

[View this email in your browser](#)



# Nillumbik Climate Action Team

## Deep Adaptation



Have you every woken in the night paralysed by terror at the prospect of a world collapsing into **climate and ecological chaos**? Despaired at the media images of a world riven by **catastrophic bushfires, floods, storms and sharply divided humanity**? Or felt deeply saddened at the realisation that the **joys of the natural world** that you experienced as a child will be **greatly diminished** for your children and grandchildren? Platypuses and lyrebirds will disappear from our rivers and forests, native orchids will be replaced by weeds...

The concept of **Deep Adaptation** helps us to deal with confronting topics such as the probability of near-term societal collapse; indeed, threats to the **very existence of humanity**. This was the topic of our recent Climate Cafe, presented by **Dr Aimee Maxwell**. For those who attended, it brought up a whirlwind of emotions, but also **offered solutions**. How we deal with these probabilities while supporting each other, and remaining **compassionate, connected and true to the essence of our core selves** and our humanity was at the heart of the presentation. Aimee offered us **strategies** to help us navigate our fear, grief, anger and despair at the prospect of a drastically changed world.

These strategies were first introduced by the founder of the Deep Adaptation movement, **Jem Bendell**, and encapsulated in the **4Rs**:

- **Relinquishment** – Which assets, behaviours and beliefs can we relinquish? What do we need to let go of in order to not make matters worse? Consumerism, fossil carbon, deforestation, endless growth, judgement, separation, stories that sever rather than bind, divisions, ownership.
- **Restoration** – What can we bring back to help us with the coming difficulties and tragedies? How can we connect with modes that worked well and can hold us in good stead? Reuse, repair, repurpose
- **Reconciliation** – What do we need to come to terms with to lessen suffering? The time for seeing ourselves as Other to each other and to the Earth is over. Love, forgive, grieve, connect, help.
- **Resilience** – What norms and behaviours do we wish to maintain as we seek to survive? How do we keep what we really want to keep?

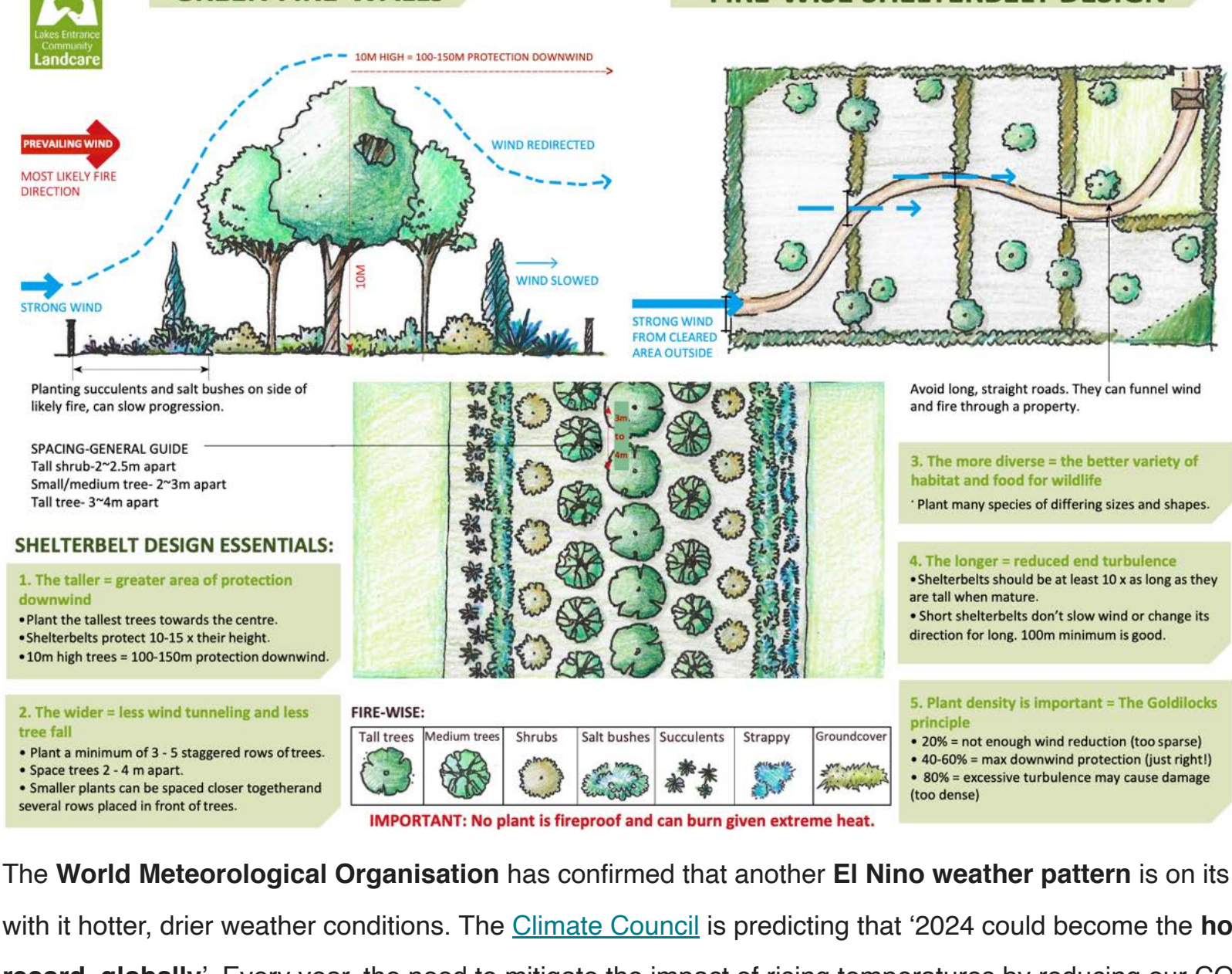
She introduced the concept of **Radical Hope** – we can be ok whatever happens. We don't need to know what the way will be, or how we'll do it as long as we carry ourselves forward as the people we want to be.

