

Local Envirogroup Manual



How to get started



Surf rider Foundation
AUSTRALIA
Conservation • Activism
Research • Education



WET PAPER
Marine Education

Local Envirogroup Manual



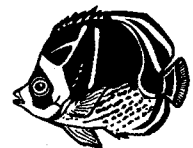
How to get started

by

Matt Keys



Surfrider Foundation
AUSTRALIA
Conservation • Activism
Research • Education



WET PAPER
Marine Education

© Copyright 1996

Queensland Government. No part may be reproduced without permission of the publisher.
May be copied for educational purposes and by local envirogroups.

ISBN 1 86283 041 X

Written by

Matt Keys
Environmental Consultant

Wet Paper Publishers and Consultants

Published by

Wet Paper
14 Millbong Tce
Ashmore 4214

Edited by

Sally MacKinnon and Mark Moffatt

Typesetting, photography, layout and design

Bob Moffatt

Additional photography

John Foss, Marnie Kent and other Surfrider Foundation members

Printed by

Bundall Printing
Straithaird Rd
Bundall Gold Coast Qld

Acknowledgements

John Clowes (WaterWise Queensland)
John Foss, Marnie Kent, Greg Howell, Brad Farmer and other members of the Surfrider Foundation Australia who contributed to photographs.

Surfrider Foundation Corporate Sponsors- Quiksilver, Rip Curl, Billabong, Wet Paper, Hot Tuna, Gowings, Finch, Ocean & Earth, Oakley, Thin Air, City Beach, Cheetah, Surf Travel Company

Surfrider Foundation National Office
PO Box 1441
Dee Why 2009

This publication was sponsored by a grant from WaterWise Queensland.

Printing: 100% white recycled cyclus offset, cover 100% recycled cyclus matt art.



Contents



1. Introduction	
1.1 Why start and is it worth it?	4
1.2 Background on Surfrider Foundation	5
1.3 How to form a local committee	6
1.4 Dramas you can expect	10
2. Getting down to business	
2.1 Problem identification, problem study, problem solving	12
2.2 Lobbying	13
2.3 Basic fundraising	14
2.4 Having fun as a group	15
3. Let's start working	
3.1 Project planning	16
3.2 Project implementation	18
3.3 Management of on ground works	20
3.4 Budget management	21
3.5 Sourcing on-going funds	22
3.6 Project publicity	25
4. Campaigning	
4.1 Environmental campaigning	26
4.2 Handling campaigns	27
4.3 Co-ordinating volunteers	28
4.4 Strategic planning	29
4.5 Media	30
4.6 Writing a media release	33
4.7 Government, greenies and campaigning	34
4.8 The law and you	35
4.9 How to work in partnership with government	36
5. Networking with other groups	
5.1 WaterWise	37
5.2 WaterWatch	38
5.3 Landcare	39
5.4 Coastcare	39
5.5 Other environment and local community groups	40
5.6 Semi government groups	40
5.7 Your local council and councillors	41
5.8 Election time	41
5.8 Local, state and national days of action	41
6. Tips	
6.1 Documents control	42
6.2 Sample meeting agenda	43
6.3 Subcommittees	44
6.4 Model rules	45
6.5 Newsletter ideas	46
6.6 Media release	47
6.7 Application for membership	48

1. Introduction

1.1 Why start and is it worth it?

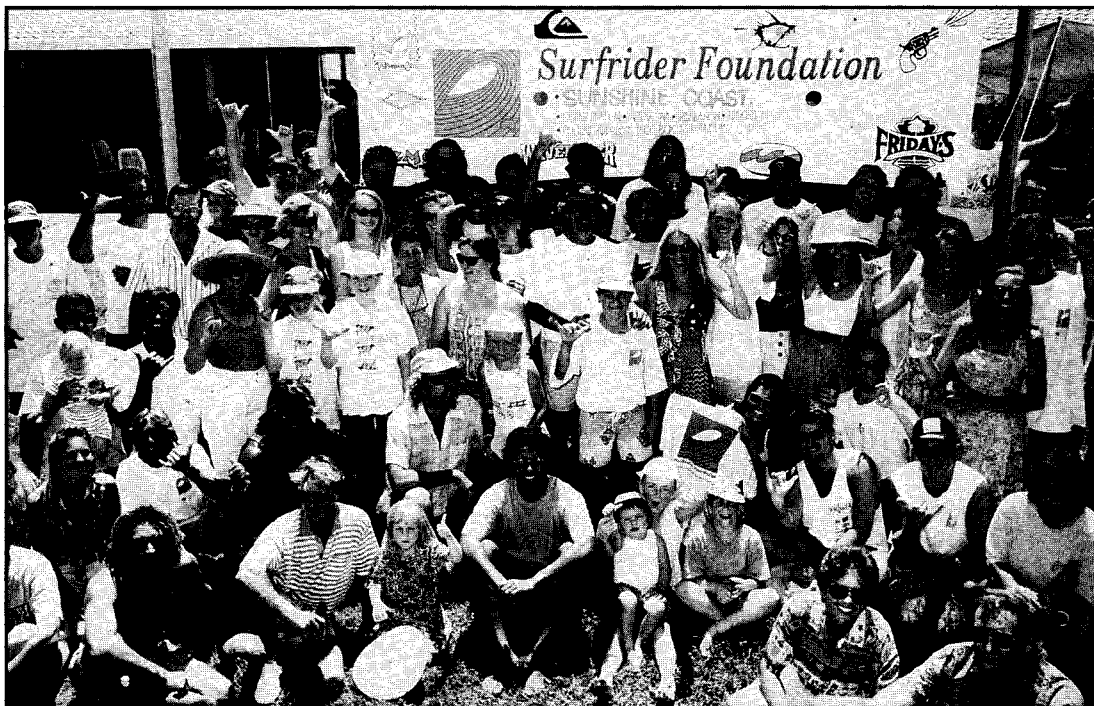


Figure 1: Thousands of Australians now volunteer their time each month to correct our past mistakes

Aussies can be proud of the fact that we are world leaders in environmental restoration and rehabilitation. However, we must keep in mind the enormous amount of damage done to our natural environment over the last two hundred years.

Thousands of Australians now volunteer their time each month to correct our past mistakes. These folk are our new pioneers. They are the people who have come forward to correct the mistakes made by our first pioneers. Just as past pioneers studiously cleared the land of vegetation, today's eco-pioneers are planting trees, cleaning creeks and rehabilitating our waterways.

Welcome to the eco-pioneer movement! You have found this manual because you've identified a local environmental problem and you'd like to do something about it. You care and you feel you can make a difference.

You are absolutely correct, you can make a difference - a big difference!

If you feel a little daunted by what you're taking on, don't worry. There are over 1000 volunteer, neighbourhood Landcare groups throughout Australia. All these groups have been set up by people like you, people who care.

You will find your project enormously rewarding. Naturally, you'll have up's and down's but at the end of the day you can be thrilled with your efforts. If this were not the case then all those thousands of groups would not be in existence today. So read on. Take note of all the tips this manual provides. The lessons provided here have in many cases been learned the hard way. This manual aims to ensure that you avoid making the same mistakes that other eco-pioneers have made in the past.

Above all enjoy yourself, maintain your vision, keep smiling and remember — frogs can't read.

1:2 Background on Surfrider Foundation

Surfrider Foundation is an international marine conservation organisation with branches in Australia, the United States, United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Germany, Spain, Japan, Brazil, Canada and New Zealand.

Surfrider Foundation Australia, was formed by volunteers in 1991 and has 58 branches around the nation.

