

Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health

WATCHWORD 22.1.20

WATCH news

A message from WATCH chair Lauriston Muirhead

Firstly, our collective WATCH heart goes out to all those who have lost so much to fire and smoke and to all those who work so hard to minimise those losses. We, and the wider climate advocacy network, have obviously not made the situation clear enough to our (so-called) leaders - particularly here in Australia. A "whole of society" approach is needed to reinforce this latest message from nature to move our leaders to take appropriate action on man-made climate change according to the science. We all have a right to a safe climate but that comes with a responsibility to do something about it.

This is not the "new normal". That would imply we have reached a steady state but sadly that is wishful thinking. Yes, there is variability, but the science is clear: rising emissions mean rising global temperature. If we continue with weak action, we will see even worse heat, fires and other impacts of man-made climate change. However, as Bob Brown says, "Don't get depressed, get active!" Let's make this a tipping point year when action outweighs inaction.

Public Hearing

The Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee of the Parliament Victoria is conducting an Inquiry into community action on climate change. Lizette Salmon sent a submission on behalf of WATCH and will be speaking at their public hearing in Wangaratta on Thursday 13th February.

WATCH meetings

WATCH meetings occur every quarter, usually in central Albury. Anyone is most welcome to attend. The next meeting will be at 6pm on Tuesday March 24th. Contact Lizette to be advised of the venue: lizette@salmonfamily.id.au

National events

National Climate Emergency Summit, February 14 – 15, Town Hall, Melbourne

Several WATCH members will be attending the National Climate Emergency Summit. This collaborative two-day event will unpack what a climate emergency response could look like at local, national, and global levels. Register now: <https://www.climateemergencysummit.org/>

Peoples' Climate Assembly, February 2 - 6, Parliament House, Canberra

A four-day event starting Sunday morning to urge parliament to take action to address the climate emergency. For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1026151234405628/>

The bushfire crisis

Statement regarding Australian bushfires | Australian Academy of Science

The scientific evidence base shows that as the world warms due to human induced climate change, we experience an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

<https://www.science.org.au/news-and-events/news-and-media-releases/statement-regarding-australian-bushfires?>

Ross Garnaut's climate change prophecy is coming true

Twelve years ago, economist Ross Garnaut made a prophecy that has devastatingly come true.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-08/economic-bushfires-billions-ross-garnaut-climate-change/11848388?>

Greg Mullins, former NSW Fire Commissioner talks tough on bushfire response

Former NSW Fire and Rescue Commissioner, Greg Mullins, has long been campaigning to get more resources for firefighters and has strong views on what governmental responses to the current bushfire crisis should be.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/sydney/programs/breakfast/greg-mullins-bushfires/11839122>

Albury councillor Amanda Cohn says Greens did not create the bushfire disaster

"The Greens do not oppose hazard reduction burning, and this is not a recent policy change," she said. "After devastating fires in Tasmania in 2013 our senators were among those calling for increased resources for hazard reduction burns."

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6579339/amanda-cohn-says-greens-did-not-create-the-bushfire-disaster/>

Letter-writing

Contact your Federal MP

Helen Haines and Sussan Ley need to know how individuals are feeling in their electorate. Please write a letter or send an email.

Letter-writing tips

The links on this page may be useful: <https://watch.id.au/meetings-letter-writing/>

Useful addresses

Helen Haines, Federal member for Indi Helen.Haines.MP@aph.gov.au
117 Murphy St Wangaratta 3677. Phone (03) 5721 7077

Sussan Ley, Federal member for Farrer Sussan.Ley.MP@aph.gov.au
517 Kiewa St (PO Box 672) Albury NSW 2640. Phone (02) 6021 3264

Border Mail letters@bordermail.com.au

Border Mail highlights

Apologies to those who do not subscribe and cannot read these excellent letters and articles we but hope you will be heartened by the efforts of those who are keeping the pressure on.

Editorial

January 1st – ‘Together we can make the change’

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6560348/we-say-together-we-can-make-the-change/?cs=9941>

Letters to the editor

The letters have been flowing thick and fast during the past few weeks. Here are some links:

January 18th ‘This isn’t good enough’ – Ray Gawen

January 17th ‘Same old rubbish’ – Geoff Brown. And ‘High price to pay’ - Graham Parton.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6581062/your-say-drop-the-same-old-lines-and-look-at-the-facts/?cs=9940>

January 16th ‘Listen to the facts’ – Mary Tapsall. <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6579459/your-say-blaming-the-greens-a-deflection-from-the-facts/?cs=9940>

January 9th ‘It’s our fault, actually’ - Chris Lehmann. And ‘Ignoring the facts’ - Rob Cadell.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6569322/your-say-its-not-pms-fault-we-all-created-this-mess/?cs=9940>

December 31st ‘Smoking-out the facts’ - Graham Parton. <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6560734/your-say-clinic-will-be-missed-after-decades-of-service/?cs=9940>

