

Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health

WATCHWORD 17.2.21

WATCH news

Border Mail editorials

We commend the Border Mail's trend towards editorials that recognise the climate crisis and highlight the Federal Government's inaction. The two most recent were: ***Running out of time on climate - February 1st*** and ***Questions on climate cannot wait - January 30th***.

Sacred People Sacred Earth event

On 11th March, faith communities from across the world will join in a huge multi-faith event calling for bold and immediate action on the climate crisis. WATCH is aiming for a multi-faith meeting between Sussan Ley and local representatives from the Anglican, Uniting, Sikh, Buddhist and Catholic faiths. Watch this space! For information see: <https://www.arrcc.org.au/global>

Corresponding with NSW Environment Minister, Matt Kean

WATCH sent a letter to NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean in early January, congratulating him on his positive renewable energy plan but pointing out the absurdity of continuing to pursue fossil fuels. Unfortunately, he declined our request for a meeting.

Data on letters to *The Border Mail* about climate change

WATCH has been keeping data on letters to the editor since 2007. Key findings from 2020 were:

- a total of 57 letters the fourth highest volume in 14 years of record-keeping
- the percentage of letters from deniers dropped to its second lowest level ever, comprising only 19% of letters on climate change.

Letters in the Border Mail

'Bushfire damage hard to compare' - Graham Parton, February 6th and ***'Not fit to give a lecture'*** February 10th (no link): <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7112145/your-say-its-time-for-albury-to-have-a-drug-and-alcohol-rehab-centre/?cs=9940>

'We're lagging behind' - David Sloane, February 1st

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7106790/your-say-its-time-for-change-so-we-can-protect-our-river-life/?cs=9940>

'Win for renewable energy' - Emilie Nuck, January 30th (no link)

WATCH meetings

WATCH meetings 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/?>

The climate crisis

What will it take to make the cost of climate change hit home?

The Climate Council's new extreme weather report, [Hitting Home: The Compounding Costs of Climate Inaction](#) demonstrates the rising costs of climate change on our lives, our health, our communities, wildlife, ecosystems and the economy.

Coalition signs Australia up to agreements to price in climate risk

This is excellent news because it shows that the government is starting to feel the international heat,

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jan/25/coalition-signs-australia-up-to-agreements-to-price-in-climate-risk?>

Business Council of Australia backs Zali Steggall's climate change bill

The Business Council of Australia has backed independent MP Zali Steggall's proposed climate change legislation. <https://www.msn.com/en-au/money/markets/business-council-of-australia-joins-atlassian-and-sarah-wilson-in-backing-zali-steggalls-climate-change-bill/ar-BB1d9m2k?>

Environmental protection

To fix Australia's environment laws, wildlife experts call for these 4 crucial changes

The independent review of Australia's [main environment law](#), was recently released and provided a sobering but accurate appraisal of a dire situation. <https://theconversation.com/to-fix-australias-environment-laws-wildlife-experts-call-for-these-4-changes-all-are-crucial-154273?>

A major report excoriated Australia's environment laws. Sussan Ley's response is confused and risky

The Morrison government seems hellbent on pushing through its preferred reforms without safeguards that Graeme Samuel says are crucial. <https://theconversation.com/a-major-report-excoriated-australias-environment-laws-sussan-leys-response-is-confused-and-risky-154254?>

Listen to Fran Kelly interview federal environment minister Sussan Ley on RN Breakfast: <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/reform-needed-to-save-iconic-species/13101838>

A message from Friends of the Earth

[Please join our call to the PM](#) urging him to rebuild the environment laws, including establishing a strong, independent regulatory body to oversee them.

Rex Patrick says he may not support Coalition plan on environment law

We urge you to send Senator Rex Patrick an email of support at senator.patrick@aph.gov.au. Coalition MPs will no doubt be pressuring him to comply with them, so the more support he gets from the public, the better. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/31/rex-patrick-says-he-wont-support-coalition-plan-on-environmental-powers-before-it-responds-to-scathing-review?>

Zero emissions

Now Scott Morrison's 'preference' is for net zero emissions by 2050 – Michelle Grattan

It remains unclear whether the baby steps will lead to his embracing the 2050 target later this year. It would undoubtedly smooth the way with the Biden administration as well as putting Australia in a better position for the Glasgow climate conference in November. <https://theconversation.com/view-from-the-hill-now-scott-morrison-s-preference-is-for-net-zero-emissions-by-2050-154394?>

'More pros than cons': Farmers ahead of divided Nationals on climate policy

Having forged ahead with its own climate goals, the farming sector was caught by surprise when Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack said agriculture may be exempted from an emissions reduction policy. <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/more-pros-than-cons-farmers-ahead-of-divided-nationals-on-climate-policy-20210208-p570kl.html?>

Deep coalition split over climate policy

The Nationals say they won't support a target to decarbonise the economy unless agriculture, mining and manufacturing are protected. Listen to Fran Kelly interview Bridget McKenzie. <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/deep-coalition-split-over-climate-policy/13134686>

Contact Bridget McKenzie!

StopAdani Albury Wodonga's Knitting Nannas sat outside Ms McKenzie's Wodonga office last week and passed on the message that part of her job is to develop policies to transition to target of zero emissions. Please send her a message! <https://www.bridgetmckenzie.com.au/contact/>

#StopAdani Albury Wodonga (SAAW)

Current Actions we can take to Stop Adani

For the first time, Lloyds of London has introduced an Environmental Social Governance policy and committed to no new insurance for coal and tar sands from 2022 and to no further insurance by 2030. This is a huge change, but we have to demand the insurance stops now. Adani must renew two insurance policies this year. Our group is focusing on ARK underwriters, asking them to publicly rule out providing insurance for Adani. Send emails to the management team and let them know how important this is. <https://arkunderwriting.com/contact/management-team/>

Knitting Nannas for Renewables

Knitting Nannas are meeting every Thursday at 12.30pm to 1.30pm, alternating between Albury's QEII Square and outside Bridget McKenzie's office, 172 High St Wodonga, carefully socially distancing. Everyone is welcome; BYO your own chair and knitting if you have some. We continue to knit rugs and donate them to local charities. Contact Liz Hammond on 0429 177 681 or email ronlizhammond@gmail.com or contact Jenni Huber 0410 074 900.