Surfrider Foundation is a non profit organisation dedicated to the protection and enhancement of Australia's oceans, waves, beaches and waterways for all people through Conservation, Activism, Research, and Education — C.A.R.E. All branches are operated by volunteers.

If you'd like to get involved with Surfrider please call us.



Figure 2: The Victorian Branch of Surfrider has adopted a 'don't spoil with oil' campaign slogan

1.3 How to form a local committee

1.3.1 Organising your first meeting

The first thing to recognise is the need to involve others in your project. The justification for this is quite simple - more hands make lighter work! Once you have read this manual and given careful thought to all the issues raised here, you will need to call a meeting of local residents.

Your first meeting should be a relaxed affair without being disorganised. First, doorknock the locals and let them know when, where and why your meeting has been called. A good suggestion is to hold the meeting at your project site. This way people get an idea of what you're proposing and by standing on site you'll be able to enthuse them about the project more than if you held your meeting in the local hall.

When you go doorknocking take a photocopied flier telling people the time, date and place of the meeting. It's also worthwhile drawing a basic map of how to get to the meeting and a suggestion to bring some snags for a barbecue after the meeting. This way people won't forget the details of the meeting and you'll have the chance to turn it into a social occasion as well.



Figure 3: First meeting

1.3.2 Basic meeting procedures

Welcome everybody at the beginning of the meeting and outline the meeting's aims.

If this is your first gathering your prime objective should be to set up a committee. Your committee should have the following office bearers - President, Secretary, Treasurer and three committee members (minimum.) Each of these people have different jobs and their job description is outlined further on in this chapter.

- Call for people to nominate for positions. This means you will say for example, "I'd like to call for nominations for the position of President." Somebody will then either nominate themselves or nominate somebody else. For example, "I nominate Joe Bloggs to be President."
- Then ask Joe if he accepts the nomination. If Joe accepts then ask for further nominations until there are no further nominees for the position of President. It may be a good idea then, to ask the nominees to leave the room while the vote is taken.
- Now you can ask for a show of hands to vote in favour of each nominee. Naturally, the nominee with the most votes wins the position. In the event of only one person nominating, that person is automatically voted to the said position.
- Once you have a successful nominee, move a brief motion to record that the vote has taken place.
- Once the motion is put up, somebody else has to second that motion. For example, "I move that Joe Bloggs be accepted as President of the Rocky Creek Catchment Group. Moved Annie Archer, Seconded Jim Smith."
- Then vote on the motion and record in your meeting minutes what the motion said, who moved the motion, who seconded it and what the outcome of the vote was.
- Don't forget to move that each point be carried by the meeting and that a quorum be established.
- Usually greater than five is sufficient but may vary according to constitutions.
- In general business, motions are needed to create actions. Members may move to write to the minister, allocate money to purchase equipment or seek permission to hold a clean up day. The beauty of motions is that the group takes responsibility and democracy rules in your association.

- The average concentration time for most people in an out of work situation is 40 minutes.
- A circle is much more friendly or a table where everyone can sit around.
- Always have a cold drink, tea, coffee or a few light beers and a snack after the meeting.
- Always set a time for your next meeting so people can plan to come.

1.3.3 Establishing a set of rules

All Australian States have an Office of Corporate Affairs. There will exist within this office a section that deals with incorporated associations.

It is worthwhile giving this section a ring and asking for the model rules of an association. Once you get these they could form a starting point for your associations rules.

Page 45 has some suggestions on model rules.



1.3.4 Office bearers job description

President

The president is the leader of the group. The president acts as chairperson at all meetings held by the group and is usually regarded as the group's spokesperson and "public face" of the group. The president is required to do the most work. This position is not to be taken lightly and much responsibility rests on it. Careful consideration needs to be given when electing someone to this position. A sensible, careful, honest and dedicated person is best suited for the role of president and they must be willing to give solid support to the group throughout the full term of their job (usually twelve months.)

Secretary

The secretary's main role is to provide support to the president. The secretary is required to record the minutes of meetings. (The minutes are a written record of what has happened at each meeting). Minutes are required to contain:

- a list of who attended the meeting
- who couldn't attend (known as "apologies")

- what motions were passed
- other matters of importance that occur during the group's meetings. The secretary is responsible for letting people know the next meeting's date, time and location. In partnership with the president, the secretary is responsible for written correspondence from the group to outside bodies (councils, funding bodies, other environmental groups etc.)

It is important that the secretary keep all your group's member details up to date, for example address and phone numbers. This will make life easier when you organise large working bees and fundraising events.

Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for handling the financial affairs of the group and oversees all financial expenditure in partnership with the committee. Treasurers are responsible for the group's book keeping. All income and expenditure must be recorded by the treasurer. A basic understanding of keeping accounts is all that is necessary for this role.

Committee members

Committee members are required to attend meetings in order to ensure that decisions are not being made solely by the president, treasurer and secretary. Committee members are team members, they are there to provide support and advice to the president and secretary. Committee members organise fundraisers, plan future events and do the odd jobs that arise as you move through your project.

When you start taking on more than one project and your committee grows, you may like to delegate more positions. This gives volunteers more responsibility and involvement.

Committee members are also required to make up a quorum which is the minimum number of people attending a meeting to allow motions to be passed.

Quorum is important as it protects the committee from having important decisions made by too few people. For example, if your group has a president, secretary and treasurer and eight committee members you should have a quorum of seven people. This means you cannot move motions at meetings unless you have a minimum of seven members in attendance.

Having a set quorum prevents just two people meeting, passing motions and generally interfering in the committee as a whole.

1.4 Dramas you can expect

(and some you think could never happen)



1.4.1 Cash flow

If you don't keep a careful eye on your finances you may find yourself with cash flow problems. It's vital to keep a careful watch on how your group spends its money. This does not mean you should be perpetually refusing to spend money though it does mean you should discuss any expenditure with your committee before spending any funds. Try and get it for nothing — sponsors, donations are all worth a go. If not, get three quotes and then buy on best available advice and price.

Develop a basic plan to assist you with forecasting expenditure. When putting this plan together keep in mind things like when you plan to plant, what expenses you expect when it comes time to plant, upcoming fundraisers and how much money you expect to make and so on.

1.4.2 Lack of interest

From time to time you may encounter a lack of interest from your volunteers. This is natural and should be expected.

You can avoid a drop in interest if you make sure your working bees are fun. This point can't be emphasised enough. Always ensure working bees are social occasions. This will keep people coming back because they know they are going to have fun while they are working.

Talk with your committee about how they feel the group can make your events as much fun as possible.

It is also possible that your volunteers need help with transport so it would be a good idea to find out those who do have problems getting around and organise a car pool or pick ups to meetings.

Remind your volunteers to bring along their lunch and a drink. Organisers of events should freeze a few bottles of water to give volunteers a drink during the day.

1.4.3 People who go off and do their own thing in the name of the group

This happens often in volunteer community groups and occurs because the group fails to set some ground rules from the beginning.

A quorum is one example of how to avoid this happening because it ensures that group consensus has been achieved. It avoids decisions being made by too few people.

Another way to avoid this is to clearly delegate who represents the group to the general public. Ideally this is the President and / or the Secretary and nobody else should be allowed to make public representations on behalf of the group.

In the event that somebody does go off and causes some strife for the group, it is strongly advised that you stay cool. In ninety five percent of cases the member has the best interests of the group at heart. They are probably misguided in their attempts to assist and should be viewed in this light. Also in some events, account for the fact that some volunteers will not be members and are just giving up their day to help for a specific project.

