

Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health

WATCHWORD 17.3.21

Zali Steggalls's Climate Change Bill

Over 6,500 individual submissions were made to the inquiry. The House Standing Committee, Environment and Energy completed two days of public hearings into the Climate Change Bill on Monday February 1st. The overwhelming expert testimony offered broad support for the Climate Change Bill and recommended the government take more urgent climate action.

The Committee is now reviewing all the evidence, both written and verbal, and Committee Chairman, Ted O'Brien MP, will prepare a report for the House of Representatives. It's anticipated the Chairman will try and present his report back to the House of Representatives in mid to late March. Scott Morrison's language on a 2050 emission reduction target has softened, suggesting he may be inching towards this.

WATCH news

Correspondence

WATCH was a signatory to a letter challenging Adani Ports in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index in an action organised by Market Forces. Other local signatories to this letter include StopAdani Albury-Wodonga, Knitting Nannas Albury-Wodonga and North East Regional Sustainability Alliance NERSA.

Letters in the Border Mail

'Time for action is now' - Emilie Nuck, March 6th

'Nationals unrepresentative' - Liz Hammond, February 28th

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7145938/your-say-storm-and-knights-clash-a-sensational-show>

'Objections to solar power are hard to fathom' - Linda Shortis, February 27th

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7141972/your-say-objections-to-solar-power-are-hard-to-fathom>

'Farmers must be part of the change' – Rita Ballard, February 25th (no link)

'Nationals offer fossilised thinking' - Lauriston Muirhead, February 24th

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7136325/your-say-facebook-detention-and-fossilised-thinking-up-for-debate>

'Much has changed in 80 years' - Bruce Key and *'Renewable energy uptake urgent'* - Ching Ang, February 18th (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 15th June 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://www.facebook.com/wodongaandalburytowardclimatehealth/>

Cause for concern

The Gulf Stream is slowing to a 'tipping point' and could disappear

The Gulf Stream, one of Earth's major climate-regulating ocean currents, is moving slower than it has in thousands of years, a new study suggests. Human-induced climate change is largely to blame.

<https://www.livescience.com/gulf-stream-slowing-climate-change.html>

Climate change 'the biggest security threat ever faced by modern humans', David Attenborough warns

David Attenborough made direct pleas to the UN Security Council to take urgent action on the climate crisis or face worsening global instability. <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/climate-change-the-biggest-security-threat-ever-faced-by-modern-humans-david-attenborough-warns>

Arctic ice loss forces polar bears to use four times as much energy to survive

Other predators such as narwhals are suffering similarly as unique adaptations become less suited.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/24/arctic-ice-loss-forces-polar-bears-to-use-four-times-as-much-energy-to-survive-study>

#StopAdani Albury Wodonga (SAAW)

Current actions to Stop Adani

#StopAdani National's best strategy, informed and reinforced by the work of Market Forces, is to knock out the remaining big insurance companies who have not publicly ruled out working with Adani.

Brit and Hiscox have already withdrawn in recent weeks. SAAW is focusing on ARK Syndicate Management and their majority shareholder, White Mountains Insurance, asking board members and underwriters to publicly rule out providing insurance for Adani. Links below:

Stop Adani <https://www.stopadani.com/>

Market Forces <https://www.marketforces.org.au/>

ARK <https://arkunderwriting.com/contact/management-team>,

White Mountains <https://www.whitemountains.com/contact/>

The National #StopAdani Day of Action is Wednesday 17 March but actions can also be held on other days. To find out more, please contact: alison.veld@gmail.com or jenniferruthhuber@gmail.com

Contact Bridget McKenzie!

The Knitting Nannas met with Senator Bridget McKenzie at her Wodonga office on Wednesday 10th March. They stated that part of her job is to develop policies to transition to zero emissions and that the agriculture sector should not be exempt from legislation relating to reducing carbon emissions. Please send Senator McKenzie a similar message: <https://www.bridgetmckenzie.com.au/contact/>

Knitting Nannas for Renewables

Knitting Nannas meet every Thursday at 12.30pm to 1.30pm. They are alternating between sitting outside Senator Bridget McKenzie's office, 172 High St Wodonga, and MP for Farrer Sussan Ley's office, 517 Kiewa St Albury, carefully socially distancing. Contact Liz Hammond on 0429 177 681 or email ronlizhammond@gmail.com or contact Jenni Huber 0410 074 900.

