, the USQ Community Environment Group have been building a permaculture garden on campus and took part in the national climate week in May. Up north, the crew at JCU in Cairns have got their hands dirty and have finished lantana clearing at the campus and are preparing for revegetation in the coming months.



In May, QEAN organised the Qld Camp for Environmental Action in the beautiful Border Range mountains. Attended by around 35 students and activists from across southern Queensland and northern NSW, the camp was a space for participants to showcase their work in workshops ranging from Theatre of the Oppressed and Collaborative Competence to Feminism/Environment, Food Co-ops and Tree Climbing.

QEAN has also supported the Buttercup Collective to fix up a car to use as a community vehicle for Brisbane activists, and was used in transporting the QEAN contingent to Adelaide for SoS and up to Alice for the NT convergence. A big shout out to all those brownie and chai makers who helped raise the petrol funds for the 5000km round trip, and the 25 qld folks that made it down to SoS!

Victoria

CCEN slowed down after the awesome skillshare earlier in the year, but managed to get about 25 people to come from Victoria to the Students of Sustainability Conference in Adelaide, including students from Melbourne Uni, La Trobe and Monash Uni. At SoS, plans were made to strengthen the state network by having a new collective convening structure. Our energies are going into this structure, working out key task areas and who will be putting their hand up to work on them. Hopefully this will help to make CCEN rocking and happening for the rest of the year!

South Australia

South Australia has been a hive of activity organising the Students of Sustainability Conference (SoS) which was held at Flinders University from the 4th to 8th of July. The conference was fantastic - not only did attendees learn lots and have fun, but it also built the skill-base and confidence of organisers who did an amazing job. The Cross Campus Network has been brought together by this challenge, and is excited by the engagement of other environmental groups around



Adelaide who we're looking forward to working with in the future. One of the major projects on the horizon is a bicycle program aimed at providing skills for people in advanced bicycle maintenance in order to have a pool of people able to do provide training at skill shares and other events throughout the year.

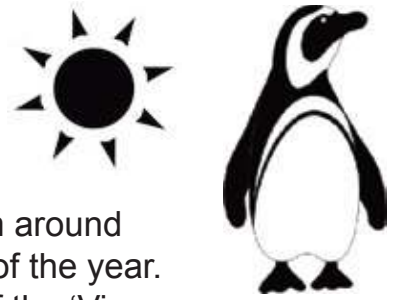
Nothern Territory

Darwin Uni Enviro Collective has been really busy. Our major project has been establishing a "chai tent" which we set up on University campus, as well as at festivals and other public locations. This provides a great space for us to talk to people about all environmental and social justice issues while enjoy a great cuppa spiced chai. A highlight has been the Top End Sustainable Living Festival where over two days we had nonstop chai going and endless conversations about the intervention, anti-nuclear campaigning, climate change, Darwin harbour and endless other issues which people wanted to talk about. Many people were simply impressed that as students we could be so involved in so much.

We also pride ourselves on engaging with, supporting and being a major part of campaigns with the broader community. A major focus has been to raise awareness around the proposed Nuclear waste dump at Muckaty Station (central N.T.). We have broad support across the Territory but need to get the Federal Government to listen. We have been getting excellent media at events such as the official Territory Day flag ceremony and making ourselves heard whenever a relevant minister, such as Martin Ferguson, comes to town.

Campaign updates:

Climate working group



The climate crew got together at SoS for campaign updates from around the country, and started planning our moves for the second half of the year. We're hoping to launch the climate scorecard at the a meeting of the 'Vice Chancellors Group of 8 Universities' in Canberra on the 22nd of July. The Go8 - UWA, ANU, UAdelaide, UMelbourne, Monash, UNSW, UQueensland and USydney - describe themselves as leading Australian universities, and are certainly among the wealthiest and resource-intensive institutions on the continent. We're hoping to create some momentum for collectives working on getting these Universities to buy renewable energy by showing the Go8 VCs their renewables report cards!

In the months to come, we're expecting an escalation in safe climate campaigning, as the election campaign collides with Climate Camp, AYCC's Powershift, and increased pressure against burning coal everywhere. Even on the day of Gillard's election announcement a national day of protest gave folks a chance to speak out against the Hazelwood power station, demanding a shift to renewable power. Rising Tide has called for a coalition against coal, which is shaping up to be a powerful federation against unsustainable power generation in the election campaign.

Nuclear-free working group

Recently the ASEN Nuclear Free group planned and facilitated two workshops at Students of Sustainability. The first was a crash-course in the nuclear industry covering nuclear sites in Australia, issues (focusing on uranium mining and radioactive waste), and current campaigns. The second was a campaign strategy session, which brought together Traditional Owners, students, NGOs and community groups from across the country to look at the year ahead and think about how we can work together for stronger national campaigns.



Films were screened at SoS, including 'Muckaty Voices' (www.beyondnuclearinitiative.wordpress.com/video) there was a stall at the activist fair, a rad resource centre set up in the communal space, and a mass action. The action was a Nuclear Scumbags Tour which saw approximately 100 participants from the conference visit uranium mining companies and members of the government responsible for the destructive nuclear industry in Australia, with a large focus on the continual depletion of Lake Eyre and its sacred Mound Springs.

We're also working on the Nuclear Freeways project, which will see anti-nuclear activists from different groups travel along the proposed nuclear materials transport route. This runs through Sydney, Victoria, South Australia, and up to Muckaty in the Northern Territory. Along the way they'll be connecting with Traditional Owners, talking to communities and local councils, and finally arriving at the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance meeting in Alice Springs. ASEN Nuclear Free are hoping to continue our support for ANFA over the next year, and can't wait to get up there and help out at the meeting in whatever way we can!

Go to www.asen.org.au or email info@asen.org.au for more info