The most diplomatic way to handle this situation is to raise the issue at the next committee meeting and issue a reminder to the offending person of the ground rules with respect to public representation. Don't privately phone the person and reprimand them, as this achieves nothing and can inflame the situation.



Figure 4: You will have to learn to deal with people who go off and do their own things in the name of the group

2. Getting down to business



Figure 5: Identifying problems with your project site is very important

2.1 Problem identification, problem study, problem solving

Identifying problems with your project site is very important if you are to succeed in rehabilitating the site.

List the problems your site encounters. Keep your eyes open and observe all the difficulties your site faces.

Once you have these problems listed you will be able to set about fixing them.

Be on the lookout for distractions and prioritise your problem solving. For example, it is pointless planting seagrass in an estuary if the estuary is heavily polluted by stormwater run off. In this example it is far smarter to correct the stormwater pollution before attempting to plant seagrass beds.

When you begin this identification and prioritising, it is worthwhile to involve local experts in the decision making process. People like amateur botanists, marine biologists, ecologists, university students, school teachers and council officers have knowledge and skills which can assist your project preparation.

Stick to your plan once it is developed and don't get side tracked.

2.2 Lobbying

Lobbying is a simple tool to achieve a positive project outcome. Much of the project's success will depend on your ability to lobby.

In simple terms, lobbying is the ability to sell your cause.

Environmental lobbying is relatively easy, largely because 90 percent of people are now concerned about the environment.

Before you begin your lobbying ask yourself questions that will be asked of you by others once your lobbying begins. Likely questions include:

- “What’s wrong with the creek?”
- “How do you think your group can fix it?”
- “How much money do you think you’ll need?”
- “How long will the project run for?”

If you ask yourself these questions when developing your project plan you will be able to provide people with credible responses when they ask you the same questions.

Also consider working with the media to highlight your concerns and to draw attention to the issue.

Always maintain a positive approach when you are lobbying. In most cases you will be lobbying people you’ve never met before so it’s important to make a positive and credible impression first up.



Figure 6: Lobby your Federal minister around election time

2.3 Basic fundraising

You will need to raise some money to give the project a kick start.

While funding sources are discussed later in this manual you will need to raise some early money to cover costs like phone calls, stationery and petrol.

There are a number of ways to raise the small amounts of money for costs at the outset of your project. Discuss the following fundraisers at your first community meeting.

One simple method is to ask for donations at your first meeting. It's fair to assume that those who turn up for your first meeting will be willing to throw in a few dollars to help kick start the project.

You can also consider holding a community garage sale which can be a great way to raise larger amounts of money. Raise this idea and discuss it at your first meeting.

Many people have 'junk' they no longer need and are willing to donate. Go door knocking in your local neighbourhood asking for donations and raising awareness of the date of the garage sale.

At this point take some time to explain to people the details of your project and why you need their support. You can also feel confident of having a very successful garage sale.

During project planning, costs will be minimal. However garage sales, donations and cake stalls can be an excellent way to cover basic costs prior to longer term funding for the project.

A band night at a local hotel is another fun idea. The outlay is nothing if the bands play for free, you run a raffle at the door using donated prizes to cover the band cost, the hotel makes a small cover charge to pay for the band or the hotel pays for the band.

Bingo nights also can raise money and allow people to make money as well.



Figure 7: Local band days are a great way to have fun as a group

2.4 Having fun as a group

Having fun is absolutely vital to the success of your project. If your group's members have a good time they will continue to come back.

Make each working bee as much fun as possible. Bring a radio along so people can listen to music while they are pulling weeds and planting trees. Stick a cricket bat and tennis ball in the boot of your car for an informal game at the end of your working bees.

Having fun is top priority. If everybody has fun, they will keep coming back. If people keep coming back, your project will keep moving forward.

It's that simple.



Figure 8: Having fun as a group is an essential part of any association



Figure 9: Bingo is another way to raise money while having fun at the same time

3. Let's start working

3.1 Project planning

All successful environment projects require simple but careful planning. You can only lead and work effectively with people if you have a plan. Planning gives people an opportunity to share thoughts and advice about how they feel the project can be improved. Planning your project is the first task to undertake as you prepare to begin on ground works.

A number of issues need to be considered when planning your project. The first is time for planning.

Each project will take different lengths of time depending on how big the project is and how much work is involved. Always give the group a reasonable amount of time to complete its tasks.

Remember, you're working with volunteers and it's unrealistic to expect them to work overtime to meet set deadlines. Give the project plenty of time and you'll avoid many hassles.

Another issue is *project funding*. The issue of funding sources is discussed further along in this chapter. The important thing is to spend your funding wisely.

It is strongly recommended you form a committee to oversee spending of funds. This committee will help you avoid any potential criticisms about the spending of project funds.

Remember, only spend funds on absolute necessities. For example, purchasing shovels is foolish if you can borrow some from your council at no cost.

Financial administration is an important aspect of your project. When you spend funds, make sure you have receipts to prove expenditure and always have the expenditure approved first by your newly formed committee.

Planning should also take into account seasonal conditions. For example, it is crazy to plant a grove of trees on a creek bank just before the wet season when they are likely to be washed away by flood water.

Planting at the right time of year can make a huge difference to the success of your plants.

If you only have a basic understanding of trees and aren't aware of the best time of the year to plant, give your local nursery a ring and ask the nursery worker to explain the plants' different characteristics and needs.

At this planning stage you'd be well advised to get in some local horticultural experts to assist with species identification and weed spotting. (Greening Australia is an excellent contact)

If you don't know any experts who can give your team a hand with planning, contact your local newspaper and radio station and ask if they can promote the fact that you need a hand with your project planning. All sorts of people will come out of the woodwork to give you a hand once the word is out.

The most important facet of planning is vision. Look to the short term, medium term and long term of your site rehabilitation and formulate a draft plan to share with others. Using this draft and the advice of others you will be able to finalise your plan for the project.



Figure 10: Publicise your project at local markets, street stalls or national days

3.2 Project implementation

Once you have your plan finalised, take it to your local council for their input.

Many people who work for councils share your concerns about the health of the natural environment and are enthusiastic in their support for projects like yours.

Council officers are also technically qualified in many of the areas that you are interested in and can offer you good, free advice.

Your council may also be interested in giving your project some basic funding if you can show them you have done your homework and are committed to the success of the project.

After having received approval from council you are then in a position to ask how they can assist with materials for your project.

Most councils have native plant nurseries, access to earthmoving equipment, landscaping tools and technical expertise. It's fair to suggest that only the most obstinate council will not assist you in some way.

Remember when you go in to meet the council, approach them with a positive attitude. Positive attitudes create positive results.

Now you have everything in place it's time to put your plan into action.

Meet with your committee before the project officially begins and decide how often the group is going to meet on site to work. It's best to go with a regular day each month, for example the third Saturday of each month with an 8.30 am start. Then people can set aside the same time each month to work on the project.

Place a strong emphasis on the social value of these days. Think about organising a bar-becue, where you bring the barbie and each volunteer brings their own steak, snags or veggie burgers.

After you've done your work, fire up the barbie, cook a feed, admire your group's work and make friends.

If people have children, suggest they bring them along to the working bee too. The kids will have fun and the parents won't have to worry about getting babysitters to look after the young ones. (By the way the kids can often help too).

Another important thing to remember when you start your project is to encourage people to 'Slip, Slop, Slap'. Even in the skin cancer enlightened 1990's we are still not protecting ourselves as much as we could.

If your project involves working in creeks then ask everybody to bring gloves and gumboots. Be alert to safety issues and ensure you inform your volunteers of safe working practices.

