



RGSQ Bulletin

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From the President

I'm not going to dwell on developments post flood in Queensland as I believe both the floods and the rebuilding of our community have been well and truly covered in local media. I would like to introduce my first 'From the President' page for 2012 with the headline 'China will keep us on track: Swan' (*The Weekend Australian* 31-12-11).

The strength of our Australian economy and our economic growth of 1% during the September quarter was trumpeted by the Federal Treasurer and Acting Prime Minister as a direct result of our trade engagement with Asia and particularly China. Mr Swan believes that China will do 'whatever it takes' to keep its economy growing rapidly and pull Australia along with it.

To supply that emerging super economy and economic developments elsewhere in Asia, there are huge developments on the board in Queensland and Western Australia, and potentially the world's largest uranium mine in South Australia.

With these developments perhaps we should ponder the question: At what long term cost to our nation, our agricultural industry and our people? While the statistics and size of the developments are economically mind-boggling the end result without restrictions, safeguards, and good governance may lead to an equally mind-boggling ecological disaster.

I would now like to focus on Queensland and draw attention again to that *Weekend Australian* – 'Coal export surge a danger to Barrier Reef'. Gladstone Harbour, in the Great Barrier Reef World-Heritage listed area, is where the nation's biggest dredging operation (46 million m³ of seabed) is under way as part of the \$30bn Curtis Island LNG project. Most of this development is to satisfy the burgeoning coal seam gas industry. But there's more!

Currently Queensland ports can handle 245 million tones of coal annually but plans are underway to expand their capacity to handle 927 million tones with shipping through the Barrier Reef trebling in a few years from 2500 to 7500, all facilitated with a new generation of larger boats and larger and larger port facilities.

In March UNESCO officials will visit Australia to look at potential damage to World Heritage Listed areas including the Reef. When gazetted in 1981 all Gladstone Harbour was part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. This could be embarrassing for the Government (both State and Federal) as the

World Heritage Committee noted "with extreme concern" the approval given for developments in Gladstone.

The *Shen Neng 1*, has already run aground at Douglas Shoal near Gladstone. If the shipping and navigational regulations are not significantly tightened there may be an even bigger environmental disaster just around the corner. Gladstone Harbour is producing more and more crustaceans with deformed shells and fish with diseased eyes and red raw sores while the local fishing industry is in sharp decline with part of the industry already relocated elsewhere.

In the September *RGSQ Bulletin* I commented on the coal seam gas industry and its development at breakneck speed without proper environmental assessment, weak government regulation particularly here in Queensland, the potential environmental impact on our precious artesian basin aquifers, and the potential destruction of some of our best cropland.

Patron: H.E. Ms P Wensley AC,
Governor of Queensland
President: Mr Leo Scanlan

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Coal is not clean fuel and yet we continue to export more and more to hungry Asian markets at considerable cost to our own environment. All these developments have encouraged class-action lawyers to gain a foothold and spread the compensation net for damage to farms and businesses affected by developments on the coast and further inland as well.

My predecessor mentioned the 13 indicators of a sustainable community (*RGSQ Bulletin*, September 2010). We all aspire to a more comfortable, happy, and sustainable way of life for ourselves and future Australians but sadly we are confronted with enormous problems of our own making. Perhaps we should be looking at more public policy and citizen participation to influence our politicians (remember the "Public Participation GIS" presentation by Assoc Prof Greg Brown last October at RGSQ) in defining natural capital and community values when assessing these and other issues related to current and future developments within our community.

The views and facts mentioned here have all been reported in local media. All of these industries and developments previously mentioned are inter-related. If we are to persist with this type of unbridled development then its my view this type of behaviour is unsustainable.

I would now like to draw on a quote from a profile story (*New Zealand Geographic*, Jan-Feb 2011 edition, available in RGSQ library) by Sir Geoffrey Palmer, a Prime Minister of New Zealand for a short time. I quote: "The trouble with the environment is that it's not a temporary phenomenon: it's there for eternity, and once you've wrecked it, it's wrecked."

Leo Scanlan

New Member

We have much pleasure in welcoming Ian Lambert as a new member. We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable.

Lecture - Governor of Qld

The Society is honoured that our Patron, Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC, Governor of Queensland, has agreed to give a lecture to the Society on the occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Penelope Wensley was born in Toowoomba and completed a Bachelor of Arts degree with First Class Honours at the University of Queensland in 1967. In 1968, Ms Wensley joined the Australian Foreign service and pursued a highly distinguished career as a diplomat, representing Australia in a wide range of overseas posts and senior policy positions until 2008, when she became Queensland's twenty-fifth Governor. Among her prestigious diplomatic appointments, she served as Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations for seven years, in both Geneva and New York, as Ambassador for the Environment, High Commissioner to India and Ambassador to France.

