

Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health

WATCHWORD 14.10.20

WATCH news

WATCH survey of Wodonga council candidates

Wodonga's going to the polls! Who will you vote for? WATCH asked all 19 candidates two questions:

Q1. How do you rate the importance of climate action on a five point scale, where one indicates climate action is a low priority and five indicates it's a high priority?

Q2. How will you use your position on council to move council towards zero emissions?

Of the ten candidates who responded, all gave climate action a rating of 4 or 5. Specifically, Kat Bennett (5), Michael Fraser (4), Rupinder Kaur (5), Andrew Lees (5), Danny Lowe (5), Brian Mitchell (5), Bernard Squire (4.5), Joseph Thomsen (5), John Watson (4), and Simon Welsh (5).

The key theme emerging from respondents was an intent to reduce emissions by increasing renewable energy. Several candidates also emphasised the importance of embedding climate change thinking into everyday operations, decisions and risk management. Please read the candidates' full responses here: <https://watch.id.au/>. We have also shared the survey results on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/wodongaandalburytowardclimatehealth>.

We were extremely disappointed that nine candidates did not respond to our survey. We can only assume they were not concerned about climate change, hiding their views or too disorganised to respond. We understand that candidates are asked for their opinions by many groups, but if they don't respond, residents don't know what they stand for on certain issues. In a democracy it is important that voters can see their candidates' views. In a time when the vast majority of Australians are concerned about climate change, impacts are evident and solutions are clear, we need local government representatives to make climate action a priority.

Take action!

Zali Steggall MP relaunches Climate Change Bill

Zali Steggall MP will be presenting a framework climate change bill to Parliament on November 9th.

Please support this important Bill. Currently there are only 263 signatures in Farrer and 808 in Indi. So ***please sign up here*** if you haven't already done so: <https://join.climateactnow.com.au/>

Support A Clean Recovery – Clean Energy Council

Sign this petition to show the federal government that Australians want more clean energy, not gas.

<https://cleanenergycouncil.good.do/cleanrecovery/support/?> -

Renewable energy highlights

Indi MP Helen Haines launches 'Local Power Plan' to bolster community energy

Dr Haines was joined by nearly 400 people [online to launch her 'Local Power Plan', co-designed with renewable energy experts and groups](#). An independent body called the Australian Local Power Agency is proposed in a national plan for community energy led by Indi MP Helen Haines.

[https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6938769/putting-energy-ownership-in-peoples-hands-goal-of-local-power-plan/?](https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6938769/putting-energy-ownership-in-peoples-hands-goal-of-local-power-plan/)

World's biggest wind and solar producer now worth more than ExxonMobil

Big news! The market value of the company that describes itself as the world's biggest producer of wind and solar power, US utility NextEra, has overtaken that of what used to be the world's most valuable company, oil major ExxonMobil. <https://reneweconomy.com.au/worlds-biggest-wind-and-solar-producer-now-worth-more-than-exxonmobil-26783/>

Climate emergency

'Lungs of the Earth' burn: Amazon rainforest fires the worst in a decade

Brazil reported 8373 fires in its portion of the Amazon rainforest in the first week of September 2020 – double the amount [seen last year](#), according to the country's Space research agency.

[https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/world/2020/10/04/amazon-rainforest-fires-2020/?](https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/world/2020/10/04/amazon-rainforest-fires-2020/)

Birds 'falling out of the sky' in mass die-off in south-western US

Wildfires and climate crisis cited as possible causes for the deaths of thousands of migrating species heading south for the winter. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/16/birds-falling-out-of-the-sky-in-mass-die-off-in-south-western-us-aoe>

Thirty countries have pledged to achieve climate neutrality. Australia is not one of them

China has become the latest developed nation to commit to reaching net-zero emissions, vowing to reduce its footprint to zero by 2060. <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/thirty-countries-have-pledged-to-achieve-climate-neutrality-australia-is-not-one-of-them?>

Gas!

Morrison says you're either for gas or against it. Of course it's not as simple as that.