Now you have your plan, you have your people, you have your funds, so it's time to have some fun and to get your teeth into your project. Enjoy!

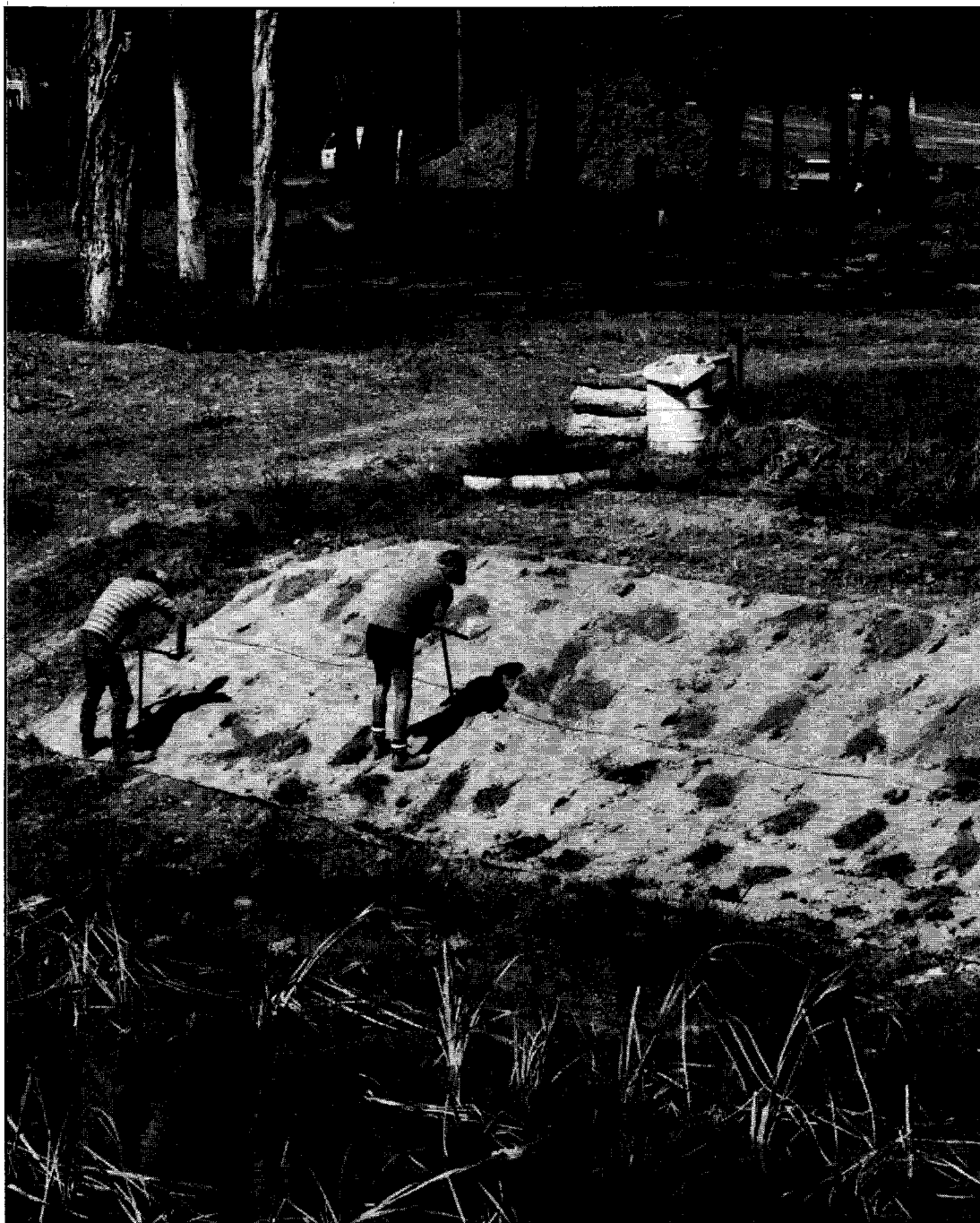
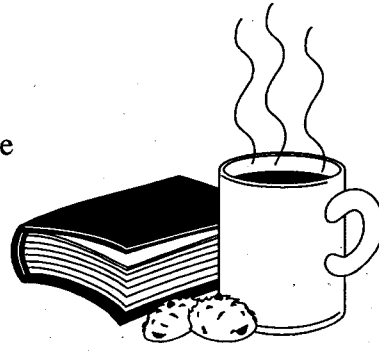


Figure 11: Link in with CES and return to work schemes to maximise your labour force

3.3 Management of on ground works

Managing your project is quite straightforward.

Your committee is responsible for the management of the project and must keep a careful eye on how the project is progressing. It's at this time your plan becomes really useful.



Look at your project plan — are you sticking to your initial plan or have you moved away from it? How are your finances, have you spent too much? All these sorts of questions need to be asked and answered on a regular basis.

When asking yourself these sorts of questions don't be too critical of your performance. If you've made a mistake don't worry. You're entitled to make mistakes — they're good learning, and the fact that you've recognised your own mistake means you're half way towards correcting it.

Let common sense guide your project management.

Your committee is there to make sure things don't get out of hand and if you have a few hassles with the project - don't stress. Chill out or calm down and then think about how you're going to come out on top. Just remember to use your commonsense and your committee's ideas and everything will be fine.

Keep data of progress and photos for future reference.

Finally, don't dwell on your mistakes — just learn by them as they are the greatest teaching tool of all.

3.4 Budget management

This is another simple facet of your project management. It's absolutely crucial for a committee to oversee expenditure of funds. If you don't have a committee you may leave yourself open to criticism (from any person with a chip on their shoulder).

Your committee will decide as a group exactly how to spend the funds.

There is one simple rule that you should always adhere to with the spending of project funds: if you don't have to spend the money - don't spend the money!

Always be on the lookout for ways you can avoid shelling out money.

Think laterally by identifying your problem and then working around it.

Remember, there are many people who will provide services or products free of charge to help the project along. Talk with your committee and sort out ways of saving your funds while still achieving the same end result.

The most important part of managing the budget is to ensure that all expenditure is listed and backed up with receipts as proof of purchase.

If you are using public funds you have a moral (and in most cases legal), obligation to show where and how you've spent your money. So again take time out to make sure that your project's financial records are always in order and you'll have nothing to worry about.



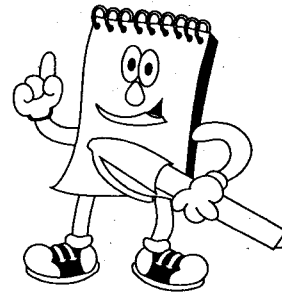
3.5 Sourcing on-going funds

OK, the project's going great but you have one key problem. The project's only half finished and you have exhausted all your funds.

Searching for on-going funds can be difficult if you don't know where to look, but never fear, the funding is there!

The truth is that there are many funding sources around and you just need to know where to look.

We'll tackle this section in two parts. First we'll explain the government funding areas and then point out some private funding sources.



3.5.1 Government - Local, State and Federal

All three tiers of government have money available to community groups for community projects.

Local government has 'divisional allocations.' These allocations are set aside for community projects in each councillor's division. As a general rule these allocations are small, but if your project just needs a small amount of money to continue, approach your local councillor for support.

If you want larger support from council, speak with your councillor to arrange for a submission to be presented to council explaining why you need the money.

As is the case with all funding applications you will be required to do some paperwork to present your case, but it's definitely worthwhile.

3.5.2 State Government

There are different funding packages in different states. So start first with your state Environment Department. They will send you a list of government funding sources and the guidelines that come with these applications.

