

Media Release

In Praise of Volunteers and keeping them Safe.

Volunteers are the backbone of our society undertaking a wide variety of activities to fill those spots that cash-strapped non-government organisations can't pay for. Most volunteers also do so for the satisfaction of a job well done and the friendships made. However it is essential that these invaluable members of our community are looked after well.

Gecko Environment Council, like all not for profit organisations, must have full insurance cover for its volunteers when they are undertaking activities whether in the office or out in the field. To ensure that the **legal requirements for managing risk with volunteers and insurance cover** Gecko has invited **Mr Darryl Ebenezer from Queensland Water and Land Carers (Qwalc)** to come along to the next **General Meeting at 6pm on July 12th at Gecko House** and fill us in on the details. Darryl promises an entertaining presentation on citizen science, risk, governance and insurance as well as recruitment, management and retention of volunteers.

Lois Levy, Gecko Campaign Coordinator said " Even though it is Origin Night the early start at 6pm will give volunteer organisers who are also football aficionados time to get home for the big game. This meeting is open to any not for profit organisation who would like to know more about risk and insurance, recruiting and retaining volunteers. Darryl has decades of experience in talking with the thousands of groups throughout Queensland who manage volunteers for a myriad of activities from bush-care, to festivals, human and animal rescue, wild care and outdoor environmental education."

A popular current issue is the growth of citizen science where by ordinary community folk take on research that can add to the body of knowledge about aspects of nature or other science endeavours. Gecko and the Surfrider Foundation are partners in the Clean Creeks citizen science project which is gathering information on water bugs, or macroinvertebrates, to determine the health of our creeks. The project requires training and managing the volunteers on a regular basis and the duty of care to these volunteers is taken very seriously. The results of this work is fed into Council data base and assists in determining what actions are needed to keep our creeks healthy.

Even community groups who do not focus on environmental activities will gain from hearing from Darryl and Gecko welcomes them all.

Darryl Ebenezer brings to the Voluntary Environment and Landcare movements his extensive experience in the non-Government and environment sectors. Prior to his role with Queensland Water and Land Carers he was with Landcare Queensland as General Manager. He was also the manager of Barung Landcare for 6 years, based in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. Two main areas have occupied Darryl's attention over the long-term – activating and mobilising people to become involved in worthwhile activities and projects within their communities and seeking long-term sustainable outcomes to assist people to achieve those aims. He is actively involved in his local community, enjoys a good coffee and likes to hear about, and be inspired by ideas.

Please contact Gecko 5534 1412 and book your place. Light refreshments will be available.

For further information contact: Lois Levy 0412 724 222.

Darryl Ebenezer 0407 696 792