

Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health

WATCHWORD 20.1.21

WATCH news

A message from WATCH Chair Lauriston Muirhead

2020 - What a year! Australia's Federal and State governments largely listened to, and acted upon, the science regarding the challenges of COVID-19. Wartime efforts and resources were marshalled; urgent actions were planned, communicated and carried out; mistakes were learnt from and tens of thousands of lives were saved. Our governments helped steer us through the challenges as safely as possible.

Now we have to do the same with climate change. This year, or early next, there will be a Federal election. It is our duty to make sure that whoever we vote for knows what we want - that they are genuinely listening to and acting upon the science of climate change. Tell them and show them this is what you want and that your vote depends on their words and actions. Look for actions that transfer us out of the polluting fossil fuel past and into a clean 100% renewable future. If you can't trust the person you were going to vote for to do these great things, then vote for someone who will! Happy reNewable Year!

Correspondence

Lizette and Lauriston have written to congratulate NSW Energy Minister Matt Kean on the leadership he has recently shown on climate and energy. However, they also expressed their concerns about the approval of massive fossil fuel developments in NSW over the last two years which will result in approximately twice Australia's total annual (2018) emissions. A meeting request to discuss fossil fuels and emissions is being considered by the Minister's office.

Letters in the Border Mail

What's the different between global warming and climate change? Graham Parton, December 26th

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7066475/you-say-whats-the-different-between-global-warming-and-climate-change-thats-easy/?>

'Australia continues to lag behind on climate change' Emilie Nuck, Graham Parton, December 22nd

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7064529/your-say-australia-continues-to-lag-behind-on-climate-change/?>

Border Mail editorial

An editorial published on December 17th was one of the strongest pro-climate editorials yet - and openly critical of the Federal Coalition. No link unfortunately.

Meet the Mayor

New Wodonga Mayor Cr Poulton wants to hear from the community on any desired changes and the future opportunities for the city as part of the Community Conversations series. On Thursdays from 2pm to 3.30pm, Cr Poulton will be available for a chat with members of the community. Book an appointment by phoning the customer focus team on 02 6022 9300. An excellent opportunity for residents to voice their concerns re climate change and other environmental issues.

A message from The Climate Council

Want to commit to some New Year's resolutions that will help to reduce Australia's emissions, change the national conversation around climate change, and pressure decision-makers to take climate change seriously? [Check out our top 5 Climate Resolutions for 2021 here!](#)

WATCH meetings

We have resumed face to face meetings! They occur every quarter, usually in central Albury and anyone is most welcome to attend. The next meeting will be at 6pm on Tuesday March 9th 2021. Contact Lizette to be advised of the venue: lizette@salmonfamily.id.au

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

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

Cause for optimism

Biden's Senate majority doesn't just super-charge US climate action, it blazes a trail for Australia

An aggressive US climate policy rollout could provide a much needed dose of reality to the climate discourse in Canberra. It may also prompt Australia's major parties to acknowledge the inevitability of a transition to a zero-carbon economy. <https://theconversation.com/bidens-senate-majority-doesnt-just-super-charge-us-climate-action-it-blazes-a-trail-for-australia-153090?>

Business lobby group and corporations back Zali Steggall's 2050 net zero target bill

Tesla, Origin Energy and Atlassian among hundreds that have made parliamentary submissions backing the proposal. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/dec/18/business-lobby-group-and-corporations-back-zali-steggalls-2050-net-zero-target-bill?>

A just transition

Renewables transition means planning for coal plant closures now

As the conversation over summer turns once again to the future of our energy system, we should view any claims that coal power stations will stay open for decades with healthy scepticism.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/renewables-transition-means-planning-for-coal-plant-closures-now-20210117-p56uoi.html?>

Can a renewable energy switch happen without sacking fossil fuel workers?

Science says the switch to renewables needs to be fast but workers on the ground say it should also be fair. How did Germany do it? And could Australia really have a 'just transition' too?