However, do go the next step and while you're talking with the Environment Department, ask whether they are aware of any other departments which offer similar funding packages.

Other departments which might assist include Primary Industries, Water Resources, Housing, Aboriginal Affairs, Science and Education.

You have to be a bit of a "digger" to unearth funding packages and again, your efforts can prove to be very worthwhile. If you feel a bit miffed or frustrated with slow progress just take it in your stride and keep plugging away.

3.5.3 Federal Government

The same rule applies as above, start with the federal Department of Environment.

Take the same approach as if you were dealing with a state government. Ask what packages the federal Environment Department has on offer and then ask if any other departments have similar programs. If you are told that no other relevant department has similar programs be polite, assume they are mistaken and speak directly with another department.

First stop after the Environment Department is the federal Department of Primary Industries.

Keep an eye on Saturday's edition of "The Australian" newspaper and other large Saturday newspapers. They run advertisements announcing that applications are open for many grants. These ads generally appear in the public notices with other general advertisements.

When ringing government departments ask to be put on their mailing list. Then you'll be forewarned of upcoming funding opportunities and won't have to make many phone calls to find the funding package that is most suited to your project.

3.5.4 Private funding

Many large companies now openly donate to environment projects. Industry can be full of keen greenies who are willing to support worthwhile projects with useful amounts of money.

Smaller companies are also keen to support environmental projects and should not be ruled out just because they are a small business.



You will need to be able to clearly show why your project is worthwhile, to gain financial support from these companies.

When dealing with companies it is suggested you take the following approach:

- a. Identify possible corporate supporters.
- b. Arrange a meeting with the managing director, or equivalent.
- c. Take along to this meeting photos of your project site, work your group has done and a bit of an overview (preferably typed) which can be left with the person for them to read.

This overview doesn't have to be an epic, just a simple explanation of the history of your project, why you're doing it, your project outcomes and benefits to sponsoring companies.

Most importantly, you need to outline the amount of money you need from the company and why you need the money.

Include a basic budget showing where you will be spending their money.

Be aware that many of these donations can be a tax deduction for the company. We suggest you get in touch with a local solicitor and ask if you can have some free advice as to how you can secure a tax deduction for your corporate supporter.

As you can see there are many different funding opportunities out there, it's just up to you to go out and look for them.

3.6 Project publicity

Your local project is of interest to local people and as such, is of interest to local media. Contact your local paper, radio or TV station and let them know what you're doing. A lot of journalists are keen greenies and will be happy to do a story to help promote your project.

Include situations like cheque handover ceremonies.

If a local company is giving your project financial support the least you can do is arrange for the local media to cover a cheque handover ceremony. This way you'll have pleased your supporter and gained more publicity for your project.

Enjoy working with the media and be proud to display your group's work to all who are interested.



Figure 12: Local companies are only too willing to donate trucks and equipment — Local Branch float during show holiday

4. Campaigning



Figure 13: Environmental campaigning is a fundamental method for achieving positive outcomes

4.1 Environmental campaigning

Environmental campaigning or lobbying is a fundamental method for achieving positive outcomes for the natural environment.

All environment campaigns involve lobbying.

Generally those lobbied are people who will make a decision for or against a certain project. It is these people you have to persuade in order to achieve a positive outcome.

Positive lobbying can achieve great results quickly, negative lobbying can have a disastrous impact on a campaign and can be more harmful than good.

This chapter will explain effective campaigning and investigate potential problems resulting from negative campaigning.

Always keep a positive frame of mind throughout your campaign. Don't allow burn out to take over so watch out for easily recognisable symptoms like overtiredness, flashpoint temper, tears etc.

A good leader is one who can see the end result, keep the team positive, show undying commitment to the cause, and is someone with a healthy dose of good old fashioned courage.

4.2 Handling campaigns

Environmental campaigns can be particularly difficult if your group lacks organisation and cohesiveness. Remember, if your group fails to show a strong, intelligent argument you will be quickly dismissed as a bunch of obstructionist loonies with nothing to offer.

Endeavour to seek alternatives to a particular development and be open to new ideas from the developer.

If you fail to do this your group can be seen difficult to work with and you will quickly find yourself 'outside' the decision making process. Once outside this process it is particularly difficult to re-enter discussions.

The most important aspect of running an environmental campaign is to make sure you have a strong, credible, intelligent leader. This individual is the 'face' of your group and needs the full support of all your group's members.

It is vital this person presents themselves effectively when attending meetings, conducting media interviews etc. Dressing well makes a difference.

This leader must be prepared to do the lion's share of the work. Ideally he/she is elected by the members and consults directly with the group on a regular basis.

This consultation can be done by holding regular meetings where all group members come together to discuss strategy, report on their work since the last meeting and plan for future directions.

These meetings are also an excellent opportunity for members to express any concerns they may have with the campaign — confidentially and within the group.

It is crucial that the group presents a united front when moving forward with a campaign. Campaigns can be destroyed by group members coming out in the press criticising the leadership of the group or how the group conducts itself.

A community group cannot be destroyed, the only thing that can destroy a group is nasty, petty internal bickering.

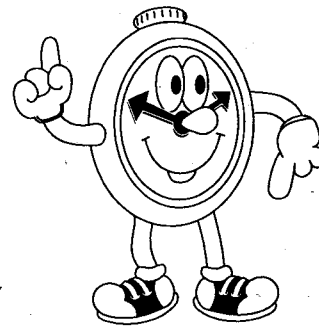
This can all be avoided with the combination of a smart leader who can sense trouble before it occurs and a regular pattern of meetings that gives dissatisfied members a forum to air their grievances privately and in the company of other members who may share the same concerns.

The group leader needs to always remember that it is an honour to lead a community group and that the campaign is owned by the group, not by the leader. Campaign decisions should reflect this attitude.

4.3 Co-ordinating volunteers

Volunteer co-ordination is extremely worthwhile if handled correctly.

Volunteers are people who express a willingness to give up a certain amount of time each week to assist a community group. Local environment groups are usually made up wholly of volunteers.



Without volunteers, the Australian environment movement could grind to a halt. It has been the successful co-ordination of volunteers over many years, that has allowed the conservation movement to move onto bigger and better things.

You will undoubtedly be approached by many people who 'want to help out.' Your task is to guide these people in how they can help.

When approached by a new volunteer who expresses an interest in assisting there are a number of quick questions you should ask them.

After thanking them for their offer, the first question to ask is how much time per week they can give to the campaign.

After ascertaining how much time they can offer and when they are available, find out what skills they can contribute.

Place them on a roster and then contact them to confirm their attendance at an agreed time to provide assistance to your group's campaign.

It is wise to allocate a committee member to oversee the co-ordination of volunteers.

Your volunteers must be kept occupied meaningfully, as you run the risk of losing them if they keep turning up to find there is no work to be done. The old motto of 'giving everybody a job' strongly applies here.

Don't give a volunteer too much responsibility when they first start. Work with them gently and show an interest and appreciation for their work. Do not take volunteers for granted.

Be wary of volunteers who are overly keen and want to do everything. Often these folk bite off more than they can chew and end up creating a gigantic mess for somebody else to sort out when they cannot complete their tasks.

Allow time and your natural instincts to inform the amount of responsibility given to your volunteers. If they are happy, busy and enthused they'll keep coming back!

4.4 Strategic planning

Without careful planning you will lack direction and reduce your chance of campaign success.

Strategic planning must be conducted by all group members throughout the campaign. Again, group meetings are an appropriate forum for this discussion to take place.

Planning must be conducted right at the beginning and go through to the end of the campaign.