Shifting from coal to gas would reduce emissions but shifting from coal to renewables would reduce them much faster. Speed is of the essence. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/19/morrison-says-youre-either-for-gas-or-against-it-of-course-its-not-as-simple-as-that?>

'We don't need it': Critics say plan for new gas power is unnecessary

A former BP Australasia president warns the federal government's plan to underwrite the expansion of gas infrastructure is more of an industry rescue package than a stimulus plan to drive the economy out of the coronavirus pandemic. <https://www.theage.com.au/environment/climate-change/we-don-t-need-it-critics-say-plan-for-new-gas-power-is-unnecessary-20200915-p55vyb.html?>

NSW planning commission approves \$3.6bn Narrabri gas project in state's north

This proposal was backed by federal and state governments, but the public response has been overwhelmingly against it due to environmental concerns.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/30/nsw-planning-commission-approves-36bn-narrabri-gas-project-in-states-north>

#StopAdani Albury Wodonga (SAAW)

Stop Adani getting insurance

After 18 of the world's biggest insurers refused involvement with Adani's mine, Adani went to Lloyd's of London in a last-ditch effort to find insurance. The national Stop Adani team have launched a permanent phone jam on Lloyd's. Sign up to help with calls: <https://www.stopadani.com/insurance>

Lloyds Insure our Future Not Adani - online rally, 28th October, 7 pm

This online rally will tell Lloyd's of London to act on the climate crisis, not act as the last refuge for climate wreckers like Adani to secure insurance. This Australian rally will come off the back of an action outside Lloyds offices in London and will be a key way to build global pressure on Lloyds.

When: 7pm-8.15pm Wednesday 28th October AEDT

Where: RSVP at www.stopadani.com/rally to receive the video link.

'People Power vs Adani – the fight of our times'

Carrie Tsai and Jason Wu, founders and coordinators of StopAdani Redfern, who featured in the film, were StopAdani Albury-Wodonga's guest speakers and took part in a Q&A session. SAAW have raised \$720 through the event for the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council. Thank you to all concerned.

Knitting Nannas for Renewables

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

Committee meeting, Thursday November 5th (first Thursday of the month)

Please note the change of plan – this is not a Zoom meeting. Venue – Browns Lagoon, at T-intersection of Olive St & Nurigong St, South Albury. We will meet outdoors, BYO chair, mozzie repellent. Up to 20 people can meet outdoors in NSW at present. Changes to this plan, if any, will be advised. For updates visit the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StopAdaniAlburyWodonga/>

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.

October <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/2020-10/>

November <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/2020-11/>

Selected events

Aussie Backyard Bird Count, 19th – 25th October

Count for a 20-minute period as many times as you like during the week. <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/?>

Gardens for Wildlife children's art competition

Entries due before 30th October 2020. <http://ecoportal.net.au/event/go-wild-art-competition/>

ACF Community Albury Wodonga Region Meeting (Zoom) 2 - 4 pm, 7th November

Please register at [Meeting registration](#).

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

[Vote as if life depends on it. Because it does.](#) By Lauren Salathiel

[Live lightly, live better](#) By Tony van Rompaey

[Leave fossil fuels in the ground](#) By Lauriston Muirhead

Radio National interviews

Torres Strait Islanders claim climate change affects human rights

In the Torres Strait, a group of local residents is persisting with a landmark claim before a UN committee that climate change is affecting their human rights. Listen to this interview on Radio National:

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/adelaide/programs/am/12716182>

Government wants to shift investment from clean renewables to carbon capture and storage

Listen to Angus Taylor arguing with Fran Kelly on RN Breakfast.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/taylor-gas-17-sept/12672104>

China signals turning point in climate fight

China has long been accused of being an environmental vandal, with a heavy reliance on coal.

Now the country is pledging to put more weight behind its home-grown renewables, which would be a game-changer for the climate. <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/china-emissions-2060/12701474>

Hydrogen

Australian Gas Infrastructure Group and ENGIE propose hydrogen energy facility for Wodonga

Joint venture partners Australian Gas Infrastructure Group and ENGIE's proposed "hydrogen park" to be co-located with North-East Water's Valley wastewater treatment plant has advanced to the next stage in obtaining crucial federal government funding. <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6931412/wodonga-hydrogen-energy-plant-step-closer-to-fruit/?>

Germany names hydrogen the hero of its post-coal future

Europe's largest economy has identified Australia as a potential supplier of the vast quantities of hydrogen needed to decarbonise its heavy industry in order to adhere to the Paris climate accord and to achieve Chancellor Angela Merkel's goal of net zero emissions by 2050.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/germany-names-hydrogen-the-hero-of-its-post-coal-future-20200923-p55y7y.html?>

'Green hydrogen' from renewables could become cheapest 'transformative fuel' within a decade

The Federal Government has nominated 'clean hydrogen' using gas and CCS but for many countries 'clean' already means without fossil fuels

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/03/green-hydrogen-from-renewables-could-become-cheapest-transformative-fuel-within-a-decade?>

Environmental protection?