Joanna Macy's work on **Active Hope** was also discussed as a powerful tool to manage overwhelming emotions and channel them in a positive direction.

The following resources address some of these ideas in greater depth:

Deep Adaptation Forum website <https://www.deepadaptation.info>  
Breaking Together – A freedom-loving response to collapse – Jem Bendell [www.jembendell.com](http://www.jembendell.com)  
The Work that Reconnects – Joanna Macy <https://www.joannamacy.net/work>

## Bushfire Response



The **World Meteorological Organisation** has confirmed that another **El Nino weather pattern** is on its way. This brings with it hotter, drier weather conditions. The **Climate Council** is predicting that '2024 could become the **hottest year on record, globally**'. Every year, the need to mitigate the impact of rising temperatures by reducing our CO2 emissions becomes ever more urgent.

We also need smart solutions to **bushfire management**. Continuing to rely on burning large areas of bushland as a preventative measure, and thereby pouring huge quantities of CO2 into the atmosphere, does not make sense. The large-scale **hazard-reduction burn response** has traditionally been employed as the preferred method for minimising the likelihood of greater damage from disastrous natural bushfires. Recent [studies](#) by forest ecologists **Prof. David Lindenmayer** and **Dr Phil Zylstra** have found evidence to suggest that this approach to bushfire management may represent outdated thinking. These studies have shown that **allowing forests to grow to maturity** (around 60 years) leads to natural dying back of the flammable under-storey, and the increased canopy reduces wind, creates shade and increases humidity. All these factors contribute to a **fire-resistant environment**, and suggest that the best approach to fire management in non-urban areas may lie in managing forests for maturity. [Other studies](#) have shown that, while the effectiveness of prescribed burning varies across regions, nevertheless in most bioregions of Victoria, **prescribed burning is likely to have very little effect on the subsequent extent of unplanned fire**. In addition, planned burns can negatively impact [ecosystem biodiversity and wildlife health](#), as well as creating [significant health problems](#) for the surrounding communities and city populations.

But what to do in the meantime? Our forests and bushland have become so fragmented by past bushfires, land clearing, previous burning regimes and logging. Many of them are in a **highly flammable state**, which will be exacerbated by climate impacts. In addition to stopping CO2 emissions at the source, the adaptation answer lies in increased reliance on [rapid responses](#) to bushfires at point-of-ignition, to ensure fires are **detected early and suppressed early**. This is particularly crucial as we wait for forests to develop natural fire resistance.

