



### District 9800 Environment & Sustainability News - April

The designated Rotary theme for April is Environment.

Thank you to Rotarian Debbie Vance for these graphics. [Facebook](#)



### Congratulations to those clubs who were recognised for their efforts in environmental work at the recent Multi District Summit in Horsham.

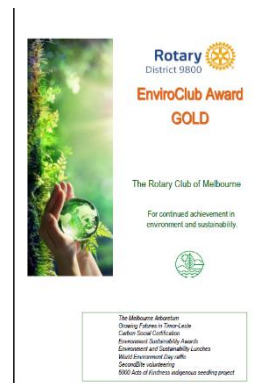
This recognition shows the dedication, enthusiasm and celebration of your environmental projects. Of course, if clubs don't publicise their projects either on their social media pages, newsletters or websites, we don't know about it.

#### EnviroClub GOLD: Rotary Club of Melbourne.

They have a strong environment team led by Peter Berg and Gary Fowler and have a schedule of events held during the year including a special lunch and awards.

The club also records their CO<sup>2</sup> emissions at lunches, meetings and events and offsets these through carbon credits purchased from the WithOneSeed forestry program in Timor Leste.

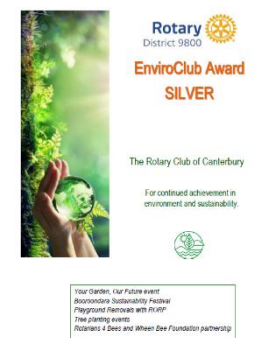
Contact Peter or Gary for more information.



#### EnviroClub SILVER: Rotary Club of Canterbury.

Led by John McCaskill and with a strong environment team, their annual evenings focussing on gardens, pollinators and plantings featuring excellent speakers are extremely well attended.

Their partnership with Boorondara Council and the When Bee Foundation add to their impact.



#### EnviroClub BRONZE:

Bacchus Marsh, Balwyn, Bendigo Sandhurst, Canterbury, Caroline Springs, Chadstone East Malvern, Footscray, Glenferrie and Wyndham all completed environment projects throughout the year from Clean Up Australia Day, National Tree Day planting, Nature Strip Gardens, school gardens, partnerships with councils, collecting playgrounds and recycling opportunities. All these clubs shared their efforts on social media.

### **EnviroClub Bronze criteria:**

Form an Environment & Sustainability Committee or working group.  
Set environmental goals for the club and consider future possible projects  
Participate in Clean Up Australia Day {March}, National Tree Day {July} or hold regular clean ups in your area.



### ***Other opportunities:***

Build a vegetable garden at local schools .  
Install renewable energy systems in schools or community centres in developing countries.  
Support projects that build water tanks for homes in developing countries.  
Collect foreign coins and notes and return to Rotary Keilor East who manage this for our District and send to Rotary Hornsby who manage this for Oceania.  
Include an environmental column in your club newsletter.  
Organise a club social night to attend a movie with an environmental focus.

### **EnviroClub Silver criteria:**

Continue with and extend an existing initiative.  
Launch at least one new initiative.

[Join ESRAG - \\$US30pa](#)

### ***Suggestions:***

Collect unwanted clothes, toys or household goods to donate to a Rotary opportunity shop  
Conduct an initiative to coincide with special days, such as National Tree Day, World Bee Day, or World Environment Day .  
Invite a guest speaker, or conduct a community/club seminar on a contemporary environmental issues.  
Encourage members to install solar panels, go electric in their homes, buy an EV, eat less red meat, plant a nature strip gardens or plant more pollinator friendly plants in their gardens.

### **EnviroClub Gold:**

Demonstrate involvement in a minimum of TWO major initiatives in the Rotary year.  
The committee or working group meets formally or informally several times a year and, includes the whole club in discussions of potential environmental projects.  
Build partnerships with other clubs or Districts, develop a global initiative, work with the schools, businesses and environmental groups.

