

Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health

WATCHWORD 19.8.20

WATCH news

Sussan Ley

It took Sussan Ley three months to respond to a letter from WATCH about the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) and when it finally arrived it didn't address the concerns raised. A letter from Bert Washington in the Border Mail on July 31st expressed similar sentiments. Here's an excerpt:

'Professor Graeme Samuel's interim report on the EPBC has once again allowed Sussan Ley, our Environment Minister, to show her true colours. One of the recommendations in the report is that there is a need for an independent regulator for important environment decisions. Our Environment Minister has dismissed this recommendation.'

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6857809/your-say-visiting-medicos-pose-covid-19-problems/>

Wodonga council candidate

WATCH met with Wodonga Council candidate Rupinder Kaur on Friday 14 August to discuss her climate platform.

Facebook

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

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

Environmental protection

Damning report on Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act

The long-awaited review of the EPBC has confirmed what many environmentalists could see with their own eyes. The review's Interim Report is damning about the EPBC. You can read and download the report here

<https://epbcactreview.environment.gov.au/resources/interim-report> .

Petitions

Speak out to end extinction - Australian Conservation Foundation

https://www.acf.org.au/environment_laws_petition?

Now is our chance to end animal extinction - WWF-Australia

<https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/end-animal-extinction?>

Make your voice heard for strong national environment laws – Friends of the Earth

<https://www.foe.org.au/protect?>

Cause for concern

Last decade was Earth's hottest on record as climate crisis accelerates

The past six years, 2014 to 2019, have been the warmest since global records began, a period that has included enormous heatwaves in the US, Europe and India, freakishly hot temperatures in the Arctic, and deadly wildfires from Australia to California to Greece. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/aug/12/hottest-decade-climate-crisis-2019>

First active leak of sea-bed methane discovered in Antarctica

Researchers say potent climate-heating gas is almost certainly escaping into the atmosphere.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/22/first-active-leak-of-sea-bed-methane-discovered-in-antarctica?>

Take note...

Here is why we are taking the Australian government to the UN over its inaction on climate change

'I want my kids to enjoy the freedom of being on traditional land, as we have been doing for thousands of years. Our island home is at risk'

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/aug/14/here-is-why-we-are-taking-the-australian-government-to-the-un-over-its-inaction-on-climate-change?>

Australia asks UN to dismiss Torres Strait Islanders' claim climate change affects their human rights

The complaint, [lodged just over 12 months ago](#), argued the Morrison government had failed to take adequate action to reduce emissions or pursue proper adaptation measures on the islands and, as a consequence, had failed [fundamental human rights obligations](#) to Torres Strait Islander people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/aug/14/australia-asks-un-to-dismiss-torres-strait-islanders-claim-climate-change-affects-their-human-rights?>

#StopAdani Albury Wodonga (SAAW)

Recent actions

On Thursday August 13th, we had our first ever social StopAdani gathering, via Zoom. We digested the latest Adani updates and compared notes on what we'd been doing from home to 'stop the money' flowing to Adani. One of our members had sent 40 emails to Korean Investment Security staff, another tried phoning Korea, a third sent photos, while others focused their efforts on the top brass. Adani may have 700 workers on the ground but we're still doing all we can to try and cut off all sources of funding and insurance.

Second major Korean brokerage withdraws financial backing for Adani's coal projects

A second major Korean backer of Adani's Australian coal operation has said it won't provide any more financial support for the controversial miner, which faces potential debt difficulties related to its Abbot Point export terminal. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/aug/03/adani-second-major-korean-brokerage-withdraws-financial-backing-for-miners-coal-projects?>

Knitting Nannas for Renewables

Knitting Nannas are meeting every Thursday at 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. We 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

Online committee meeting, Thursday September 3rd, 7 – 9 pm on Zoom (first Thursday of the month)

Due to Covid 19, the September meeting will be held online. If you would like to participate contact Alison Veld to be sent a meeting link: alison.veld@gmail.com. For all 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.

August <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/2020-08/>

September <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/2020-09/>

Selected events

Body Count - Write around the Murray

Paddy Manning discusses the human toll of climate change with Jane Rawson. Sunday 13 September 2020, 11:00 am - 11:45 am <https://writearoundthemurray.org.au/program/author-talks/body-count>

How to talk about climate change

Fight for Planet A: Our Climate Challenge

This three-part series airs on the ABC premiered on Tuesday 11th August at 8.30pm. Craig Reucassel takes on a challenge to reduce our carbon emissions. <https://tvtonight.com.au/2020/07/airdate-fight-for-planet-a-our-climate-challenge.html>

Can TV affect our attitudes to climate change and carbon emissions?

In the first episode of *Fight for Planet A: Our Climate Challenge*, Craig Reucassel provided a visual representation of individual Australia's carbon footage, tweaked the corporate gas giants underwriting the nation's emissions, consulted experts, and commissioned practical experiments with a cross-section of households. <https://www.smh.com.au/culture/tv-and-radio/can-tv-affect-our-attitudes-to-climate-change-and-carbon-emissions-20200803-p55hyv.html>

Watch *Fight For Planet A: Our Climate Challenge* in Iview: <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/fight-for-planet-a-our-climate-challenge>

Fight for Planet A Action Hour

Will you host a *Fight for Planet A* Action Hour with your friends and family? Sign up for the ACF toolkit now. https://www.acf.org.au/planet_a?

