



THECA FORUM 2023

People Reconnecting with Nature



10 June, 2023

Queensland Centre for Advanced Technologies,
Technology Court, Pullenvale

THECA
The Hut Environmental &
Community Association Inc.
ISSN: 1442-181X



Supported by Brisbane City Council and Healthy Land & Water.



SPEAKERS



Professor Richard Fuller
University of Queensland



Dr Michael Vincent
Australian Catholic University
and University of Queensland



Jutta Godwin
Cubberla-Witton Catchments
Network



Dr Renata Buziak
Lamington Natural
History Assoc.



Hayley Troupe
Qld. Conservation Council



Stefan Hattingh
Moreton Bay Regional Council



Dr Robyn Gulliver
University of Queensland



Stephen Cameron
Conservationist

THECA Forum 2023 PROGRAM

8.30am REGISTRATION

9.00 Welcome and Introduction: Greg Siepen, Forum Convenor

Session 1 Chair: Dr Annie Ross The Big Picture (Overview)

9.05 Cr Greg Adermann Official Opening

9.15 Professor Richard Fuller **KEYNOTE:** For the Love of Nature,
The Science behind Interacting with Nature

10.05 Dr Michael Vincent The Natural World and the Changing Western Social Contract.

10.25 *Questions and Panel Discussion*

11.00 MORNING TEA

Session 2 Chair: Greg Siepen Backyard Connections

11.40 Jutta Godwin Brisbane's Big Butterfly Count – a project for everyone.

12.00 Dr Renata Buziak Artistic Reconnections

12.10 Hayley Troupe Using Citizen Science within Nature Campaigns

12.30 *Questions and Panel Discussion*

12.50 LUNCH

Session 3 Chair: Charles Worringham Wild and Bushland Connections

1.50 Stefan Hattingh Rats. Impact of rat poison, and owls as nature's solution.

2.15 Dr Robyn Gulliver Identifying, Supporting and Retaining Environmental Volunteers and Volunteer Leaders.

2.35 Stephen Cameron Experiences working with others in the bush: successes and failures.

2.55 *Questions and Panel Discussion*

3.30 Summary and Thanks

Welcome to THECA's 2023 Forum

People Reconnecting with Nature

Past THECA Forums 2000 to 2018

2000	Genetic Mix and Local Provenance: Implications for Bush Regeneration Projects
2001	Managing Plant-Animal Interactions: Strategies for Bush Regeneration
2002	Weeds: Identifying Issues and Seeking Solutions in Bush Regeneration
2003	Waterways and Water Ways: Implications for a Healthy Environment
2004	Biodiversity in Backyards and Bushland: Creating and Maintaining Food Sources for Wildlife in Southeast Queensland
2005	Taking Stock: Habitat Management in SEQ Now and for the Future
2006	Ensuring the Future: Biodiversity Protection and Sustainability
2008	A Green Future? Biodiversity under Climate Change
2009	Caring for our Waterways: 'Clear' or 'Muddied'
2010	Restoring Biodiversity
2012	Connections: Spatial, Social and Temporal Links for Biodiversity
2013	Building Resilience in Biodiversity: Ecological, Social and Economic
2015	Conservation conundrums: Exploring Apparent Conflicts in Wildlife Management
2016	Barriers to Biodiversity Conservation
2018	Citizen Science: Challenges and Benefits for Biodiversity Conservation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THECA 2023 Forum *People Reconnecting with Nature*

THECA's forum would not be possible without the help and support of many individuals and organisations.

We particularly thank:

- All the speakers and their co-authors and institutions.
- Brisbane City Council and Healthy Land & Water for sponsoring places at the forum.
- Queensland Centre for Advanced Technologies (QCAT) for use of their venue and facilities.
- Organisations that advertised in the forum booklet.
- All organisations and individuals who have provided displays.
- THECA management committee, the forum planning committee, and volunteers who helped during the forum.

The Hut Environmental & Community Association Inc. (THECA)

The Association works to conserve and improve the environment and to inform, educate and involve the local community in environmental issues and activities. We welcome new members and visitors to our monthly meetings with guest speakers, forums, weekly bushcare groups, workshops, outings, quarterly newsletters, and extensive library and resources.

Healthy Land and Water

Healthy Land and Water is the designated Natural Resource Management Group for Southeast Queensland, dedicated to the care of Southeast Queensland's unique land, waterways, and biodiversity. Healthy Land and Water takes a collaborative approach to managing natural resources and seeks to involve landholders, community groups, industry, Traditional Owners, and government in all project work.