She has been awarded honorary Doctorates by both The University of Queensland and Griffith University. In 1994, The University of Queensland named her as the first woman Alumna of the year. In 2001, Penelope was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO), for her distinguished contributions to Australia's international relations. On Australia Day 2011 she was appointed a Companion (AC) in the General Division of the Order of Australia "For eminent contribution to the people of Queensland, and to Australia's international relations through senior diplomatic representational roles and as a key contributor to initiatives of the United Nations".

Ms Wensley's life-time involvement with the promotion and protection of Australia's interests internationally, and her long and active engagement with the development of national and international responses to various global challenges, has created a deep commitment to the advancement of international understanding and cooperation, through enhanced communication, contact and exchanges between countries and cultures.

The Governor's address to the Society in 2010 to mark our 125th anniversary was a highlight of the year. You won't want to miss this presentation. Please ensure that you are seated by 7.25pm.

Christie Theatre Organ

See, hear and learn about the magnificent Christie Theatre Pipe Organ.

When: 1.45pm Sunday 5 Feb
Where: Assembly Hall, Kelvin Grove State College, Victoria Park Road, Kelvin Grove
Cost: \$5.00 per person
Book: by 2 Feb, preferably by email so we can email you back a map

Ease into the 2012 treks and activities programme with a leisurely and enjoyable afternoon at the Kelvin Grove State College Auditorium, where we will be privileged to meet with members of the Theatre Organ Society for a behind-the-scenes tour and a short recital, followed by afternoon tea.

The organ was originally installed in the Granada Theatre in Maidstone, England. After arriving in Brisbane and undergoing major refurbishment, it was located in the new auditorium in 1973. It is considered one of the best of its type in the world. For more information about the organ visit www.tosa-qld.org/organs.html.

Kay Rees

There's a Little Bit of Irish

Irish travel and tucker on St Patrick's Day.

What: Aussie nibbles and drinks, a 3-course Irish meal, slide presentation and talk
When Sat 17 Mar, 6.00 for 6.30 pm
Where: RGSQ
Cost: \$35.00 per person
Book: with the office; pay by 6 Mar

So green and fertile, Ireland is a beautiful country. Although small, there is so much for the traveller to explore. St Patrick brought Christianity to Ireland between 432 and 451 AD. Archeology includes dolmens, gallery tombs, passage

tombs, circular forts, Megalithic and early Bronze Age remains.

The scenery is magic; there are ancient religious sites; magnificent historic buildings, churches and cathedrals; national monuments; island cruises; quaint villages, national parks and much more.

My first visit was in 1984, beginning in Dublin, braving narrow and winding roads, following the coast to Galway, then zipping back to Dublin because we'd run out of time – but not places to visit. In 2002, I joined a walking group from Limerick, travelling around the coast with many adventures and collecting millions of slides and stories to share.

Bring your friends and introduce them to your Society. And wear something green.

Audrey Johnston

Commentary in the Cane Fields

Please note, this includes a visit to the prawn farm, but is **different from the 24 Feb trip** in the December Bulletin, which we were unable to organise.

You are invited to join us on a day's coach trip to tour the farmlands of the northern Gold Coast.

A local guide will provide a full commentary on the changing occupancies of land use. This includes the history of settlement, farming and industry. Learn the diverse practices of sugar cane and prawn farming visiting the Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture. There will be the opportunity to purchase local produce – so remember to bring a small esky with you!!

Experience the natural landscape and history of the Logan River, scenic southern Moreton Bay Islands and the townships.

When: Wed 21 March 2012
Depart: 8.15am Ann St, City opp Central station (old Palace Hotel/ Backpackers) or other pick-ups
Return: approx 4.45pm, Ann St, City
Price: only \$52. Includes morning tea, guided tour and lunch at a local hotel.
Book & pay: no later than 21 Feb

Bookings are already heavy so book now, and include where you will be joining and leaving the coach and your phone number.

Pick-up/return points are Brighton, Carseldine, City, Stones Corner, Upper Mt Gravatt. Members already booked also need to tell the office their pick-up point.

This promises to be a great day out!!