How much the budget undervalued conservation: 16 World Heritage sites received less than Sydney Harbour

The Coalition government's federal budget allocated A\$233.4 million to six Commonwealth-run national parks — but most will be spent on tourism infrastructure upgrades.

<https://theconversation.com/how-much-the-budget-undervalued-conservation-16-world-heritage-sites-received-less-than-sydney-harbour-147663?>

Australia joins US, China and Russia in refusing to sign leaders' pledge on biodiversity

The Morrison government has said it refused to sign a global pledge endorsed by 64 countries committing them to reverse biodiversity loss because it was inconsistent with Australia's policies.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/29/australia-joins-us-china-and-russia-in-refusing-to-sign-leaders-pledge-on-biodiversity?>

Coalition began writing landmark environment bill before receiving review it had ordered

The environment department instructed the Office of Parliamentary Counsel to begin drafting the changes to the [legislation](#) on 19 June, 11 days before the government received the interim report of the review of Australia's national environment laws.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/16/coalition-began-writing-landmark-environment-bill-before-receiving-review-it-had-ordered?>

Regenerative agriculture

How Charlie Massy turned his ravaged property into an oasis

Charles Massy's property near Cooma in NSW has been in drought since 2017. But unlike surrounding properties which are bare dust bowls of dead trees, Severn Park is covered in native grasses. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-28/charlie-massy-regenerative-farming-movement/12438352>

Australian Story featuring Charles Massy – 'Breaking New Ground'

Fascinating and so affirming. Watch this program in iview, <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/australian-story/series/2020/video/NC2002Q024S00>

Focus on frogs!

FrogID - The Australian Museum

Want to know what that frog is in your local creek or backyard pond? Well now you can work it out! With the FrogID mobile app, you can discover which frogs live around you and help count Australia's frogs. Addictive!

<https://australian.museum/get-involved/citizen-science/frogid/>

Frog pond

If you would like to know about creating frog-friendly habitat, there's lots of useful information here. Scroll down a short way to find it: <https://wodongalandcare.org.au/information/> Check out the recent event held by Gardens 4 Wildlife AlburyWodonga: https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=728383424380602&id=164633180755632

'An exciting find': Ecologists discover native frog thought to be extinct

For months, Australia's catastrophic bushfires were feared to have wiped out a particular frog species. But there is now renewed hope for the future of the threatened Giant Burrowing Frog.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/2020/10/12/gippsland-giant-burrowing-frog/>

Good news from our local towns

Yackandandah's bid to go 100% solar wins grant to "supersize" battery

Around \$171,000 was awarded to the town's community solar and storage project as part of more than \$1 million in grants handed out by the Victorian government in Round five of its New Energy Jobs Fund.

<https://onestepoffthegrid.com.au/victorian-towns-bid-to-go-100-solar-wins-grant-to-supersize-battery/> Watch this video from Prime News: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=685904658799891>

Walwa bush nursing centre gets renewable energy funding

The Walwa Bush Nursing Centre that became a refuge during last summer's bushfires will be able to run entirely on renewable energy after receiving funding from the Victorian State Government. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-05/isolated-nursing-centre-that-became-refuge-gets-renewable-energy/12730610?>

Indigo Extinction Rebellion event in Beechworth

On Saturday 3rd October, the Indigo Shire Red Rebels made their public debut as part of an 'empty shoes' installation at the old Post Office. The photos on the Indigo XR Facebook page are worth checking out:

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

The scenic route..

Mark Humphries launches the government's new energy plan - 7.30 Report

<https://www.abc.net.au/7.30/mark-humphries-launches-the-governments-new-energy/12700440?>

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 18th November.

WATCH email address: watch.albwod@gmail.com

WATCH website: www.watch.id.au

*Warm regards,
Jenny Davies*