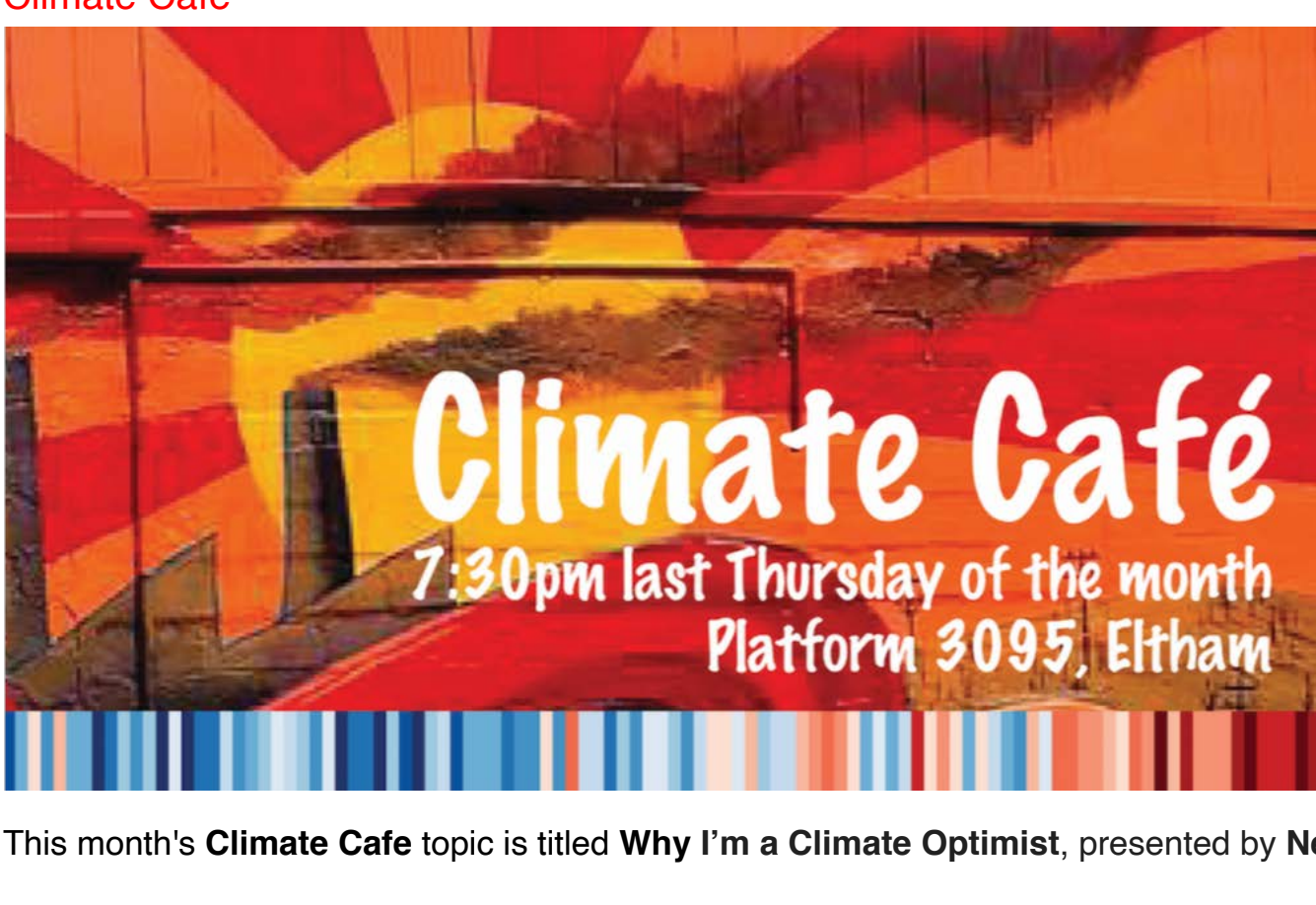
Around settlements, there is evidence that [intensive fuel treatments closer to property](#) (at a distance of no more than 0.5kms) are effective. An innovative approach to protecting assets, particularly for non-urban land-owners, is the use of ['green fire-walls'](#) (see diagram above). These are shelter-belts designed to protect buildings and animals from the worst effects of fire by **planting fire-resistant native trees strategically**. These plantings can deflect the fire and act as a windbreak, while simultaneously increasing biodiversity. While the information presented here has been developed for Gippsland communities, many of the plants suggested are also indigenous to Nillumbik.

For more information about **garden design** and **plant selection in bushfire-prone areas** click [here](#).

