

Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health

WATCHWORD 17.6.20

WATCH news

Submission to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry

WATCH and many other organisations are concerned about the system of governance Australia is using to emerge from COVID-19. Specifically, that the National COVID-19 Coordination Commission (NCCC) and National Cabinet, which weren't established under statute, have unclear lines of accountability and lack independent appointment processes. WATCH member Jill Coghlan has made a submission to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into the Government's response to the pandemic, on our behalf.

Replace Hazelwood event back in July 2010

It's almost ten years to the month that we gathered around a huge Hazelwood cake at La Trobe University and spoke of the need to replace this filthy coal-fired power station. Thanks to those who attended on the day and for those of you who continue fighting for climate action. Watch this video of the Hazelwood Power Station chimneys being demolished in a controlled explosion: <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/watch-live-hazelwood-power-station-set-to-be-demolished-20200525-p54w4g.html>

Letters in the Border Mail

This has been a bumper month with several letters from our supporters being published but very few with links.

'*On climate, it is what it is*'. Graham Parton's letter, published on June 5th, was in agreement with Marjorie Glanville's letter about the climate emergency '*Nothing alarmist about it*', published on June 3rd. David Thurley commented on both letters, '*Not a tantrum or whim*' published on June 6th. <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6752306/your-say-our-decisions-not-based-on-tantrums-or-whims/?cs=9940>

May 23rd 'Smelling a rat in process'. Greg Oates commented on the composition of the National COVID -19 Commission NCCC and, in a similar vein, Lizette Salmon explained where she obtained her information on the NCCC:

June 1st 'Fossil fuel link still a concern'.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6775555/your-say-independents-irrelevant-for-national-cabinet/?cs=9940>

May 30th 'Our hopes are dashed'. Lauriston Muirhead commented on Angus Taylor's plan to transition from coal to gas.

Facebook

Check the WATCH Facebook page for stories, photos and comments:

<https://m.facebook.com/pg/wodongaandalburytowardclimatehealth/posts/>

Take action

Don't let the fossil fuel companies pull the strings

The unelected National COVID-19 Coordination Commission has taken the front seat in policy making. Sign the petition and demand transparency in decision-making: <http://getup.to/8oWGkUmxBhzrjhW>

No 'gas-fired recovery'

A "gas-fired recovery" would increase emissions and energy costs and squander Australia's recovery spending. Sign The Australia Institute petition here: http://nb.tai.org.au/renewables_led_recovery?recruiter_id=314030

Cause for concern

'Some things were out of bounds': Fire chiefs 'gagged' on climate change warnings to government, inquiry told

Decorated former firefighter and climate action advocate Greg Mullins says current fire chiefs have been effectively gagged from raising the bushfire risks created by global warming with politicians.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/some-things-were-out-of-bounds-fire-chiefs-gagged-on-climate-change-warnings-to-government-commission-told-20200527-p54wxv.html?>

'Collapse of civilisation is the most likely outcome': top climate scientists

The world's most eminent climate scientists and biologists believe we're headed for the collapse of civilisation, and it may already be too late to change course. <https://voiceofaction.org/collapse-of-civilisation-is-the-most-likely-outcome-top-climate-scientists/>

Our local politicians

Helen Haines, Federal member for Indi

Helen has been engaging with community energy groups via webinars to hear thoughts on what the Government could be doing to support community-owned renewables in this country. Here is a link to Helen's paper: 'Launching a renewable energy plan for regional Australia'. She is seeking comment from the community:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cb8b5b02f0054b43871a338074a4cb23> . Send in a submission by July 3rd to hamish.mckenzie@aph.gov.au.

Sussan Ley, Federal member for Farrer

School Strike for Climate SS4C members Eli Davern and Natasha met with Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley in an online interview. Ms Ley acknowledged that climate change is the number one challenge to our Great Barrier Reef, bushfires and drought, but reiterated old arguments about Australia only producing 1.4% of the world's emissions and Australia's coal being better quality than elsewhere. To see the complete interview with Sussan, please visit the SS4C Facebook page. Questions about climate change and the environment commence at approximately 9:10 into the recording. https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=120630656321297&id=106511547733208

After the meeting, Lizette wrote a letter to Sussan Ley on behalf of WATCH, asking her to strengthen the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act and to develop a coronavirus recovery package for people and the planet.