Often your direction can change throughout the campaign because of unforeseen circumstances. That's okay. The most important factor is to stay focused on your end result while taking the most appropriate approach to achieve your goal.

No plan can be set without first identifying exactly what you want to achieve. For example, if you are aiming to clean up your local creek, at your group's inaugural meeting you may wish to come up with a mission statement such as "The Rocky Creek Community Catchment Group is dedicated to the restoration and rehabilitation of Rocky Creek with a view to providing natural habitat, recreational facilities and a valuable natural asset for future generations."

This mission statement provides the group with a clear sense of direction and purpose.

The group then needs to decide exactly how you're going to achieve your goal.

It's very important that your group shows the community that you are concerned citizens and not a bunch of whingeing ratbags. Using the Rocky Creek model you may want to have a community tree planting day combined with a picnic and sausage sizzle.

These sorts of events create good PR for your group while also moving towards achieving your environmental goal.

In some cases you may be opposing a particular development on environmental grounds and will have to be very careful in your planning.

Use your meetings as a forum to discuss how you're going to tackle the difficult issue of stopping a particular development.

Using your collective commonsense and ideas your group will have a greater chance of success no matter what the problem.

4.5 Media

The media can be a great support vehicle to get your message out to the general public. The media can be both a friend and foe depending on how you work with journalists and present your argument.

There are three different media outlets commonly used by experienced environment campaigners; print (newspapers, magazines), radio and television. Each of these mediums needs to be handled differently to get the best results.

In all cases it is worthwhile to make contact and develop a rapport with journalists in each of the three different mediums.

This working relationship can take time

to build but is particularly worthwhile to your cause. It can also be a good way to make new friends!

You must have a story to tell with a particular angle to get journalists involved.

An angle is a new twist to a previously reported story. For example, the media may have done a story on the formation of the Rocky Creek group and the sausage sizzle, tree planting day. Now it's been found out that some vandals have pulled out the trees that were planted and you're back to square one. The catchment group is now putting out a plea for donations of new trees and fencing to protect the site from being vandalised again.

The new story is about the tree planting site being vandalised, the new angle is the plea for donations of trees and fencing.

Journalists always need a new story that relates to a previously reported item and a new angle to give the new story added spice.

It is not difficult to come up with these new angles.

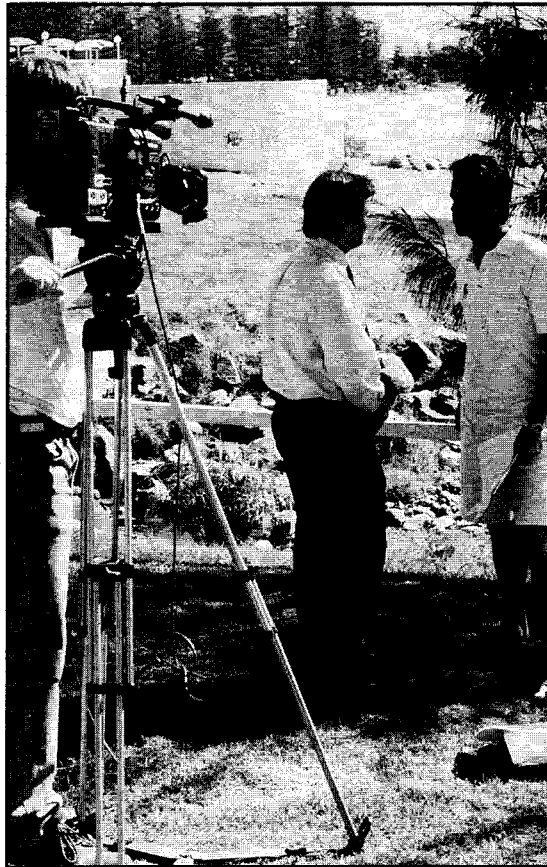


Figure 14: The media can be both a friend and foe depending on how you work with journalists and present your argument

If you provide a new angle to your story you can almost guarantee success getting your message into the public arena. The cardinal rule when dealing with the media is to always tell the truth.

If you go around concocting false stories you will be quickly exposed, your group's credibility will be stripped and the media will have nothing to do with you.

Integrity is not served on a platter, it is earned. Integrity in all fields has one common denominator - honesty. Do not exaggerate, stretch the truth, tell fibs or make misleading statements. Simply tell the truth.

Below is a basic guide to dealing with the media .

4.5.1 Radio

Your story will be presented as a news item unless you're involved in a talkback forum.

When doing a news story keep in mind the longest 'grab' (the bit where they have you talking) will be about ten seconds.

It is therefore vitally important that you keep your message short and clear. Don't mumble on and take a minute to say something that can be said in ten seconds.

Time is extremely tight for radio news and you need to make your message clear and very concise.

Unless told otherwise your interview will be pre-recorded, so if you stumble on a word or get tongue-tied simply ask the journalist if you can repeat the section you mucked up.

Journalists don't bite and are used to working with people who have never worked with the media before. They don't mind being patient with somebody who's a first timer and a little nervous.

If you're doing a long interview for talkback where the journalist wants to discuss your project or campaign, it is very useful to have a list of facts in front of you that you can turn to when the interviewer asks you a specific question. This list is handy for the times your mind goes blank while talking live on radio, (as has happened to your author on occasion!).

The ticket with live radio is to simply relax. Talk just to the interviewer as a person. Enjoy yourself — you have got an important message to get across and you're doing it because you care for the environment you live in.

4.5.2 Television

Television news is similar to radio news. The only difference is that there's a TV camera involved.

Like the radio journalist, the TV journalist is also looking for good five to ten second grabs. Don't panic about the camera, it can't bite. Forget about it being there, talk directly to the journalist, be your normal self and you'll be fine.

TV is an important medium and should be used whenever you have a fresh angle on your campaign. It has the ability to share your project with thousands of people and can show why "Rocky Creek" is so important and special.

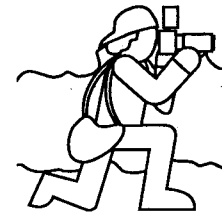
Utilize TV for all it's worth. However, do make sure you're well presented and not looking like a complete grub.

4.5.3 Print media

Newspapers are different to radio and TV.

Unlike the other two mediums, newspapers have more time to investigate your project and more space to present your group's position.

It is worthwhile to ring up local newspapers and speak directly with journalists about your story and any fresh angles.



The journalist may decide to do a phone interview immediately or they may ask you to put some quotes on paper and fax it across to them at the paper.

If you do a phone interview expect to get a small article in the paper.

If you take the time to write (or preferably type) your comments and then follow up with a phone call, you can expect to get a decent run.

In our Rocky Creek vandal scenario ask the journalist if a photographer can come out and take a photo of you or group members holding one of the trees that had been torn out of the ground to go with the story.

If you have a fax and computer it's best to produce a media release to go with your new angle.

Media releases are very useful and a great way to give your story an extensive run in all local newspapers. See section 4.6 for a guide to writing a media release.

Another way to obtain newspaper coverage is through letters to the Editor.

These are the letters from the public which are printed each day in the newspaper. Many people read these letters and it's worthwhile writing a letter to air your group's concern over a particular issue.

4.6 Writing a media release

A media release is a simple way of getting your message out to the public.

Media releases are designed to tell journalists exactly what you want to be said about your project. They are an effective way of avoiding being misquoted.

Your release is typed and contains some basic background to the project — a couple of sentences are fine.

It should have some direct quotes or comments from your group which the journalist can incorporate into their story.

It is clear and concise in its message.

Media releases can be faxed to your local media outlets with the group's contact name and phone number at the bottom of the release. This way journalists can contact you if they need further comment about the project.