Big Letters, Noreuil Park, Saturday 6th March, 9am

The letters start quite a few conversations and it's a good opportunity to highlight the issue to the community. Please join us. Contact Jenni Huber on 0410 074 900.

Committee meeting, Thursday 11th March, 6pm

This will be a Zoom meeting. RSVP to Alison on alison.veld@gmail.com to receive the link. Please note, it's the second Thursday of the month, changed due to a clash with the national StopAdani meeting.

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.

February <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/2021-02/>

March <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/2021-03/>

Selected events

Climate Change - Present Facts & Future Projections, February 26th, 7pm, Benalla Town Hall

Benalla Sustainable Future Group is excited to have two very experienced Climate Scientists accept its invitation: <http://ecoportal.net.au/event/bsfg-to-host-climate-science-talks-in-benalla/>

Getting elected: The first national convention for community-minded independents.

26th - 28th February This is an online event hosted by Cathy McGowan. Here is a link with details: <https://communityindependents.com.au>

Wild Encounters - a photographic exhibition by Chris Tzaros

At the Wangaratta Visitor information Centre until March 24th. Superb!

<https://m.facebook.com/events/1084966975298501?>

Meet the Mayor, Thursdays, 2 – 3.30pm, Wodonga Council

ACF Community Albury Wodonga Region recently met with Wodonga Mayor Kevin Poulton to discuss a range of topics related to climate change. Friends of Willow Park have also had a meeting. This is an excellent opportunity for residents to voice their concerns re climate change and other environmental issues. Book an appointment by phoning the customer focus team on 02 6022 9300.

Living Lightly

A heartfelt thankyou to Lauren Salathiel who has done such a marvellous job at coordinating the *Living Lightly* column for so long. Her passion and enthusiasm for positive change has been inspirational.

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 new *Living Lightly* coordinator, Kirsten Coates. wabisabi@netc.net.au

Recent articles

[Birds of a Feather](#) By Jonathon Howard

[The value of a garden](#) by David Thurley

[Superb Fairy-wren – a truly superb bird](#) By Ian Davidson and Chris Tzaros – Wangaratta Landcare & Sustainability

A just transition

Coal-rich Hunter Valley ponders jobs future as Asian giants commit to net-zero carbon emissions

The Hunter Valley is a region largely built on the backs of its coal miners, but many locals have passed the stage of climate change denial and are now actively preparing for life after coal.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-02/coal-transition-climate-change-hunter-region/13109642?>

Beyond the coal economy - The Business - ABC

Part 1. The jobs at risk as Australia's major thermal coal region is forced to consider a greener future.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/programs/the-business/2021-02-01/beyond-the-coal-economy:-part-1/13110914?nw=0>

Part 2. This report focusses on how Australia's major thermal coal region is transforming itself for a greener economy.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/programs/the-business/2021-02-02/part-2:-beyond-the-coal-economy/13114856?nw=0>

Climate action in the US

Dizzying pace of Biden's climate action sounds death knell for era of denialism

"This isn't time for small measures," Biden said. "We need to be bold."

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/30/joe-biden-climate-change-action?>

As Biden hits the accelerator on climate action, Australia remains stuck in policy paralysis

Joe Biden plans to host a climate summit of world leaders in April. The climate crisis, he says, is an existential threat. In Australia, both major parties are treading nervously.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-31/biden-hits-accelerator-climate-action-australia-policy-paralysis/13103574?>

Radio National highlights

Australian farmers central to climate change debate – RN Breakfast

Many of Australia's farmers are already doing the hard work needed to reduce their carbon footprints while at the same time adapting to the effects of climate change.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/australian-farmers-central-to-climate-change-debate/13139156>

The evolving strategies of climate inactivists - Late Night Live

As it becomes increasingly difficult to deny climate change, the strategies of the new climate inactivist are delay, divide and deflect. Michael Mann outlines the strategies and how they can be defeated in his new book *The New Climate War*.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/the-evolving-strategies-of-climate-inactivists/13139882>

Cost of extreme weather doubles thanks to climate change – RN Breakfast

Australia is failing to keep up with the growing threat of extreme weather as climate change increases the risk in areas once thought to be safe.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/cost-of-extreme-weather/13093964>

Much deeper emission cuts needed to keep global warming below 2 degrees – RN Breakfast

As Will Steffen explains to Fran Kelly, carbon output will need to be cut by 50% by 2030 if we are to play our part in keeping temperature rises below 2 degrees by the end of the century.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/much-deeper-emissions-cuts-needed/13097482>

Oil versus water: confessions of a carbon emitter – Boyer lecture

In the first Boyer lecture, Andrew Forrest calls for an urgent move to green hydrogen "on a global scale". <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/boyerlectures/oil-vs-water-confessions-of-a-carbon-emitter/13072410>

Finally..

Another gem from cartoonist of the year Cathy Wilcox:

<https://m.facebook.com/sydneymorningherald/photos/a.10150144263581264/10159622880201264/?t>

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 March 24th.

Warm regards,

Jenny Davies

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WATCH website: www.watch.id.au