### ***Suggestions:***

Invite guest speakers to inform members on a range of environmental issues.  
Work with a local school to support students in an environmental initiative e.g. monitor the energy performance of their school, assess its carbon footprint or measure its water usage.  
Organise a major clean-up of a beach or river.  
Send unwanted hospital, medical or educational equipment to needy communities in Australia and overseas  
Partner with DiK, RIMERN, WERN or RORP.



**National Tree Day occurs on the last Sunday of July each year.  
This year Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>. <https://nationaltreeday.org.au/>**



This is a major opportunity for you to partner with your local council or environmental group and make a real difference in tree canopy, wildlife habitat and pollinator corridors.

Contact your council or environment group now and plan for a big Rotary impact!

**GRANT OPPORTUNITIES:**

Collier Foundatio - <https://colliercharitable.org/CCF/CCF/About/About.aspx?hkey=cd07507f-e593-4a2b-bfa4-81b1728069b7>

Victorian Govt – DEECA: [Victorian Landcare Grants](#)

Ian Potter Foundation: [Environment | The Ian Potter Foundation](#)

Wettenhall Environment Trust: [Small Environmental Grant Scheme – Wettenhall Environment Trust](#)

Greater Western Water: [Community grants | Greater Western Water](#)

=====

**Dates for your calendar:**

**Thursday 16 April at 6pm - ESRAG Oceania monthly meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85914293604>

Dr Isobel Bender, [Fenner School of Environment and Society](#) at ANU, and Landscape Policy Analyst at the Wentworth Group will speak with us about how we could help engage and restore nature based landscapes to protect the Australian environment.

She will also speak about the recent publication "[Blueprint for a healthy Country and thriving regions](#)" This NSW based report focusses on environmental decline and puts in place a whole-of-landscape approach.

**April is Citizen Science Month**

- 25<sup>th</sup> April – World Penguin Day
- 9<sup>th</sup> May – Migratory Bird Day
- 15<sup>th</sup> May – Endangered Species Day
- 20<sup>th</sup> May – World Bee Day
- 5<sup>th</sup> June – World Environment Day

<https://www.worldbeeday.org.au/>



**From ESRAG – our mothership:**

[Join ESRAG - \\$US30pa](#)

**ESRAG Project Seminars:**

2pm UTC i.e. midnight AEST - [Time Zone Map](#)

[Access previous seminars through the online library](#)

April 22<sup>nd</sup> - Climate impacts of hydrogen emissions, Ragnhild Bieltevedt Skeie

April 29<sup>th</sup> - ESRAG Secretary Deniz Virul, Earth's Frozen Frontiers

Read the ESRAG ENA Newsletter [here](#).

[Link to ESRAG Action Guides:](#)

**The Million SolarPanel Challenge**

The Million Solar Panels initiative is a campaign to encourage Rotarians to purchase solar panels in order to impact climate change and at the same time reduce their power bills.

The rapid transition to Renewable Energy is needed to stop a Climate Crisis. We can wait for our governments to take action, or Rotarians can lead the way.



Did you know that if every Rotarian installed one (400 watt) solar panel this would:

be equivalent to planting 14 million mature trees;

Save >\$5 billion dollars in electricity bills;

Stop > 10 million tonnes of CO2 being released.

[Log your solar panels here:](#)



**The Online Pollinator Stewardship Program** launches on 6 May 2026. The program provides science-based learning and practical projects that increase participants' understanding of pollinators and helps them adopt climate-smart, sustainable agricultural and land management practices.

Participants will engage in eight flexible online modules and weekly live Q&A sessions led by experts providing the critical skills to protect bees to support food security, biodiversity and ecosystem health.

A pilot of the program is currently underway, with participants already reporting valuable insights and practical ideas they can apply in their farms, gardens and classrooms.

Adapted from a successful US model by Pollinator Partnership and co-designed with Australian scientists, the program is tailored for Australian landscapes and farming systems. Secure a limited spot now and help shape pollinator understanding in Australia.