Always follow up your fax with a phone call.

MEDIA ALERT

Attn: All Media Outlets


18 August 1995

BOMBS AWAY!!!

**SURFRIDER FOUNDATION "BLAST" FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTING
KINGS OF THE SUN PERFORMING LIVE FOR WORLDWIDE LAUNCH
OF
"BOMBS AWAY"**

Surfrider Foundation will be creating their own "nuclear bomb" and mushroom cloud on Tuesday August 22 at 12.55 pm on the sports oval at Miami High School, Gold Coast. The protest will feature a large pyrotechnic fireball explosion. Surrounding the explosion (at a safe distance) will be approximately 1000 high school students who will fall backwards mexican wave style from the "epicentre" to simulate the catastrophic effect of nuclear explosions. The protest will be highly visual and helicopters are strongly recommended for TV crews and photo jounos.

The No Nukes action is part of the Australian launch of the protest song "Bombe Away" written and performed by well known Australian rock band Kings of the Sun. Kings of the Sun include Jeffery and Clifford Hoed - former Miami High students. The band will be performing "Bombs Away" live at the Miami High Great Hall from 10.40 am and will be available for interviews at the conclusion of the gig. "Bombe Away" was first performed on Surfers Paradise beach as part of the nationwide Bastille Day protests. Kings of the Sun have agreed to donate all proceeds of "Bombe Away" to the Surfrider Foundation. The song was played for the first time on Australian radio this morning (Friday) and has received strong acceptance from the SEA FM audience on the Gold Coast.



**Surfrider
Foundation**
NATIONAL OFFICE
2011 EASTLICK BLVD
C/O BOSTON LEGAL
SUITE 1000
BOSTON MA 02118
TELEPHONE: 617 552 0995
FAX: 617 552 1177
P.O. BOX 88, 10, 022

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

TUESDAY AUGUST 22, 1995

10.40am Miami High School Great Hall, Great Hall Drive Miami.
KINGS OF THE SUN performing live and Film students producing a video.
Year 11 and 12 Students will be joining the chorus line of "Bombs Away"

12.55pm SHARP "Nuclear Bomb" detonation and Human Mexican Wave.
MIAMI HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS OVAL
Further : Matt Keys (015) 780444
Andrew Mckinnon (018) 754 974
Luke Johnston (07) 55 785 276

Figure 15: A press release

4.7 Government, greenies and campaigning

The three tiers of government can be a friend or foe to your group and project.

Local, state and federal governments have funding programs in place which can provide assistance to your group.

Ring around and find out which grants are available and what you have to do to apply for funding.

Some of these government bodies are listed in the rear of this book.

All tiers of government have different legislation designed to protect the natural environment. These laws differ in different councils and in different states. The important thing is to get a basic understanding of which laws are in place to assist you in protecting areas from unsuitable developments.

Frogs can't read or vote so it's up to you to find out how the wetland they live in can be protected from damaging, inappropriate development. It is also your right to be allowed access to this legislation and no civil servant has the mandate to stop you from gaining such access.

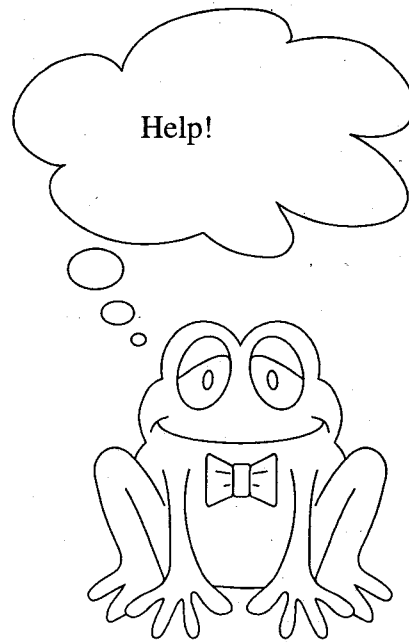
Pay particular attention to your local government planning laws. These local laws are set down by your local council and you need a basic understanding of what developers can and can't do in certain areas.

This knowledge is valuable when attempting to identify a developer who is contravening local planning laws.

When dealing with public servants it's always wise to be polite and courteous, not only because it's the Aussie way of doing things but because if you upset them they can become unwilling to help.

You are more likely to be successful in gaining their support if you are on good terms with them.

Remember, honey catches more flies than vinegar.



4.8 The law and you

Contact a local solicitor for advice on the do's and don'ts as far as your project is concerned.

Do think before speaking because all sorts of laws exist to protect people from defamatory comments. You need to be aware that you may be prosecuted if you run around making outlandish, unsubstantiated statements.

Speak with your volunteer solicitor and ask about any traps you may encounter throughout the duration of the project.

Your committee may also wish to investigate public liability insurance in the event of somebody injuring themselves at one of your working bees.

It's so simple these days to become an incorporated association that your committee should consider this option. The law does recognise incorporated groups and offers some protection above and beyond individual liability.

Incorporation — check it out.



Figure 16: If you want to spray drains with slogans like - dump no waste, flows to creek, you will need local government permission. Work place health and safety issues also have to be considered

4.9 How to work in partnership with government

Involving government in your project can be very useful.

Approach your local government at the beginning of the project to get them involved. Many departments are keen to work with community groups.

Ask for their support and continue to consult with them as your project progresses. The more government is involved in your project the more likely you are to receive ongoing support. Treat government as an important part of your team.



Figure 17: A Local Authority Councillor and a State Minister at a conservation launch supported by Local Envirogroups

5. Networking with other groups



5.1 WaterWise

WaterWise is a national program which involves local councils and community groups in helping to protect and conserve water.

The WaterWise program is usually linked to local councils with the state government water department providing backup support with school and community education materials as well as a whole host of resources.

You can make contact with WaterWise programs through your local council by making contact with the people who control the water supply in your town.

Another way to make contact is by ringing the state government department general number and asking to speak to the person who deals with water supply.

Your telephone book has a government section for this purpose.

5.1.1 School education programs

The Department of Primary Industries in Queensland has produced a number of educational packages for schools.

Primary and secondary school packages are available for schools at a reasonable price and you should encourage a teacher's representative to be on your committee to find out what is available. Your president should also encourage promoting environmental education programs in schools.

The WaterWise education program has stories, games, songs, textbooks, student activity brochures, fact sheets, videos and teacher's guides available for school teachers.

Schools are great places because they have rooms you can use, phones, photocopiers, computers and lots of volunteers who can help you.

Needless to say, you should always follow correct procedures and start by seeking a meeting with the local principal before you do anything in a school.

5.1.2 Community programs

World Water Day and National Water Week

These days are organised nationally by state government departments responsible for water.

There will usually be an official launch for the day or week with media present, so this is a good opportunity to put your project on display. It's also a good place to meet people.

See if you can set up an information stall or tent as part of proceedings.

5.2 WaterWatch

WaterWatch is a national program which seeks to get community groups to make informed decisions about the quality of water in local creeks, rivers or water ways.

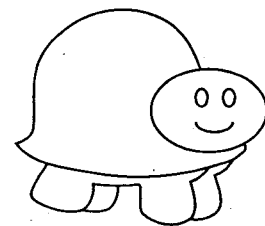
At time of publication, each state has a WaterWatch co-ordinator who organises a number of regional co-ordinators.

The WaterWatch program is running in schools, community groups and some local government departments.

The advantage of this program is that it presents results in a form everyone can understand. That means you go out and do tests on the water to see if it's polluted.