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/what-s-a-just-transition-and-can-you-switch-to-green-energy-without-sacking-coal-workers-20201218-p56oub.html?>

How Australia can phase out coal power while maintaining energy security

The end of coal-fired generation in Australia is inevitable. The only questions are when coal-fired power stations will close and how well Australia will manage that phasedown.

<https://theconversation.com/how-australia-can-phase-out-coal-power-while-maintaining-energy-security-152747?>

The climate crisis

Last decade hottest on record for Australia with temperature almost 1C above average

Maximum and minimum temperatures were above average for all states and territories, Bureau of Meteorology says. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jan/08/last-decade-hottest-on-record-for-australia-with-temperature-almost-1c-above-average> Here is BOM's annual climate statement 2020 <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/annual/aus/?>

2020 equals world's hottest year on record, as factors behind Black Summer become clearer

Thinning Arctic ice, more storms in the North Atlantic and record heat across Australia during La Niña during 2020 were some of the trademarks of the world's equal-hottest year on record.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-12/2020-equals-worlds-hottest-year-record-as-arctic-ice-disappears/13048780?>

China uses blankets to prevent glaciers melting as temperatures rise

Scientists in China have used blankets to protect vulnerable glaciers from melting amid rising temperatures.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/china-blankets-glaciers-climate-change-b1783178.html?>

Emissions

One billion tonnes in mining emissions approved despite landmark case

Coal and gas projects that could release more than 1 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases have been given the green light by the NSW government in the two years since a Land and Environment Court ruling, which upheld the government's Rocky Hill coal mine refusal in part because of climate impacts.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/nsw/a-billion-tonnes-in-mining-emissions-approved-despite-landmark-case-20201230-p56qu6.html?>

Australia's new climate pledge to UN criticised for not improving on 2030 target

Australia has formally updated its United Nations climate policy without fanfare and without any improvement to its 2030 target to cut emissions. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jan/05/australias-new-climate-pledge-to-un-criticised-for-not-improving-on-2030-target>

Western Australia LNG plant faces calls to shut down until faulty carbon capture system is fixed

Greenhouse gas emissions from Chevron's Gorgon LNG facility have increased because the company's carbon capture system is not working properly, meaning more carbon dioxide is being vented into the atmosphere. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/15/western-australia-lng-plant-faces-calls-to-shut-down-until-faulty-carbon-capture-system-is-fixed?>

#StopAdani Albury Wodonga (SAAW)

Big Letters - Noreuil Park, Saturday 30th January, 9am

Every second Saturday, a group is meeting at Noreuil Park with the 'big letters'. This starts quite a few conversations and is an excellent opportunity to highlight the issue to the community. Contact Jenni Huber on 0410 074 900.

Current actions we can take to Stop Adani

Adani is racing to lock in insurers for its destructive coal project in the Lloyd's of London insurance marketplace. Everyone is encouraged to take 5 minutes to email or phone an insurer. More actions will be announced next month. <https://www.stopadani.com/insurance>

Knitting Nannas for Renewables

Knitting Nannas meet every Thursday at 12.30 to 1.30 in Albury's QEII Square, carefully socially distancing. Everyone is welcome; BYO your own chair and knitting if you have some. The group continues to knit rugs and donate them to local charities. Contact Liz Hammond 0429 177 681 ronlizhammond@gmail.com

Committee meeting, Thursday 4th February, 6pm (first Thursday of the month)

This will be a Zoom meeting. RSVP to Alison on alison.veld@gmail.com and the invitation will be sent out in the week before the meeting. The national #StopAdani team has put together a plan for the year and this is an excellent opportunity to discuss it and to develop local strategies.

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. Keep checking the calendar for updates.