THECA acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbul people on whose land this Forum takes place, and whose knowledge of and care for country informs and inspires the conservation work and education of all participants.

For the Love of Nature

The Science behind Interacting with Nature

Professor Richard Fuller

University of Queensland

E: r.fuller@uq.edu.au

Spending time in nature alleviates many of the stresses and strains of modern life. Science has shown that a regular “dose” of nature reduces the risk of depression, hypertension, diabetes and a whole host of other non-communicable diseases. A love for nature might also spur a person to care more deeply about environmental issues. Yet many of us are spending less and less time outdoors, raising concerns of an impending health crisis. Why is it that some of us love spending time in nature, while others prefer staying in? And can we rekindle a long lost love for nature in a person?

I will describe a recent study of twins, in which we found that love for nature is partly inherited, explaining why a penchant for the great outdoors seems to run in some families. Yet, 60% of our connection to nature is caused by factors that we can change, and I will talk about exciting new research findings showing how a love for nature can be ignited in adults and children. Encouragingly, long term studies are showing that connection to nature can remain strong even in places where urbanisation is happening apace, so long as we keep stepping outside and taking the chance to be among the wildlife. I'll conclude by suggesting how we can ensure nature forms a significant part of all of our lives, in turn helping us to safeguard our environment for future generations.

The Natural World and the Changing Western Social Contract

Dr Michael Vincent

Lecturer, University of Queensland, and
Australian Catholic University
E: m.vincent2@uq.edu.au

Traditionally, humans have looked after their local ecosystems through systems of social norms which rely on communal supervision and shared goals. But for centuries now in Western cultures, 'live and let live' conflict-avoidance techniques have been developed which promote privacy and the pursuit of divergent goals. While many of us have come to value our privacy and our individual goals, this has had unfortunate effects on the natural world, the destruction of which can be seen partly as a result of our inability to agree on its value and coordinate our actions to preserve it. Yet there is some hope that we are not stuck with a choice between contemporary inter-personal values and conservationist values. There is reason to expect that diverse people can all converge on seeing value in the natural world, and that conservation could be an activity which addresses not only our ecological problems but some of our civic ones as well.

Brisbane's Big Butterfly Count – a project for everyone.

Jutta Godwin

Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network

E: godwinjr@tpg.com.au

Community engagement and education are key work components for all environmental organisations. Successfully reaching the community including existing or potential volunteers starts with making nature accessible, emotionally and intellectually, and nurturing the connection. While the recent pandemic led in some ways to a heightened appreciation of the outdoors for many, be it through walks of family units or the intensified use of backyards, the effects of social isolation had a longer term impact. Harnessing the general love for the outdoors as well as recruiting new interest of disengaged community members may yield success with inventive approaches.

Brisbane's Big Butterfly Count was designed with multiple outcomes in mind, all considered equally important. The multi-faceted citizen science project uses a variety of 'tools' in the field, in workshop settings, on-line and printed, and now succeeds in all key target areas. It delivers engagement across age and knowledge levels, offers learning opportunities about a bioindicator, and informs about the interdependencies in the environment which in turn influences the work of volunteer rehabilitators as well as home gardeners' approaches. And importantly, Brisbane's Big Butterfly Count gathers information on local environmental health. Whilst data collected require a substantially longer time for scientific analysis than the three thus far completed butterfly survey seasons, the contributions of citizen scientists engaged here will be invaluable.

Brisbane's Big Butterfly Count is full of positivity, attempts to make every aspect an experience and preferably fun, allows participants to identify with their chosen topic, enables families to be engaged as a unit and hands-on, and it celebrates nature. The overall project's success is an example of how nature and community can be linked.

Artistic Reconnections

Dr Renata Buziak

Member: Lamington National History Association

E: renata@renatabuziak.com

Unfortunately, Dr Buziak was unable to present due to illness. A 'Gardening Australia' program describing Renata's art will be shown. The link is www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/my-garden-path-renata-buziak/9437966.

Dr Buziak's original presentation summary:

Following the devastating 2019 bushfires that ravaged Binna Lodge and surrounding areas, Binna Burra decided to invite an artist to create new works and engage the community to 'bring the spirit of Binna Burra back' and reconnect people with nature. I feel immensely privileged to have been invited as the first Artist-in-Residence owing to my experience and research in promoting a connection with nature through my biochrome art. Moreover, I also developed and governed an *Art. Nature. Science.* Program of events between February 2022 to February 2023.