Jeanette Lamont

Camping Bigriggen Park

We are planning a family oriented camping weekend from **Friday 30 March to Tuesday 3 April**. The weekend has been chosen to run into the school holidays so that school aged children will be able to come.

Bigriggen Park is situated about 1½ hours drive from Brisbane and the Gold Coast, and is beautifully located on the upper reaches of the Logan River. The Park is commercially operated, and generous facilities are provided, such as a kiosk, showers, non-powered camping on level grassy sites, and bunk rooms. Small campfires are permitted and wood is available for purchase on site. Activities available include canoeing (BYO), fishing, bushwalking, swimming, or just resting. The Park's location enables easy access to Rathdowney and Beaudesert as well as scenic spots such as Maroon Dam, Mt Barney and the Border Ranges National Park.

A suggested itinerary will be available in the March *Bulletin*.

Members need to make their own online bookings for campsites at www.bigriggen.com.au. Put RGSQ in the "Group Name" box. Complete fees are shown on the website. Typically, fees for a campsite are \$8 per night/adult and \$5 per night/child. Bunk rooms (in the Bunkhouse) are also available for non-campers and the cost is about \$50 per night; each

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2012 Membership Renewal

Membership fees for 2012 were due on 1 January. According to our records, your membership has been paid up to the year shown in the top right corner of your mailing label. (For life members this space is blank.) Please contact the office if you think there may be a mistake in our records. If you have not yet paid, please circle the appropriate fee and send this in with your payment. The mailing label on the back of this sheet gives your name and address. Please correct it if there are any errors. You may like to consider making a tax-deductible donation for the Society's environmental and educational work at the same time. Thank you.

Ordinary	\$40.00
" Pensioner rate	\$25.00
Household	\$55.00
" Pensioner rate	\$35.00
Student/Junior	\$25.00
Schools/Non-profit organizations	\$55.00
Corporate	\$150.00
Life	\$400.00
Donation	\$.....
TOTAL	\$.....

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to RGSQ; or, please debit my Visa Mastercard

Card no.: _____ Exp date: _____

Cardholder name: _____ Cardholder signature: _____

Yes, I'd like my Bulletin delivered by email. My email address is: _____

bunk room holds up to 4 persons. Bookings for these rooms must be made by telephone – 5463 6190.

Due to the school holidays it is advisable to book early. Intending participants are asked to:

- i) book their accommodation directly with the Park operator (mentioning they are part of the RGSQ group) – on their website if camping, or by phone if “bunking”
- ii) register with RGSQ office and pay a registration fee of \$20 per family or \$10 per individual

It will be an enjoyable weekend.

Brian Mealey (3379 2783)

Cape Town to Victoria Falls

There are a few places left on the Society's second trip to southern Africa, from 18 August to 12 September 2012. The trip starts at the beautiful city of Cape Town and travels through Namibia and Botswana, finishing at Victoria Falls.

Highlights include: Namaualand (the famous flower wonderland in Spring); Fish River Canyon; Sossusvlei sand dunes; Namib-Naukluft National Park; Cape Cross seal colony; the Brandberg massif; Twyfelfontein (known as Namibia's largest open air art gallery); Etosha; the Western Caprivi Strip; the Okavango Delta; and Chobe National Park.

The Trek represents extremely good value at \$10,850 for 24 days. It includes all airfares (international and the flight from Victoria Falls to Johannesburg at the conclusion), accommodation, meals, excursions and entrances to many national parks and associated activities.

If you are interested, please contact Lynn Law at Travel Concepts on 3420 6397, mob 0419 779 448, for more information and a full itinerary.

This trek travels through some spectacular parts of the world. It is sure to be a most enjoyable trip in the company of like-minded members.

Leo Scanlan

RGSQ Bulletin

January 2012

Afternoon Trek, Sun 5 Feb, 1.45pm
What: Christie Theatre Organ, Kelvin Grove

Lecture, Tues 7 Feb, 7.30pm
Speaker: H.E. Ms Penelope Wensley AC,
Governor of Queensland, on the
occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's
Diamond Jubilee

Lecture, Tues 6 Mar, 7.30pm
Speaker: Assoc Prof Peter Skinner
Subject: Up the Creek: Rethinking
Brisbane's Suburban Floodplains

Social, Sat 17 Mar, 6.00pm
What: Talk and Themed Dinner - Ireland

Day Trek, Wed 21 Mar
What: Commentary in the Cane Fields

Long Weekend Trek, Mar 30 - Apr 3
What: Camp at Biggriggen

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