*The Online Pollinator Stewardship Program is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program under the Natural Heritage Trust, and is a Pollinator Partnership program, delivered in Australia by the Wheen Bee Foundation.*

[READ MORE](#)

[Wheen Bee Foundation](#)

# Growing Futures in Timor-Leste

A Rotary-led campaign for lasting livelihoods, stronger communities and a healthier planet.

## Join Forces to Grow a Greener Future

**Growing Futures in Timor-Leste** is a Rotary-led project partnering with Rai Matak's 50-year plan to plant 10 million trees, generate certified carbon income for farming families and communities, transforming rural livelihoods across Timor-Leste and restoring farmland from deforestation.

## Why This Project Matters

- Timor-Leste is one of the world's youngest nations, and exists in our Rotary South Pacific region.
- Over **42% of the population** live below the poverty line and over **70% live in rural areas**, relying on subsistence farming.
- Deforestation has devastated ecosystems, impacting the land and communities.

**Rai Matak** ("Green Land") is turning this around. Farmers plant and care for native trees on their own land and are paid each year for every surviving tree. After eight years, the sale of certified carbon credits provides ongoing **sustainable** income for families and funds for community projects (e.g. bridges, water, tanks, irrigation, community centres). This is a **proven approach**, building on the **WithOneSeed** pilot (500,000 trees and US\$1 million paid to farmers) of the **xpandFoundation**, ensuring strong local leadership and science-based outcomes.

## Rotary Areas of Focus in Action

### Community & Economic Development

- Provides steady income for farming families (about 675 people) through certified carbon credits.
- Creates 100+ local jobs, strengthens rural economies, and fosters community pride.

### Supporting the Environment

- Restores degraded land and protects biodiversity.
- Expands forest cover and captures carbon to combat climate change.
- The project is scalable and replicable for other developing countries.

## Measurable Outcomes

- Verified **trees** maintained: **68,000**
- Direct income to farmers: **USD 272,000**
- **Farming families supported**: 136+ (benefiting 675+ individuals)
- Timorese staff employed: 100+
- **CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered** (30 yrs): **100,000+ tonnes**
- Gold standard certification for **carbon credit trading**
- Community celebrations: 2, with **active Rotaract Dili partnership**
- **Annual reporting**: transparent and independently verified

## Rotary's Role

**Bridge funding** ensures farmers stay **engaged, trained, and supported** through the critical establishment phase to ensure long term income can be accessed via carbon credit revenue. Rotary provides the global network and funding tools to make it happen:

- **District Designated Funds (DDF)**, a **Rotary Foundation Global Grant** and club donations will channel USD 300,000 as bridge funding for the farmers until carbon income flows.
- Be a part of our **Rotary network** including Rotary Melbourne, ESRAG and Rotaract Dili to help run community events, share stories, and mentor young leaders.
- Timorese NGOs handle day-to-day planting and payments.

## Commit & Support

Rotary Melbourne has kickstarted the campaign with an initial pledge of USD 10,000. We are seeking a pledge from **each District** within Rotary South Pacific. USD 10-15,000 DDF plus additional individual and club donations will ensure maximum Global Grant outcomes - matching an additional 80% of every dollar we raise.

## Contacts

Garry Fowler OAM - Rotary Club of Melbourne

✉ [garry.fowler@bigpond.com](mailto:garry.fowler@bigpond.com) | 📞 +61 411 881 389

Dr Patricia Armstrong - Rotary Manningham City

✉ [pat.arm@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pat.arm@bigpond.net.au) | 📞 +61 411 381 790



## Our Partners

Endorsed by

**Rotary South Pacific**

Supported by

**Timor-Leste President**

**Jose Romas Horta** as project of national significance

International Partner:

**Rotary Club of Melbourne**

Host Partner:

**Rotaract Club of Dili**

Delivery Partner:

**xpand Foundation**

(Australia-based charity)

Supported by **ESRAG Oceania**

(Environmental Sustainability

Rotary Action Group)

Geography and Geospatial Data

support (including dedicated

PhD and Masters project):

**Monash University**

Watch our short 3 minute video with an overview of the initiative. Click on link below or scan QR code.

**Supporting a Greener Future in Timor Leste**