Many local councils and local businesses sponsor local groups to buy water testing equipment. It's not cheap and can cost up to \$3,500 for a full kit, however if you target local business and industry keen on presenting a supportive environmental image, this should not be too hard a figure to achieve.

The advantage of the kits is that they allow you to make an independent judgement on the quality of your water. If one agency tells you that the bacterial levels are OK and you go and test the water yourself and find that they are not, you have got something to argue your case with.



The kits are easy to use but require training and if you go in with your local high school, all the facilities and help will be there. All you have to do is find a keen teacher.

For example, the program has a turbidity tube, which is a long pipe that you fill with water. It's got an "X" on the bottom and if water is polluted in some areas from erosion, the "X" will disappear very quickly when you pour water into the tube.

If a new development is about to occur and you have twelve month's readings on turbidity, you can argue a case for environmental protection in the development by insisting that your local creek not be polluted by tons of sediment that occur when it rains on a new development site.

5.3 Landcare

Landcare is the careful management of the land and its resources for the benefit of this and future generations.

Landcare groups form to work on any type of land or water degradation issue. Members could be a group of farmers who are concerned about soil erosion on their land or a community group in a city who want to clean up and protect their local creek or area of bushland.

It's easy to become involved in landcare – and you don't need to be an expert, just an enthusiast!

5.4 Coastcare

Coastcare supports direct community involvement in the management of coastal and marine areas. It funds activities to help protect and rehabilitate coastal areas such as dunes, estuaries and wetlands and enhances sustainable use of the coast.

Coastcare is about people getting together to identify local environmental problems and taking action to repair them.

Coastcare groups are involved in weeding and replanting sand dunes, making walking tracks, revegetating coastal forests, building walking tracks and viewing platforms, raising awareness in local communities about issues like storm water runoff and clearing beaches and waterways of litter and pollution.

5.5 Other environment and local community groups

Service clubs

Get in touch with your local council to gain access to a list of community groups in your area. Lions, APEX, Rotary, Scouts, Guides, Zonta and Probus are all community groups which may be willing to help your project.

The more groups you involve in your project, the more likely you are to succeed.

Make contact with your local groups and ask them if they'd like to attend one of your working bees. You can be guaranteed a positive response though it's up to you to make the initial contact.



Australian Conservation Foundation

Established in 1965, the ACF is an independent, national, non-profit organisation. With headquarters in Melbourne, the ACF also has a campaign office in Sydney with branch offices in Adelaide and the Gold Coast and a national lobbying office in Canberra.

Environmental campaigning, research, policy development, direct marketing and retailing, fundraising, membership services and promotion of public awareness are carried out by more than forty full time staff with generous support from volunteers, ACF branches and campaign groups.

5.6 Semi government groups

The Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) and the Marine Education Society of Australasia (MESA) are also groups who run national conferences and programs for government agencies.

These groups consist of loose networks of government employees and consultants to government agencies who campaign for environmental education in the community and schools.

5.7 Your local council and councillors

Get your local councillor involved in your project. They will be interested in the project and will be able to provide valuable contacts and support throughout it. Councillors are local community-minded people and are a great asset to have on your committee.

5.8 Election time

Local elections can provide a great opportunity to gain support for your project.

Seek a commitment from all local candidates to support your project prior to the election.

Always act in a fair and unbiased manner during this process. Talk to your committee about who you're going to lobby and how you're going to approach them. If you receive a favourable pledge your committee can consider promoting this fact to the public.

5.8 Local, state and national days of action

There are a number of days set aside each year where the general public is encouraged to do something positive for the natural environment.

These days include Clean Up Australia Day, Ocean Care Day, Sea Week, Arbour Day, National Water Week and World Environment Day.

Get in touch with your local council to get dates for each of these events as these days can provide a great opportunity to attract the public to your project. Promote your working bees prior to the day itself.

6. Tips

6.1 Document control



6.1.1 Essential documents

- Minutes book
- Membership register - whose paid up
- Bank books - cheque book and bank deposit book
- Order book
- Bank reconciliation book
- Constitution or rules of the association

6.1.2 Folders, files

- Correspondence in and out
- Special events files
- Press clippings
- Newsletters

6.1.3 Hints on record keeping

- The storage box system
- A dedicated file
- A dedicated room
- Computer

6.2 Sample meeting agenda

6.2.1 Order of business at a general meeting

- Opening
(President to ask for apologies, secretary to record. President to confirm agenda items)
- New members welcome
(President to welcome new members, membership registrar to submit names of new members and move that they be admitted)
- Minutes from previous meeting
(Secretary to read minutes and move they be accepted as read)
- Correspondence
(Secretary to read inward and outward - summarise if need be. Secretary to move inward be received and outward endorsed)
- Treasurer's report
(A written report to be given. Treasurer to move report be accepted as presented)
- President's report
(Written or verbal)
- Committee reports
(Written or verbal)
- General business
(Deal with items confirmed at beginning of meeting)
- Set next meeting date and close meeting.

6.2.2 Notes

- Have a few drinks, order a pizza, show a video or relax.
- Keep meetings to about an hours duration
- If you get bogged down, form a subcommittee and elect a chairperson (see next section)

6.3 Subcommittees

6.3.1 The function of subcommittees

- Subcommittees are great for when you get bogged down. Sometimes people just like hearing their own voices and often quieten down at the suggestion of more work. However if a really important issue comes up that you just cannot solve in five to ten minutes, one way to deal with this is to form a subcommittee

6.3.2 Agenda for a subcommittee meeting

- Purpose
Outline why you have come and agree to a desired outcome to keep the meeting focused.
- Background
Record the history of the issue/s and who the main players are. Spend time letting everyone have a say to get the issues off their chest and give everyone a good hearing. Often people get frustrated by the fact they have not had time to have their say.
- Recommendations
Map out a desired course of action and result and if their are jobs to be done, delegate these .
- The chairperson to finish with a checklist of who, what, when, where and why and prepare a report for the next meeting.

6.4 Model rules

6.4.1 Each group should have set of rules*

A basic set of rules could be arranged under the following headings:

- How and when meetings are called.
- The voting method (e.g. show of hands).
- How the money shall be banked.
- The regularity of meetings and numbers for a quorum.
- How a person can be expelled or suspended from your group.
- How the group shall be wound up and what shall happen to the money.
- The ways by which the constitution can be changed and under what conditions.

6.4.2 A basic constitution

For a small enviro group with no property could be arranged under the following headings:

- The powers of the executive which enable it to run the day to day organisation.
- If the secretary and treasurer can be one and the same person.
- The number of members of the committee (usually 5-7).
- The aims and objects of the association.

* Note that a more detailed set of rules can be obtained from your state government Corporate Affairs Office and publications are available from libraries on small group constitutions.

6.5 Newsletter ideas

The Creek Courier

Newsletter of the Rocky Creek Enviroclub

Summer

Story 1: Plan to save creek

Date claimers

Success stories so far

Story 2: Rubbish a problem

Committee members

President name and address

Secretary name and address

Membership registrar

The newsletter is sponsored by

Turn over /2

6.6 Media release idea

Media Alert

Attention all media outlets

Date:

.....

Headline:

.....

Story:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name of group

Contact in group

Phone number

Application for Membership

Year _____

Name of enviro group _____

Postal address of group _____

Presidents name _____ Presidents address _____

Dear Membership Registrar,

I would like to join your group and wish to provide the following details

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No _____

The member who has nominated me is _____

Please find enclosed the sum of \$ _____ for this years membership.

I realise that my name will now be submitted to the executive and that if my application is successful, I will receive details regarding the group and its rules

Yours sincerely

Signature

Date