I will discuss how I developed and coordinated an *Art. Nature. Science.* Program of events between February 2022 to February 2023. Our Program successfully provided numerous opportunities for bringing people back to nature through art and science activities. We attracted 25 volunteers and held 30 events facilitated by artists, scientists, and educators. Additionally, we published the *Art. Nature. Science. at Binna Burra* book, with 40 contributors, *Art. Nature. Science. at Binna Burra* podcast with 13 episodes, and a Gondwanan Biochromes exhibition catalogue.

I will include strategies and methods in attracting volunteers and program facilitators, as well as challenges and success stories. I will present available data and feedback collected from participants of the program and community consultations that we were able to conduct prior and at the end of the first year of the *Art. Nature. Science.* Program. I will also provide some insights on the Program's development in 2023.

Using Citizen Science within Nature Campaigns

Hayley Troupe

Queensland Conservation Council

E: organiser@qldconservation.org.au

Protected areas are widely recognised as one of the most effective approaches to the conservation of nature. Unfortunately, Qld has the second highest number of endangered animals in the country and the smallest percentage of land protected, only just over 8%. One way of expanding Qld's protected areas system is through the transfer of state forests to protected areas. Native habitat is currently being logged or is at threat from extractive industries. Here in South East Qld we have identified 70000 hectares of native forest in state forests, home to threatened species including species such as Greater Gliders that rely on large, old trees with hollows.

Unfortunately most of this area is threatened with logging over the next couple of years. With the leadership and consent of First Nations people, we are calling on the Queensland Government to build a bigger and better system of protected areas across the state. Right now here in SEQ we need the government to protect all native habitat in state forests in Qld before any further logging occurs.

We desperately need more people to connect to and stand up for nature to pressure the government to do what is needed. It seems the more connected people are to a place and the wildlife that calls the place home the more likely they are to stand up for its protection. As a way to show just how important SEQ state forests are we have launched a citizen science project, Forest Watch. Forest Watch aims to connect people to the forests we need protecting while also highlighting the incredible diversity of these special state forests.

Rats. Impact of rat poison, and owls as nature's solution.

Stefan Hattingh

Moreton Bay Regional Council

E: stefan.hattingh@moretonbay.qld.gov.au

As a registered raptor carer I noticed more barn owls came into care because of the impact of rodent poison during the Covid Lockdown. This could have been attributed to the fact that people were spending more time at home, in their garden, shed or garage, noticing rodents or their impact. Putting poisoned bait out is still the most used method to control rodents.

I will describe that after Covid restrictions were relaxed, I conducted a number of workshops for community groups, schools and Land For Wildlife property owners on the impact of rodents, why they are such a pest and to show that owls are the ideal solution for any rodent problem, and how their breeding biology and hunting strategies have evolved around rodent populations. By supplying barn owl nest boxes for barn owls to live in (they don't just use it for breeding), and not using rodent poison, we can attract more owls into suburbia.

Identifying, Supporting and Retaining Environmental Volunteers and Volunteer Leaders

Robyn Gulliver

University of Queensland

E: r.gulliver@uq.edu.au

Volunteers play critical roles in leading the activities of environmental organisations seeking to address the environmental crisis. Despite their importance, we know little about the factors that motivate individuals to persist with environmental volunteering, particularly in leadership tasks. This discussion presents findings from a multi-study exploration examining how organisations can identify, support and retain environmental volunteers and volunteer leaders. Equitable distribution of tasks and labour, seeing tangible outcomes and recognition of volunteer efforts were factors that helped volunteers take on more tasks and continue their participation. The most critical element for retaining volunteers was the presence of positive relationships with their team members.

Experiences working with others in the bush: successes and failures

Stephen Cameron

Working with others on a range of bush-care and conservation activities in different capacities (volunteer, leader, instructor, supervisor, mentor) inevitably brings with it all sorts of experiences.

Stephen will share some of those he has had working in these roles over many years – both successes and some inevitable failures, and describe how different people bring a diversity of motivations and personalities with them that colour their connections with nature, and how understanding these can be helpful in developing positive interactions.

PRESENTERS

Richard Fuller is a Professor at the University of Queensland. He studies how people have affected the natural world around them, and how some of their destructive effects can best be reversed. Much of his work focuses on the interactions between people and nature, and how they can be harnessed to address the biodiversity crisis. See the lab website at www.fullerlab.org.

Dr Michael Vincent is a casual lecturer at the Australian Catholic University and the University of Queensland, where he teaches ethics and political philosophy, including UQ's course 'Environmental Philosophy'. His research interests concern the nature of values, social norms, and disagreement in large and diverse societies.

