

Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health

WATCHWORD 22.4.20

WATCH news

Our thoughts are with you as we adjust in response to the current health crisis. Climate advocacy groups are amending their approach and considering how they can be most effective online. Although COVID-19 is preoccupying us, we mustn't forget climate change; it's a much greater long-term threat than COVID, yet while our attention is focused elsewhere our governments are surreptitiously passing legislation that will increase emissions.

If you have any local campaign ideas, please send them through. In the meantime, remember to write letters to the editor (letters@bordermail.com.au), and *Living Lightly* articles. Also, use social media to ensure our government and society doesn't forget about climate change over coming weeks and months.

WATCH meetings

Due to the coronavirus situation, a small group of us trialled a virtual meeting using Zoom on Friday April 3rd. Guest speaker Annette Baker discussed her plans to host a climate forum in mid-August featuring the mayor Darebin Council, Cr Trent McCarthy. This will most likely be changed to a virtual forum. Well done to Annette for getting this initiative up and running despite all the challenges of the coronavirus.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6698519/border-called-to-wake-up-and-declare-on-nations-climate-emergency/?cs=9686>

Climate impacts database

WATCH has received several reports of unseasonal flowering of several plant species including pear and apple trees. These observations have been documented on our climate impacts database and summarised on recent WATCH Facebook posts. <https://watch.id.au/local-climate-impacts/> Please contact Lizette if you have any other observations to add to the list. lizette@salmonfamily.id.au

Market Forces and Westpac

WATCH was a signatory to an important letter to Westpac's new CEO, Peter King. Market Forces and the Australian Conservation Foundation prepared an open letter to Mr King, asking Westpac to be the first of Australia's "big four" banks to rule out financing the expansion of the fossil fuel industry.

WATCH was one of more than 50 signatories. You can see the version that was sent to Westpac [here](#) and here's a link to an article in The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/apr/15/westpac-urged-to-stop-supporting-projects-that-boost-fossil-fuel-industry>

Letter in the Border Mail

13th April 'Listen to reef warnings' - David Sloane

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6717934/your-say-get-a-flu-vaccine-and-listen-to-reef-warnings/?cs=9940>

Facebook

Check the WATCH Facebook page for stories, photos and comments from those who attended the recent climate summit: <https://m.facebook.com/pg/wodongaandalburytowardclimatehealth/posts/>

Cause for concern

Snow-white coral of once-vibrant Great Barrier Reef a sign urgent action must be taken

A plan for net-zero emissions combined with a new diplomatic effort is Australia's best chance at saving the reef for future generations. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/08/snow-white-coral-of-once-vibrant-great-barrier-reef-a-sign-urgent-action-must-be-taken?>

Victoria gives green light to conventional onshore gas exploration but bans fracking

The Andrews Government will introduce new laws into State Parliament to allow for an "orderly restart" of drilling for gas reserves underground from July 2021.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-17/victoria-lifts-ban-on-onshore-gas-exploration-but-bans-fracking/12063196>

Victorian gas fields seven times more polluting than estimate, think tank says

The true climate impact of new onshore gas exploration and extraction has been underestimated by as much as seven times because the Victorian government excluded emissions produced when the gas is burnt.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/gas-fields-seven-times-more-polluting-than-estimate-think-tank-says-20200414-p54ju5.html?>

Fears for water quality after NSW allows coalmining extension under Sydney's Woronora reservoir

The Berejiklian government has given the green light to Peabody Energy to extract coal beneath reservoir for its Metropolitan mine. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/31/fears-for-water-quality-after-nsw-allows-coalmining-extension-under-sydneys-worona-reservoir?>

Please sign the Greenpeace petition to protect NSW drinking water:

<https://act.greenpeace.org.au/NSWmining?>

Climate emergency updates

Trent McCarthy

Here's a link to Trent McCarthy's presentation at the recent National Climate Emergency Summit. The session is one - hour long and Trent's presentation is at 20:53 minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xw5KBbubkvl&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR3T0SnybevsGP6GV>

National Climate Emergency Summit - videos and podcasts

The NCE Summit Videos & Podcasts are available here: <https://mailchi.mp/df4bcee0bcf4/beyond-the-declarations-504411?e=efb5b08ab9>

Greater Shepparton City Council declares a climate emergency

Greater Shepparton City Council has declared a climate emergency and will spend the next 10 years targeting zero emissions.