December 30th ‘Evidence is clear’ - David Thurley. <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6560277/your-say-mcgowan-inconsistent-on-detention-centre-conditions/?cs=9940>

December 28th ‘Work together to prevent bushfires’ – David Macilwain. And ‘The science is in’ – Lauriston Muirhead. <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6556718/your-say-work-together-to-prevent-bushfires/?cs=9940>

December 23rd ‘Climate a global issue’ – Lauriston Muirhead. And ‘In defence of Greta’ – Kevin Rocks.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6555169/you-say-father-lees-view-on-thunberg-contradicts-the-pope/?cs=9940>

#StopAdani Albury Wodonga (SAAW)

‘Join the dots between coal and fires’

There was a great article in the Border Mail on our Big Letters Walk last Saturday. Congratulations to Alison Veld for her terrific banner and interview with the Border. Here’s the link <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6586875/join-the-dots-between-coal-and-fires/?> For photos please visit the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StopAdaniAlburyWodonga/>

Next Big Letters Walk, Saturday February 15th, 10am, Wodonga

Meet at Junction Place near the Goods Shed parking area. For further details, contact Les Langmead leslangmead@gmail.com

Knitting Nannas for Renewables

Knitting Nannas meet in Albury every Thursday, 12.30 to 1.30pm. During January, they will be in the shade in QEII Square near the Dean St Bus stop. Please contact Jenni Huber on 0410 074 900 or jenniferruthhuber@gmail.com to check the location.

Next SAAW meeting – Thursday February 6th 6 - 7.30 pm

Meet at the Sustainable Activity Centre SAC, Gateway Island, Wodonga. For further information and to receive the StopAdani Albury-Wodonga newsletter, contact Tracie Esler tesesler@gmail.com

Extinction Rebellion Albury Wodonga

Extinction Rebellion Albury-Wodonga makes it to the front page of The Border Mail!

Well done to XRAW for making the front page and a detailed story inside.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6556557/shoppers-hear-santa-tell-of-climate-impact/>

Next meeting - Tuesday 28th January

For details of venue please contact xralburywodonga@gmail.com. Check the Facebook page for news and videos:

<https://www.facebook.com/Extinction-Rebellion-AlburyWodonga>

Ecoportal

<http://www.ecoportal.net.au>

Ecoportal is your online directory, listing groups and events for sustainable living in Albury-Wodonga, North East Victoria and Southern New South Wales. Follow Ecoportal on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Ecoportal.net.au?fref=nf>

Living Lightly

Living Lightly is published every Wednesday in the Border Mail and published on the Ecoportal website <http://ecoportal.net.au/articles/>. It is a wonderful way to connect with people who have similar conservation and environmental values. If you have a 380 word article you'd like to share, please send it to Lauren Salathiel at l.salathiel@gmail.com

Recent articles

[Overcome anxiety by taking action](#) By Dr Juliette Milbank

[Lighting the spark for climate action](#) By Lauren Salathiel

[On the search for garden delights](#) By Di Pritchard

Focus on wildlife

Kangaloola Wildlife Shelter: fewer animals appear to be surviving fire

A 'cascade of environmental changes' have resulted in more animals dying in the current bushfires than previous blazes, a wildlife rescuer says. [Kangaloola Wildlife Shelter Inc.'s](#) Chris Lehmann said no burnt or injured animals have emerged from the Corryong fire - but that wasn't necessarily good news.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6583383/environmental-change-causes-desperate-wildlife-to-seek-human-help-rescue/>

'Silent death': Australia's bushfires push countless species to extinction

Millions of animals have been killed in the fires but the impact on flora and fauna is more grim even than individual deaths. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/04/ecologists-warn-silent-death-australia-bushfires-endangered-species-extinction?>

Time needed to assess full extent of habitat and wildlife loss: Ley - RN Breakfast

Sussan Ley says that it will take time to assess how many animals have actually been killed.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/time-needed-to-assess-full-extent-of-habitat-wildlife-loss-fire/11857300>

Complexities of fuel and fire

Are hazard reduction burns effective in managing bushfires?

Research has shown that during catastrophic fire conditions, hazard reduction burns do little to mitigate the intensity and spread of a fire. <https://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-20/hazard-reduction-burns-bushfires/11817336?>

Fuel reduction burning

Here is a comprehensive report from a parliamentary committee back in 2002/3.