Local council news

Albury councillors reject use of 'climate emergency' in statement acknowledging need for environmental action

A motion to have Albury Council acknowledge a "climate emergency" has been scuttled after claims such language was "alarmist" and "unnecessary". Instead councillors agreed firstly to recognise "that climate change is one of the most significant issues that will impact the social, cultural, economic and environmental health and well-being of our community" and "act accordingly with all" council policies and programs. Secondly, they have "committed to promoting the reduction of carbon emissions, to support our community and businesses to be climate ready and to facilitate practices of regeneration, stewardship and sustainability for our city".

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6770161/councillors-say-no-to-using-climate-emergency-wording/>

Council pages on Facebook

Wodonga and Albury Councils get few 'likes' and reactions to Facebook stories about initiatives to address climate change. This has led them to think residents aren't interested in the issue. We encourage everyone to follow the Albury and Wodonga Facebook pages and respond to posts about renewable energy, energy efficiency etc.

Albury City: <https://m.facebook.com/AlburyCity/>

Wodonga Council: <https://m.facebook.com/wodongacouncil/>

#StopAdani Albury Wodonga (SAAW)

Change in our SAAW leadership

SAAW's beloved and respected convenor, Tracey Esler, has stepped down after a mammoth effort over the last three and a half years. She has led the group in the many local actions and campaigns. Inspired by her energy, dedication and passion, SAAW has made an amazing contribution to the national campaign. Thankyou Tracey! Jenni Huber, Barb Martin, Alison Veld and Meg Shiels will be the new co-convenors. Together, they will work to lead the movement, bolstered by the many wonderful committed members and supporters.

Adani news

Adani continues to engage new contractors, clear bush and construct worker accommodation for the rail line. Last week BMD was awarded a \$350 million contract for the second part of the rail. There is evidence of more land clearing on the mine site and other activities. There are a range of actions planned nationally and an opportunity for locals to discuss the most effective ways we can push back against this climate destroying mine.

Knitting Nannas for Renewables

Knitting Nannas are back meeting every Thursday from 12.30pm to 1.30pm in QEII Square, carefully socially distancing. Everyone is welcome; BYO your own chair and your knitting if you have some. We continue to knit rugs and donate them to local charities. Contact Alison Veld alison.veld@gmail.com or Liz Hammond 0429 177 681.

Online committee meeting, Thursday 2nd July

Due to COVID 19, the July committee meeting will be held online. Alison Veld will send out invitations or contact her on alison.veld@gmail.com. For all updates visit the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/StopAdaniAlburyWodonga/>

ACF Community Albury Wodonga region

This new group is continuing to grow and is currently organising meetings with the local Federal MPs to discuss the ACF Campaigns. The next regular ACF community online meeting is on July 4th so please register at [Meeting registration](#). These meetings are normally held on the first Saturday of the month. Please get in touch with us by e-mail at acf.awr@gmail.com and like our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/512119632769926>

Extinction Rebellion – local groups

North East Extinction Rebellion meeting (NEXR)

The recently formed North East Victorian group of Extinction Rebellion have organised an event which will take place on June 27th in Beechworth from 10am until 1pm. The street kiosk will be used as an information centre with other activities also planned around the town. Anyone interested in knowing more or wishing to join the group can contact Bernie Jovaras on 0438281928 or by email at NEvicxr@protonmail.com

AlburyWodonga XR

XR VIC have called Saturday June 20th a day of action. AWXR will follow their lead and gather for a bike ride in QE2 Square at 1.45pm. Wear your t-shirts and bring your placards. Contact Rachel Buchan for details:

rachelbuchan@hotmail.com

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. With the gradual relaxing of restrictions, we hope there may be some additional events added as the month progresses.

June <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/2020-06/>

July <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/2020-07/>

Online events

Rebecca Huntley - How to talk about climate change, Monday, July 13, 6:30– 7:30 PM

<https://avidreader.com.au/events/rebecca-huntley-how-to-talk-about-climate-change-in-a-way-that-makes-a-difference>

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. Articles of 380 words should be submitted to the *Living Lightly* coordinator, Lauren Salathiel: l.salathiel@gmail.com