Jutta Godwin is a naturalist, environmental educator and volunteer leader with many years of experience through her long term engagement with and for the Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network. Jutta initiated and coordinates Brisbane's Big Butterfly Count.

Dr Renata Buziak is a Biochrome photomedia artist, educator and researcher working at the nexus of art and science, with a particular interest in nature. Renata holds a PhD in Visual Art from Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, and has previously taught there and at other academic institutions. Her innovative practice of collaborating with nature led her to work as the ECO Harmony Guide to help enhance the experience of public and private spaces in harmony with the natural world. In 2022 Binna Burra Lodge invited Renata as the first Artist-in-Residence and Art. Nature. Science. Program Director. Program link: <https://www.binnaburralodge.com.au/art-nature-science-program/>

Hayley Troupe works for the Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) as Volunteer Coordinator and Nature Organiser, responsible for engaging and organising volunteers to increase capacity across QCC as well as organising volunteers and supporters around QCC's protected areas campaign. Hayley has been working and volunteering in community organising roles within climate and environment campaigns for the last 10+ years and has a background in ecology and landcare.

Stefan Hattingh has a Masters in Environment Studies from the University of Pretoria, South Africa. He has a great passion for environment education with over 19 years of experience (nine years as ecology lecturer in Conservation at the Nelson Mandela University and seven years as the Landcare Manager for Bulimba Creek Catchment (B4C)). Stefan loves offering educational workshops to organisations, school groups and members of the public. He is currently employed by Moreton Bay Regional Council as a Senior Environment Officer, where he continues to offer workshops to Land For Wildlife and Bushcare groups. Stefan's other passion is rescuing and treating owls. He is a registered raptor carer with Wildlife Rescue Queensland. He draws on his experience in public speaking and love of nature to draw large crowds to educational workshops.

Dr. Robyn Gulliver is a Research Fellow at the University of Queensland School of Communication and Arts and a Senior Researcher at Greenpeace Australia Pacific. She is a Board Director for The Commons Social Change Library and volunteers for a range of environmental organisations including as Wynnum Bushcare group leader. She won the 2020 Australian Council of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Distinctive Prize for her development of Australia's largest database of environmental groups and campaigns.

Stephen Cameron has been a lifelong member of Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee. He has had a varied career, recently coming back to working in the area of conservation education as a trainer, supervisor, including a project funded by the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, working with trainees in the Certificate 1 environmental management program.

DISPLAYS AND POSTERS

Organisation	Title
Charles Worringham THECA	Live CO2 Monitoring
William Booth Australian Conservation Foundation	Save our Big Backyard Campaign



Flora, fauna and fire management.

admin@biodiverse-environmental.com.au

www.biodiverse-environmental.com.au

PO Box 320, Eudlo, Qld. 4554



www.ecosp.com.au

info@ecosp.com.au

+61 428 118 496

Aquatic ecologists specialising in:

- Ecological assessment, monitoring and reporting, including Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Provision of expert advice, including Expert Witness to the Courts.
- Management of community and habitat restoration projects.
- Environmental training.



GONDWANA ECOLOGY GROUP

- Expert witness
- Fauna and Flora assessments
- Environmental Management plans
- Ecological restoration
- Biodiversity and conservation research

Contact: **Justin Watson**

E: justin@gondwanaecology.com.au

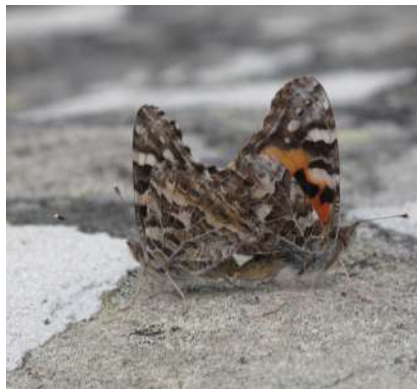
M: 0407 410 099

W: www.gondwanaecology.com.au



Specialises in connecting people with nature by rehabilitating bushland.

Email: info@workeco.com.au Ph: 0420580031



The Hut Environmental & Community Association Inc. (THECA)
 The Hut Environment Centre
 47 Fleming Road, Chapel Hill
 PO Box 804, Kenmore Qld 4069
 P: 3878 5088 E: info@theca.asn.au W: www.theca.asn.au

Formal Citation:
 THECA 2023 Forum: People Reconnecting with Nature
 Editor: C.M. Zupanc and G. Siepen
 ISSN:...1442-181X

*Copyright:
 Reproduction of information with authors', artists' and photographers' permission only.*