[Victoria's Draft Bushfire Management Strategy](#) is now open for **community feedback**, via completion of the **survey** or **submission**. Submissions close **20 August 2023**. Present throughout the draft strategy is the implicit assumption that reducing fuel load by large-scale prescribed burns will reduce subsequent fire risk from unplanned bushfires. As demonstrated in the above section, this is not necessarily the case. Make your views known by completing the survey, or send in a submission.

## Upcoming Events

### Climate Cafe



This month's **Climate Cafe** topic is titled **Why I'm a Climate Optimist**, presented by **Neville Nicholls**.

Neville trained as a meteorologist with the **Australian Bureau of Meteorology** in 1971 and has been a climate researcher for over 50 years. In the 1970s and 1980s he developed methods for seasonal rainfall forecasting for Australia and elsewhere, based on the El Niño – Southern Oscillation or ENSO. He was an author for the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** from the very first IPCC climate change assessment in 1990. In 1990 Neville initiated the development of Australia's high quality climate data bases to monitor climate change. Neville is currently an Emeritus Professor in the School of Earth, Atmosphere & Environment at Monash University.

For much of Neville's career, climate scientists have been ignored, ridiculed and abused. As a result, the challenge facing us is greater than it would have been if the scientific evidence had been accepted and acted on earlier and more forcefully. Nevertheless, Neville is still optimistic that we will overcome the challenges of global heating caused by fossil fuel burning. In his talk he will briefly outline why he is still a Climate Optimist.

Please join us for a **stimulating evening** of information and discussion. Come early to share a meal with us in the cafe, or bring your drinks and snacks from the bar into the **Beer Garden** at the rear of the building.

**Note:** This event differs from the topic previously advertised for our August cafe, due to our advertised speaker's unavailability on that night. We hope to bring you the talk on **Food Sustainability and the Climate** at a later date.

## Get Bushfire Resilient - 2023 Free Webinar Series



Bushfire Resilience Inc. is offering a series of free webinars for the 2023 season. The schedule is as follows:

**Getting ready for an El Niño summer** 7.30-9.00pm AEST Wed 16 August

Craig Lapsley, Innovation Pro Pty Ltd  
Parvathi Subramaniam, The University of Sydney  
Danielle Clode, Flinders University

**Reducing risks for people and houses** 7.30-9.00pm AEST Thu 31 August

Justin Leonard, CSIRO

**Grass fire and bushfire behavior** 7.30-9.00pm AEST Wed 13 September

Kevin Tolhurst AM, University of Melbourne  
Justin Leonard, CSIRO

**Safety actions for the fire season** 7.30-9.00pm AEDT Wed 4 October

Craig Lapsley, Innovation Pro Pty Ltd  
Jamie Mackenzie, Red Flag - Real Time Leadership Solutions  
Steve Pascoe, Resident, Strathewen Victoria

Register for the webinar series at <https://br.org.au/webinar>

## Climate Action, Coffee and Chat - St Andrews

Drop in for a free cuppa and chat with CFA, SES and Council about ways you can help climate action in your community and everyday life.

**When:** Friday, 25 August 2023, 9am - 12pm

**Where:** A Local Baker, 83 Burns Street, St Andrews

More information can be found [here](#)

## More Council Climate and Environment Activities...

### Energy and sustainable living advice

Council's sustainability officers will be available at facilities across Nillumbik over the coming months. Drop in and chat about ideas and solutions for:

- going all-electric
  - solar and batteries
  - electric vehicles
  - bulk-buys
  - saving energy
  - finding better energy deals
  - accessing the power-saving bonus.
- You can also get advice on sustainable living topics such as food production, waste reduction, building and renovating, and water efficiency around the home and landscape.

Upcoming drop-in sessions:

**17 August 9.30am -1pm Diamond Hill Library**

**7 September 11.15am - 2pm Pantom Hill Living and Learning Center**

**5 October 9.30am - 1pm Eltham Library**

Click [here](#) for more information.

### Getting Off Gas: Free online event series

Starting the home electrification journey can be daunting and confusing for many households. [Renew](#) are providing a free online event series for you to listen, learn, ask questions and gain the support you need to ditch gas.

Join the [Getting Off Gas free online series](#) to plan out your all-electric, gas-free journey

[Trades, Wiring, Plumbing, Troubleshooting](#): **Wednesday 16 August, 6.30pm–8pm**

Check out [Renew's Getting Off Gas Toolkit](#) to help you plan your transition.

## Nillumbik Climate Action Team