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

[Nature observations for fun and science](#) By Karen Retra, Wodonga Urban Landcare Network

[The art of covid-19 travel](#) By Chris McGorlick

[Reading group shines a light on alternatives for living](#) by Lauren Salathiel

Young people taking action

Cathy McGowan organises online climate change talks to create youth response

Former Indi MP Cathy McGowan organised five online gatherings to discuss Indigo Shire council's climate action strategy, held between August 11 and 18. "It is clear from the findings that the environment and climate change are issues high on the agenda of the young people in Indigo Shire and North East Victoria." <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6872470/mcgowan-organises-online-climate-talks-to-create-youth-response/?>

Australian Government sued by Melbourne student over financial risks of climate change

A 23-year-old Melbourne law student is suing the Australian Government for failing to disclose the risk climate change poses to Australians' super and other safe investments. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-07-22/student-sues-australian-government-over-climate-change/12480612?>

Greta Thunberg gives €1m award money to climate groups

[Greta Thunberg](#) has been awarded a Portuguese rights award and promptly pledged the €1m (\$1.15m) prize to groups working to protect the environment and halt climate change. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/21/greta-thunberg-gives-1m-award-money-to-climate-groups?>

Fossil fuels

More coal power generation closed than opened around the world this year

This is a great milestone and news we have been looking forward to!

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/aug/03/more-coal-power-generation-closed-than-opened-around-the-world-this-year-research-finds>

Investors are trying to shut down fossil fuel companies from the inside

More than 100 investors in Whitehaven Coal have filed a resolution asking the company to plan its own closure — the first in an ambitious play by an activist shareholder group to push fossil fuel companies to act on climate change. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-13/shareholder-fossil-fuel-resolution-whitehaven-coal/12546830>

Unisuper dumps coal assets as sector turns its back on fossil fuels

Two ASX-listed coal miners have been cut off the books of major superannuation fund Unisuper in another sign of the sector turning its back on the fossil fuels industry. Unisuper has confirmed it no longer holds stakes in coal miners New Hope and Whitehaven Coal.

<https://www.theage.com.au/business/banking-and-finance/unisuper-dumps-coal-assets-as-sector-turns-its-back-on-fossil-fuels-20200803-p55hzd.html?>

Narrabri Gas Project should be blocked, says ex-chief scientist

The proposed Narrabri gas project in NSW's north-west is at odds with the nation's Paris climate commitments and the state government's goal of cutting emissions to net zero by 2050, said former chief scientist Penny Sackett. <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/narrabri-gas-project-should-be-blocked-says-ex-chief-scientist-20200809-p55k20.html?>

Renewable energy highlights

Sun Cable's massive 10GW solar export plan awarded Major Project status

Sun Cable plans to build one of the world's largest dispatchable solar and battery power stations, complete with the world's largest subsea transmission link. <https://reneweconomy.com.au/sun-cables-massive-10gw-solar-export-plan-awarded-major-project-status-99423/>

W.A. to spend \$66m on solar and batteries for schools, communities and social housing

The Western Australia state government has announced a plan to spend \$66.3 million on solar and battery storage installations for schools, isolated communities and social housing as part of a massive \$5.5 billion plan to re-boot the state's economy after the Covid-19 pandemic.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/w-a-to-spend-66m-on-solar-and-batteries-for-schools-communities-and-social-housing-92719/>

COVID-19

Medical experts urge Scott Morrison to act on climate change as part of the COVID-19 recovery

Many of the medical professionals on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic are urging the Australian government to also act on another health crisis - climate change.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/medical-experts-urge-scott-morrison-to-act-on-climate-change-as-part-of-the-covid-19-recovery?>

Covid Commission advised Morrison to underwrite gas pipelines, but ignored green jobs

Nev Power, chair of the national Covid-19 commission advisory board, said that the body had "requested support from government" be directed towards the expansion of Australia's gas industry, including potential agreements to underwrite new gas pipelines.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/covid-commission-advised-morrison-to-underwrite-gas-pipelines-but-ignored-green-jobs-48758/>

Let's explore our own backyard

Take a stroll with the Friends of David Winterbottom Park

Enjoy a 4-minute video highlighting this Wodonga park. The video was prepared by group co-ordinator Mike Fraser as part of their submission to the Tidy Towns Awards 2020 where they are finalists in the sustainable communities, environment category. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=325768621897255>

Explore part of the WREN in Baranduda (Wodonga Retained Environment Network)

In this video, Andrew Griffiths from Wodonga council takes us on a walk through a lovely WREN reserve in Baranduda. <https://www.facebook.com/wodongacouncil/videos/305555260499274/?>

Here's a frog chorus welcome recorded by Karen Retra in another Baranduda reserve.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=292459558503118>

There are maps on the entry gates in the area or check out this #WalkWodonga suggested route:

<https://walkingmaps.com.au/walk/4481>

The super cute spotted tree frog!

Aside from being super cute, the Spotted Tree Frog is widely recognised as an iconic native species.

To learn more about the species, and the impacts of the fires and other threats, our specialist researchers are conducting surveys across north east Victoria. Listen to Glen Johnson explain more in this video:

<https://www.facebook.com/DELWPHume/videos/684365285483390/>

Food for thought

Gillard on climate action: "It was done. And ... we can do it again in the future"

Former Labor prime minister Julia Gillard has expressed optimism that Australia will eventually embrace strong climate policy while defending her government's carbon price policy as one of the most effective measures introduced in Australia to cut emissions.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/gillard-on-climate-action-it-was-done-and-we-can-do-it-again-in-the-future-63753/>

Letter from economists: to rebuild our world, we must end the carbon economy

The carbon economy amplifies racial, social and economic inequities, creating a system that is fundamentally incompatible with a stable future.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/aug/04/economists-letter-carbon-economy-climate-change-rebuild?>

To lift the spirits

Alchemy for glum times: awe of life's wonders

An article by Julia Baird. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/alchemy-for-glum-times-awe-of-life-s-wonders-20200807-p55jg7.html?>

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 September 16th.

WATCH email address: watch.albwod@gmail.com

WATCH website: www.watch.id.au

Warm regards,

Jenny Davies