<https://www.sheppnews.com.au/news/2020/04/01/1110730/council-declares-a-climate-emergency?>

Climate action

School Strike 4 Climate (SS4C)

Albury Wodonga School Strike for Climate Action group is holding a virtual panel discussion on COVID 19 and Climate, to be held on Friday 15th May. Check details here:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/154957222518682/>

Climate Change Bill

Independent member for Warringah Zali Steggall has decided to defer presentation of the Climate Change Bill to a later date. News of the update [is found here](#). But you can still vote to support it. Please [sign up here](#). At the last count, Indi has 777 votes, one of the highest in Victoria and slightly more than Adelaide at 766, with Farrer at 254 votes. Cooper, formerly known as Batman, has over 1000 votes so let's try to compete! Please add your voice now.

NSW EPA to be sued over climate response by bushfire survivors

[Environmental Defenders Office](#) EDO chief executive David Morris said the case would seek to force the EPA, which does not have a climate policy, to use its powers to keep communities safe from the increasingly severe impacts of a warming world. <https://www.theage.com.au/environment/climate-change/kick-them-into-action-fire-group-takes-epa-to-court-over-climate-20200418-p54kzl.html?>

#StopAdani Albury Wodonga (SAAW)

Adani news

Please stay up to date with Adani news on the SAAW Facebook page, to follow and comment and generally help keep the issue front of mind. Adani is forging on with the project despite calls (even from Matthew Canavan) to cease work to protect all the fly-in fly-out workers and the many, many communities they all travel to and from.

Online actions re Marsh

Marsh still appears to be acting to source insurance for the Adani project. We know, thanks to [this](#) article, that Marsh is creating a "new global position on coal projects". We also know that the AGM is on May 21st. Now is the time to pile the pressure onto Marsh while the position is being formed. Here are some online actions you can take: <https://www.stopadani.com/marsh>

Stay in touch

The next meeting has been postponed until 6pm, Thursday 2nd July. This will, of course, be subject to what is happening with COVID 19. For more information contact Tracey Esler tesesler@gmail.com.

For all updates visit the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StopAdaniAlburyWodonga/>

Community energy

Indigo Power

Indigo Power is a local community energy retailer. It employs local people and will invest half of any profits in renewable energy projects in our local communities. Watch this great little video where Ben McGowan tells the story behind Indigo Power;

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=835423550292364&id=590525414782180

Some good news! Indigo Power has just met its target for the first public share offer. The target was met in four days, 17 days before the deadline. You can find out more about how to [join in by watching this short webinar presentation](#). To find out more about Indigo Power, to sign up or become a shareholder, check the website <https://indigopower.com.au> or call 1800 491 739 or email us at connect@indigopower.com.au

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>

Most of the Ecoportal events in April and May have been cancelled or postponed. However, some groups are operating in other ways, such as online, so please keep an eye on the calendar. Follow the link at ecoportal.net.au/events.

Mushroom discovery online workshop - Saturday 2 May, 10:30am to 12pm

This online workshop introduces participants to the diversity, ecology and curiosities of the Kingdom Fungi. Participants will learn the basic skills in identifying fungi through demonstration of techniques and by using their own specimens.

https://www.trybooking.com/book/event?eid=622516&fbclid=IwAR31J6V1KNn_cBsMscwGCQCPx_jqjElug_2dGJKBjv46waMQiobzdP3o6Ho

Living Lightly

Such a great time to write an article! **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. Articles should be submitted to the *Living Lightly* coordinator, Lauren Salathiel: l.salathiel@gmail.com

Living Lightly guidelines

Articles are 380 words in length and written in conversational style. If possible, please include a good quality, high resolution photo. You don't need to think of a catchy title for your article - The Border Mail will create their own title depending on the available space. Please include your name and any group(s) you might be affiliated with. To get a feel for past *Living Lightly* articles, they're archived here:

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

Recent articles

[Frog chorus](#) By John Whale

[Love in the time of coronavirus](#) By Kirsten Coates

[We don't want to return to normal – we want better](#) By Graham Parton

[Know where your food comes from](#) By Jade Miles, Black Barn Farm

COVID 19

'It's positively alpine!': Disbelief in big cities as air pollution falls

Delhi is one of many capitals enjoying improved air quality since restrictions were introduced due to the coronavirus. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/11/positively-alpine-disbelief-air-pollution-falls-lockdown-coronavirus?>

Cop26 climate talks in Glasgow postponed until 2021

Crucial UN conference will be delayed until next year as a result of the coronavirus crisis.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/01/uk-likely-to-postpone-cop26-un-climate-talks-glasgow-coronavirus?>

Emissions

Victorian emissions target decision likely delayed by coronavirus crisis

As part of *Environment Victoria's* campaign, 285 businesses and organisations have signed an open letter urging Premier Daniel Andrews to [lift his ambition](#) on climate. The campaign will continue through the pandemic, as the Victorian state government has indicated the [decision on emissions targets](#) will be delayed. For more information and instructions on calling the Premier, go to this link:

<https://environmentvictoria.org.au/targets/>

Nearly one in five of Australia's big polluters breach government-set emissions limits

38 of the 210 mines, smelters, refineries and other industrial facilities covered by the federal government's "safeguard mechanism" policy exceeded previous pollution limits based on historic or projected emissions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/apr/01/nearly-one-in-five-of-australias-big-polluters-breach-government-set-emissions-limits?>

EU presses on with tighter 2030 climate target despite pandemic

The European Commission has begun a public consultation to gather views until June 23 on its options to tighten the EU's 2030 target to a 50% or 55% cut in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels, from the current 40%. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-eu/eu-presses-on-with-tighter-2030-climate-target-despite-pandemic-idUSKBN211386?>

Wildlife matters

ABC Radio School: Become a nature detective with Costa Georgiadis

Gardening Australia's Costa Georgiadis takes kids on a trip into the garden to become nature detectives!

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/coffscoast/programs/breakfast/radio-school-costa/12088372?>

What's in your backyard? - Junior Landcare

And another great suggestion from Costa: <https://juniorlandcare.org.au/campaigns/whatsinyourbackyard/?>

Kangaloola wildlife rescue volunteers limited in face of coronavirus and travel ban

Kangaloola's Chris Lehmann said the rescue shelter usually has four overseas volunteers at any given time, but since late February volunteers had been cancelled.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6721497/small-number-of-dedicated-volunteers-determined-to-keep-rescue-going/?>

Opinion pieces

Global disregard for nature brought on coronavirus pandemic - Jane Goodall

Renowned conservationist and activist Dr Jane Goodall is hoping the coronavirus pandemic will be a wake-up call, warning the crisis is a result of human disregard for nature and animals.

<https://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-11/jane-goodall-says-disregard-for-nature-has-brought-coronavirus/12142246?>

How permaculture-designed household isolation can lead to RetroSuburbia – David Holmgren

Some thoughts from one of the founders of the permaculture movement: <https://holmgren.com.au/the-problem-is-the-solution-how-permaculture-designed-household-isolation-can-lead-to-retrosurbia/?>

COVID-19 is nature's wake-up call to complacent civilisation - George Monbiot

A bubble has finally been burst – but will we now attend to the other threats facing humanity?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/mar/25/covid-19-is-natures-wake-up-call-to-complacent-civilisation?>

Good news!

Karen Retra on Gardening Australia

Did you see Karen Retra talking about pollinator insects?? If not, please watch. She did a brilliant job!

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/a-house-in-the-sticks/12117682?>

And finally..

Zeke would like to be your daily reminder to wash your hands

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2796033340516584&id=100003298370117

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 May 20th.

WATCH email address: watch.albwod@gmail.com

WATCH website: www.watch.id.au

Warm regards,

Jenny Davies