Big Letters, Junction Square, Wodonga, Saturday 3rd April, 11 am

This event is held monthly at various prominent border locations for an hour on Saturdays. The Big Letters start quite a few conversations and it's a good opportunity to highlight the issue to the community. Contact Jenni Huber on 0410 074 900.

Next SAAW general meeting, Thursday 8th April, 6.30 - 8 pm via zoom

Please RSVP to Alison on alison.veld@gmail.com to receive the link to the Tipping Point zoom account.

The meetings are no longer on the first Thursday of the month due to a clash with the national #StopAdani meeting. The May General Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 6 May at 6.30pm.

Community energy

Helen Haines proposes \$483m Local Power Agency to help communities buy in to wind and solar

Federal independent MP for Indi Helen Haines has introduced legislation to the federal parliament in a bid to establish a new, dedicated community power agency to support investment in new community owned renewable energy projects.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/haines-proposes-483m-local-power-agency-to-help-communities-buy-in-to-wind-and-solar/>

The Local Power Plan was the result of over 12 months work of Helen Haines' office, with almost 100 submissions from around Australia. Read this report from TRY, Totally Renewable Yackandandah:

[https://totallyrenewableyack.org.au/2021/02/landmark-bill-tabled-in-parliament/?](https://totallyrenewableyack.org.au/2021/02/landmark-bill-tabled-in-parliament/)

Albury and Thurgoona Community Energy Hub

Indigo Power is a locally owned social enterprise and invests half its profits on projects that support renewable energy development in our communities. The Albury Community Energy Hub was launched on March 4th at the Thurgoona Golf Club. Find out more about Indigo Power at the website

www.indigopower.com.au or call 1800 491 739.

Australia's largest community solar farm switched on in Canberra

One of Australia's first and largest community-owned solar farms, a 1MW project financed by more than 400 Canberra locals, has been completed at its site in the ACT's Majura district.

<https://onestepoffthegrid.com.au/australias-largest-community-owned-solar-farm-switched-on-in-canberra/>

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.

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

April <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/2021-04/>

Selected events

Bee inns and pollinators workshop, Willow Park, Wednesday 14th April, 10am - 12pm

<http://ecoportal.net.au/event/bee-inns-and-pollinators-workshop/>

'Farming matters' conference and field days, 29th- 31st March, Albury

Here is a link to conference rescheduled from last year. <https://landtomarket.com.au/FarmingMatters/>

Off-Grid Living Festival, 10-11th April, Eldorado

<http://offgridlivingfestival.com.au/>

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, Kirsten Coates. Please send your articles to: livinglightlybm@gmail.com

Recent articles

- [Clean Up options – we're spoilt for choice!](#) By Anne Stelling, Parklands Albury Wodonga
- [Help to put Albury Wodonga's natural environment on the map](#) By Sam Niedra, Executive Officer, Albury Conservation Company
- [Not all Mining is the Same](#) By Lauriston Muirhead, Wodonga Albury Toward Climate Health (WATCH).
- [The times; are they changing?](#) By Kirsten Coates

Environmental protection?

Morrison government's new environment commissioner 'toothless'

Conservation groups say a new environmental assurance commissioner would have no power to investigate individual decisions related to projects. They also expressed concern that ministers would have the authority to make decisions that are inconsistent with new national environmental standards if they considered it in the public interest to do so. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/feb/25/morrison-governments-new-environment-commissioner-toothless-conservation-groups-say>

Enviro bill sparks animal extinction fears - The Border Mail

Graeme Samuel recently released his review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, highlighting the need for fundamental reform. The government is instead focusing on one aspect of the review which recommended cutting red tape to prevent doubling up on decisions.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7142959/enviro-bill-sparks-animal-extinction-fears>

Australian scientists warn urgent action needed to save 19 'collapsing' ecosystems

A 'confronting and sobering' report details degradation of coral reefs, outback deserts, tropical savanna, Murray-Darling waterways, mangroves and forests.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/feb/26/australian-scientists-warn-urgent-action-needed-to-save-19-collapsing-ecosystems>

Coal - feeling the heat

The death of coal-fired power is inevitable, yet the government still has no plan to help its workforce

So what is the the federal government doing to help the [10,000 domestic coal workers](#) set to lose their jobs when Yallourn and other coal power stations shut down? At the moment, the federal government isn't offering anything more than platitudes.