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/cib0203/03Cib08

Could Indigenous cultural burning help save homes in future fires? - RN Breakfast

A terrific interview with Den Barber, founder, Koori Country Firesticks.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/could-indigenous-cultural-burning-help-save-homes-in-fires/11850906>

Opinion pieces

Sir David Attenborough hits out at Australia's climate platform

Noting the destruction prompted by Australia's wave of bushfires, Sir David criticised Canberra's approach to climate change, saying the government's support of coal mines suggested it does not care about the environment.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/sir-david-attenborough-hits-out-at-australia-s-climate-platform-amid-global-moment-of-crisis?>

Do not allow this summer of destruction to become our destiny - Helen Haines

'When I stood for election last year, I promised to fight for three things: the regeneration of our regions; a national action plan to mitigate and prepare for climate disruption; and to return integrity to our broken politics. Indi voted for renewal, action and integrity. And we will need each of these if we are to find the phoenix in this fire.' A terrific opinion piece from our local member.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6579959/dont-allow-this-summer-of-destruction-to-become-our-destiny-opinion/?cs=9683>

Welcome aboard, denialists: now let's stop fiddling and start fixing – David Watson

An excellent article by David Watson, Professor of Ecology at Charles Sturt University.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/welcome-aboard-denialists-now-let-s-stop-fiddling-and-start-fixing-20200117-p53say.html>

Why Australians must rage at the Prime Minister - Sarah Wilson

A rundown of why Scott Morrison must be held to account...

<http://www.sarahwilson.com/2020/01/australians-raging-prime-minister-scomo-us-confused-allowed/>

Climate emergency updates

Weather bureau says hottest, driest year on record led to extreme bushfire season

The Bureau of Meteorology's [annual climate statement](#) confirms 2019 was the nation's warmest and driest year on record. <https://theconversation.com/weather-bureau-says-hottest-driest-year-on-record-led-to-extreme-bushfire-season-129447?>

Dutch supreme court upholds landmark ruling demanding climate action

The Netherlands' supreme court ruled that the government had explicit duties to protect its citizens' human rights in the face of climate change. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/20/dutch-supreme-court-upholds-landmark-ruling-demanding-climate-action?>

The Murdoch press

How Rupert Murdoch is influencing Australia's bushfire debate

Critics see a concerted effort to shift blame, protect conservative leaders and divert attention from climate change.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2020/01/09/ruPERT-murdoch-bushfire-debate/?>

James Murdoch criticises father's news outlets for climate crisis denial

Rupert Murdoch's son has strongly criticised his family's news outlets for downplaying the impact of the climate crisis, as bushfires continue to burn in Australia. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2020/jan/14/james-murdoch-criticises-fathers-news-outlets-for-climate-crisis-denial?>

Be aware...

Lies, myths, and disinformation are being spread about hazard reduction burnings

Experts like RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons have set the record straight on the realities and complexities of firefighting. https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10156585564926455&id=13527056454

The truth about Australia's fires — arsonists aren't responsible for many this season

Only about 1 per cent of the land burnt in NSW this bushfire season can be officially attributed to arson, and it is even less in Victoria. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-11/australias-fires-reveal-arson-not-a-major-cause/11855022?>

Bots and trolls spread false arson claims in Australian fires 'disinformation campaign'

The false claims are, in some cases, used to undermine the link between the current bushfires and the longer, more intense fire seasons brought about by climate change.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jan/08/twitter-bots-trolls-australian-bushfires-social-media-disinformation-campaign-false-claims>

What can we do?

Coping with climate distress

Resources from Environment Victoria to help build resilience, manage difficult emotions and stay engaged throughout the bushfire crisis. [https://environmentvictoria.org.au/2020/01/15/coping-with-climate-distress/?](https://environmentvictoria.org.au/2020/01/15/coping-with-climate-distress/)

Grow Free, Seed Savers call for seed donations for bushfire

The aim of this project is to distribute seed boxes containing a variety of food and flower seeds packets to fire affected communities during late February and March. Visit the [Grow Free Albury-Wodonga](#) or [Sustainable Activity Centre](#) Facebook page to find out how to create a seed box and where the drop off points are.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6580514/need-for-seeds-for-bushfire-recovery/?cs=9686>

Bushfire message from Parklands

Some thoughts and ideas to follow up from Parklands Albury Wodonga. https://www.parklands-alburywodonga.org.au/news-events/latest-news/PL_16-January-20_2067.asp

NRM update

This update from NECMA focuses on bushfire updates and recovery planning, where to find help and general advice. <https://mailchi.mp/necma/nrm-update-bushfire-information-8-january-2020?>

The power of song

Vanuatu choir in Wagga Wagga

A group of apple pickers from Vanuatu uses its collective voice to say thank you to the Wagga Wagga community.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=3075395245813437&id=125982670754724

Students sing to save the planet

Wonderful video from Torquay Girls' Grammar School:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR3y79iBOMf1-34uJSXUvJrNoJ8BzviruKdA3bFn4JY2EzEIW0PdpVtO5p0&v=XCC0DIIEQSI&feature=share>

Thankyou...

Thanks again to friends and supporters who have provided content for this newsletter including those who regularly send links, write *Living Lightly* articles or letters to the editor. They are all much appreciated! The next newsletter is due out on February 19th.

WATCH email address: watch.albwod@gmail.com

WATCH website: www.watch.id.au

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/wodongaandalburytowardclimatehealth>

Warm regards,

Jenny Davies