Recent articles

[Discover the joys of cycling your city](#) By James Sloan

[Change begins at home](#) By Chris McGorlick

[Science must guide pandemic and climate response](#) By Lauriston Muirhead

COVID 19

Why community-owned renewables should lead Australia's Covid-19 recovery plans

A plan that envisions the development of thousands of community-owned renewable power stations dotted throughout Australia had its launch last month with the publication of a [comprehensive discussion paper](#) co-authored by the federal member for the Victorian seat of Indi, Independent Helen Haines: <https://onestepoffthegrid.com.au/why-community-owned-renewables-should-lead-australias-covid-19-recovery-plans/>

COVID Commission boss Nev Power steps back at gas company amid conflict of interest concerns

The head of the Morrison government commission tasked with coming up with plans to revitalise the economy after the coronavirus crisis, Nev Power, is to step aside from his position as deputy chairman of a gas company over conflict of interest concerns.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/may/23/covid-commission-boss-nev-power-steps-back-at-gas-company-amid-conflict-of-interest-concerns?>

Emissions

Paris Agreement: Australia's emissions reductions falling short of climate commitment

Australia's greenhouse gas output continues to flatline, falling short of the downward trajectory required to meet the conditions of the Paris climate agreement and keep global warming below two degrees.

<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/federal/australia-s-emissions-reductions-falling-short-of-climate-commitment-20200528-p54xdz.html?>

Angus Taylor says higher emissions targets 'not necessarily good policy'

Federal energy and emissions reduction minister Angus Taylor has said that the Morrison government had no interest in setting ambitious climate change targets, but would rather set targets the government knew it was already able to meet. <https://reneweconomy.com.au/angus-taylor-says-higher-emissions-targets-not-necessarily-good-policy-73492/>

Australia's muddled energy policy and the roadmap to nowhere

Political editor Katharine Murphy talks to environment editor Adam Morton about a huge week in energy policy and why Australia appears to be making an energy roadmap without a destination.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/audio/2020/may/25/australias-muddled-energy-policy-and-the-roadmap-to-nowhere?>

Environmental protection

National environment laws failing to deliver

The draft of the second statutory review of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) is due to be handed to environment minister Sussan Ley by the end of the month. Ms Ley will have to balance the demands of industry, conservation groups and scientists: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/really-depressing-national-environment-laws-failing-to-deliver-20200610-p551fs.html?>

Strengthen our environment laws - Australian Conservation Foundation

Please write a submission: https://www.acf.org.au/environment_laws_submission

Our environmental protection laws are under threat

Please sign the petition and demand the Government respect the laws protecting our environment.

<https://www.getup.org.au/campaigns/surge/save-our-environmental-laws/our-environmental-protection-laws-are-under-threat?>

Be worried when fossil fuel lobbyists support current environmental laws

The fossil fuel lobby, led by the Minerals Council of Australia, seem pretty happy with the current system of environment laws and does not want them replaced. One wonders why... <https://theconversation.com/be-worried-when-fossil-fuel-lobbyists-support-current-environmental-laws-138526?>

Wildlife matters

Wild Pollinator Autumn 2020 count results

Thank you to everyone who participated in our biggest count yet! A total of 1959 valid observations were submitted this count. <https://wildpollinatorcount.com/2020/06/09/autumn-2020-count-results/>

AlburyWodonga Regional Natural Environment Strategy

Feedback is due by 29th June, 2020. The strategy and feedback options can be found at this link:

<https://www.wodonga.vic.gov.au/Have-Your-Say/Consultations/Regional-Natural-Environment-Strategy>

Don't count your fish before they hatch: experts react to plans to release 2 million fish into the Murray Darling

As the river system recovers from a string of mass fish deaths, caution is needed.

<https://theconversation.com/dont-count-your-fish-before-they-hatch-experts-react-to-plans-to-release-2-million-fish-into-the-murray-darling-140428>

Books

RetroSuburbia by David Holmgren

The downshifter's guide to a resilient future (Online Version) <https://online.retrosurbia.com/?>

The Overstory by Richard Powers

A majestic redwood of a novel: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/apr/08/the-overstory-richard-powers-review>

Phosphorescence by Julia Baird

This book is the perfect read: <https://www.betterreading.com.au/review/our-review/we-need-this-book-julia-bairds-phosphorescence-is-the-perfect-read/>

Good news!

Totally Renewable Yackandandah is one step closer to achieving its goal of being a community fully powered by renewable energy, as explained in this Channel 9 News report:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2608791419437754&id=384005941978066

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 July 22nd.

WATCH email address: watch.albwod@gmail.com

WATCH website: www.watch.id.au

Warm regards,

Jenny Davies