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

[Climate inequality is right here](#) By Lauren Salathiel

[The secrets behind scientific names](#) By Jonathon Howard

[Keep your eyes peeled for the Crested Shrike-tit](#) By Ian Davidson and Chris Tzaros – Wangaratta Landcare & Sustainability

[Build with warming climate in mind](#) By Wendy

Repair Cafe Albury-Wodonga

Repair Cafe Albury-Wodonga is seeking a new coordinator. After five years at the helm, Lizette Salmon's stepping aside and we're keen to fill her position. If you'd enjoy being at the heart of a happy fix-it crew who've repaired more than 2,500 items and won Wodonga's 2020 Community Organisation of the Year award, please consider applying. This requires a commitment of approximately 20+ hours per month, with some remuneration. For a position please description email: repaircafeaw@gmail.com

Good news from our local towns

Totally Renewable Yackandandah named winner of 2020 Premier's Sustainability Awards

TRY was named one of 12 winners, taking out the community category and the Premier's regional recognition award for its work on the virtual power plant project.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7060096/totally-renewable-yackandandah-recognised-at-premiers-sustainability-awards/?cs=9681> Watch this Prime 7 video:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=3661899717236871&id

Indigo XR

This local Extinction Rebellion group in Indigo Shire is currently developing its action strategy for 2021. Contact Bernie Jovaras to be added to the mailing list. jovaras@westnet.com.au

Cause for concern

Environmental activists in the dark as government refuses, delays access to information

Federal government agencies are refusing in full or in part the vast majority of requests for environment-related documents under freedom of information law in what the Australian Conservation Foundation says is a trend to secrecy that is threatening the country's ecosystems. As an example, the office of Environment Minister Sussan Ley refused 39 FOI requests outright in 2019-2020, granting only one request in full and three in part. <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/environmental-activists-in-the-dark-as-government-refuses-delays-access-to-information-20210114-p56u2p.html?>

Australia the only developed nation on world list of deforestation hotspots

WWF report finds area six times the size of Tasmania has been cleared globally since 2004.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/13/australia-the-only-developed-nation-on-world-list-of-deforestation-hotspots?>

Insect populations suffering death by 1,000 cuts, say scientists

'Frightening' global decline is 'tearing apart tapestry of life', with climate crisis a critical concern.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/11/insect-populations-suffering-death-1000-cuts-scientists?>

Wildlife matters

Wild Pollinator count

The spring count happened from 8-15 November 2020. We received just over 1000 submitted observations representing over 12,000 insects! Thank you to all who participated during what has been a difficult year for all of us. [Spring 2020 results are here!](#)

Albury Wodonga Gardening Guide

Listen to Sue Brunskill speaking about the new *Albury Wodonga Gardening Guide*.

<https://soundcloud.com/wodongalibrary/wodonga-gardening>

Gardens for Wildlife

Do you or someone you know have a wildlife-friendly garden with diverse plantings? Please contact Lizette Salmon, Project Officer, Gardens for Wildlife Albury-Wodonga lizette@salmonfamily.id.au Ph: (02) 6059 4185, 0468 320 647.

Food for thought

News Corp produces and amplifies climate scepticism

[Lies, Debates, and Silences: How News Corp produces climate scepticism in Australia](#) is an explosive new report, commissioned by GetUp, that reveals the staggering levels of climate scepticism peddled by major News Corp newspapers. It found that 45% of all News Corp climate coverage expressed scepticism in the reality of climate change. 65% of opinion pieces were sceptical towards climate science. Of the 55% of stories that accepted climate science, there was negligible reporting of the findings of climate scientists or the impacts of climate change.

Focus on birds

Just add water: when the rain comes, the boom starts for Australian birds

These birds have adapted to be guided by conditions, not season. It is wonderful to witness budgies in Chiltern! <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jan/11/just-add-water-when-the-rain-comes-the-boom-starts-for-australian-birds?>

***The Bird Way* by Jennifer Ackerman**

Fascinating accounts of bird behaviour.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=819295151956095&id

BirdLife Australia photography awards

The 2020 Winners Gallery is live now! <https://www.birdlifephotoaward.org.au/?>

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 17th.

Warm regards,

Jenny Davies

WATCH email address: watch.alwod@gmail.com

WATCH website: www.watch.id.au