Despina Filippaki, the Convener of the Green Social Work practice group, shared updates from the divestment campaigns that took place in a number of Australian universities in mid-April and its significance both for the divestment movement and the transition movement.

Many universities are funding industries who are contributing to climate change. Despina noted that it is the right time to join student and environmental collectives across Australian campuses and send a clear message to big corporations and universities.

Despina also shared her excitement with having a representative from Healthy Futures attending Green Social Work’s May meeting and discussed about her involvement with the organization.

Lucy Foley, a member of the Green Social Work Practice Group working in community mental health, shared a current event, The Human Rights and Arts Film Festival, which is on currently until the 8th of June.

Films she recommended that have an environment theme include 'The True Cost', which explores the effects of globalized production caused from ‘fast fashion’, 'This Changes Everything', which presents several powerful portraits of communities on the front lines of climate activism, and ‘Landgrabbing’, looking the impact of contentious land acquisition.

For more information see: http://2016.hraff.org.au/
Kate Lardner, a representative from Healthy Futures, shared with us her work at the Medical Association. The working group which she and other doctors are currently attempting to establish has a lot of similarities with the scope of our Green Social Work practice group and aims to raise awareness of environmental issues that affect public health within the medical profession.

Kate and Despina also spoke about the annual ANMF Health and Environmental Sustainability Conference which took place on Friday the 29th April in Melbourne. Healthy Futures members raised awareness around unethical investments super funds make and encouraged participants to have healthy debates with their super funds around ethical and sustainable investments.

Healthy Futures is an affiliate of Friends of the Earth Australia.

For more information, check out their website: http://www.healthyfutures.net.au/divest

Hugo Otalora, a representative from Annecto, shared his experiences after attending The Spanish Film Festival. Hugo recommended the Colombian film the Embrace of the Serpent.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the ethnologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg arrived in the Amazon intending to study its indigenous people. A few dozen years later, the North American biologist Richard Evan Schultes appeared in the jungle to study plants used by the same indigenous population. These two true stories are the point of departure for the Embrace of the Serpent.

The bulk of the film is devoted to dreamlike exploration, observing the folklore of individual tribes and learning about their greater spiritual belief system. This film pays tribute to the lost cultures and civilizations of the Colombian Amazon.

For a trailer of the film, please follow the link bellow: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ff7TcnqH1c
Lisa Sulinski shared a project developed by the Victorian National Parks Association of which Lisa is a long-term member. The working group in which Lisa participates, has organised a series of Skill Up for Nature workshops to build leadership skills in engaging diverse groups with nature-based activities.

This aims to increase the knowledge of volunteer activity leaders to effectively engage and support diverse participation in nature through families, elderly people, and multicultural audiences.

The working group aims to promote the importance of natural environments in urban communities and remote areas, and to encourage participation in conservation programs to preserve natural areas.

For more information on this working group, follow the links bellow:

Lisa has also attended some information sessions run by the Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy which aims to promote wellness and recovery through therapeutic programs combining adventure and outdoor environments.

Various groups use the techniques learnt through AABT, such as narrative therapy, mindfulness, forest immersion and bush adventure, to improve mental health and treat stress and depression. Upcoming forums and workshop are listed on the website:

Lisa's involvement in these workshops aims to build knowledge of the potential connections between nature appreciation, mental and physical health, and social capital.