<https://theconversation.com/the-death-of-coal-fired-power-is-inevitable-yet-the-government-still-has-no-plan-to-help-its-workforce-156863>

Yallourn coal closure: "Too little, too late" on climate

Friends of the Earth says the complete phase out of Australia's coal-burning power plants must occur by 2030 to contribute towards meeting Paris agreement goals and avoid dangerous climate impacts.

https://www.melbournefoe.org.au/yallourn_coal_closure_too_little_too_late

Alan Kohler: Australia's solar tsunami to trigger coal collapse

The transition to renewables is happening a lot faster than expected, and neither the national grid nor the coal industry is ready for it. The lack of clear policy leadership from Canberra has led to confusion, under-investment and complacency. <https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/2021/02/25/alan-kohler-solar-coal>

Emissions

Australian exporters could face millions of dollars in European tariffs as EU seeks to punish polluters

Australian exporters to Europe are likely to face millions of dollars in new tariffs after the European Parliament voted to move forward with a carbon levy on products from countries lacking serious pollution reduction programs. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-11/australia-to-face-huge-tariffs-in-europe-over-climate-emissions/13233360>

'Not even close:' UN slams Australia and other rich countries for weak climate efforts

United Nations secretary-general António Guterres has called on wealthy countries, including Australia, to commit to larger cuts to greenhouse gas emissions after a new report published by the UNFCCC found targets being set by national governments are nowhere near enough to limit global warming to safe levels.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/not-even-close-un-slams-australia-and-other-rich-countries-for-weak-climate-efforts/>

Australian farmers call for renewable energy zones as Nationals push coal and nuclear

The National Farmers Federation NFF is increasingly at odds with the Nationals on climate policy, after [it called for a target of net zero emissions by 2050](#) and [urged caution](#) about the prospect of a gas-led economic recovery. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/feb/23/australian-farmers-call-for-renewable-energy-zones-as-nationals-push-coal-and-nuclear>

Take action!

Workers deserve a fair and just transition

Workers and coal-reliant communities deserve a fair and just transition – [please email Scott Morrison and urge him to set up a national Just Transition Authority.](#)

Victorian Community Energy Target

Friends of the Earth Melbourne and Coalition for Community Energy (C4CE) team have created a new petition calling for a Victorian Community Energy Target. [Sign-on today](#) to throw support behind the community energy sector.

Climate champions

Anjali Sharma breaking new ground in climate fight

With seven other teenagers from four different states, Anjali Sharma is taking part in a landmark class action in the Federal Court in Melbourne. The group is challenging the federal Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley, to protect young people from climate change and the future harms of coal mining.

<https://www.theage.com.au/environment/climate-change/anjali-sharma-breaking-new-ground-in-climate-fight-20210304-p577ym.html>

Sports stars speak out

The Climate Council has released a landmark report: [Game, Set, Match: Calling time on climate inaction](#). Hopes of homegrown sporting gold in 11 years' time grabbed the headlines, but so did some top athletes, including Pat Cummins and David Pocock, [backing a new Climate Council report calling time on climate inaction](#)

And did you know...

A tiny echidna moves 8 trailer-loads of soil a year, helping tackle climate change

By improving echidna habitat, we can significantly improve soil health and boost climate action efforts.

<https://theconversation.com/dig-this-a-tiny-echidna-moves-8-trailer-loads-of-soil-a-year-helping-tackle-climate-change-155947>

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 April 21st.

Warm regards,

Jenny Davies

WATCH email address: watch.albwod@gmail.com

WATCH website: www.watch.id.au