



**Nillumbik
Climate
Action
Team**

Newsletter February 2025

In this newsletter

1. Welcome to 2025!
 2. Climate Cafe 2025
 3. Meeting with Kate Thwaites, MP for Jagajaga
 4. How climate change has fuelled the LA fires, and why pre-burning is no magic bullet
 5. Brave New World
 6. Climate anger can lead to action - or curdle into despair
 7. How does Australia's climate action rate on the global scale?
 8. Quotes of the Month
 9. Australia leads the world in arresting climate and environment protestors
 10. How climate science will hold fossil fuel companies to account
 11. Whatever happened to the government's National Climate Risk Assessment?
 12. Can Bluesky become the new Twitter?
 13. Upcoming events
-

1. Welcome to 2025

Welcome, newsletter readers, to our **first newsletter for 2025**. I hope you have all had a chance to rest, regroup and recharge over the summer, and are now ready to roll your sleeves up for some robust climate engagement this year.

You may have noticed some **changes in our newsletter format**. We have moved to a new bulk mailout platform, **Action Network**. We hope you will find this new format easier to read and navigate.

2. Climate Cafe 2025



This year, we are looking forward to bringing you speakers on a diverse range of climate and environment issues.

Our first climate cafe for the year, on **Thursday 27 February**, will be on the topic of **Housing and Development in Nillumbik: climate change implications** with **Anne Nielsen** from **Eltham Community Action Group (ECAG)**. Anne's presentation will delve into an update on the **Nillumbik Shire Council's Draft Housing Strategy 2024** and the **State Government's housing target for Nillumbik**. She will examine examples of proposed developments in Eltham with reference to medium density housing with virtually no garden space, McMansions that fill up most of the site they are built on, and the resulting implications for the creation of **urban heat islands, loss of tree canopy** and natural habitat, and exacerbating the effects of climate change and **reducing comfort levels** for those who occupy such developments.

The **program for the following few months** is as follows:

- **March 27**
Rebuilding Democracy to Solve the Climate Crisis
- Sonia Rhandawa (Sortition Foundation)
- **April 24**
Active Transport, Urban Planning and Sustainability
- David Collis
- **May 29**
Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design
- Sarah Bekessy (RMIT)

Where: Platform 3095 Cafe, 965 Main Rd, Eltham

When: 7:30pm last Thursday of the month February to November

As always, you are welcome to join us earlier for a meal from 6pm onwards if you can, or come at 7.30pm for the speaker event. nillumbikclimateactionteam.org/ncat-climate-cafe/

3. Meeting with Kate Thwaites, MP for Jagajaga



Elizabeth, Kate and Mitzi

by Mitzi Tuke

Mitzi and Elizabeth met with **MP for Jagajaga, Kate Thwaites** on 23 January to discuss fracking in the Beetaloo Basin and to ask for Minister Plibersek to **activate the water trigger** in the national environment laws (EPBC Act). Activating the water trigger would mean that the fracking project would then be properly assessed under the Act with reference to its impact on water resources.

The meeting is part of a **nationwide campaign**, organised in collaboration with several groups, aimed at preventing the fracking of the **Beetaloo Basin** from going ahead, due to its destructive impact on environment and NT aquifers. **Nillumbik Climate Action Team** is a member of **Beyond Gas Network**, one of the groups in the campaign.

Context

- **Empire Energy** and **Tamboran Resources**, both US companies, have been conducting “**appraisal and exploratory activities**” for fracking in the NT since about 2022
- Fracking is still considered to be at the “appraisal and exploratory” stage, and hasn’t yet assumed full scale production
- In September 2023 Tanya Plibersek asked for a scientific panel to enquire into the fracking activities,

and the report from the panel was released in December 2024

- There appears to be plenty of evidence (as analysed by environment NGO's) in the report for the Minister to **call in the projects under the EPBC and activate the water trigger.**

Kate acknowledged the shortcomings highlighted in the scientific report, and that the brief of the report was narrow, but outlined that at the appraisal and exploratory stage, the NT government was still solely responsible, and that **the federal government could not intervene until the project reached production stage.** Furthermore, there were regulatory hurdles for the project to pass before it could be called in under the Act.

However, we understand that the gas being fracked currently is being sold both to the NT government and exported, so it's at a further point than just the appraisal and exploration stage, and also that [the government does have the power to call in projects at any stage of their operation.](#) There is still more discussion to be had on this issue and the campaign is preparing evidence. The main point is that if fracking in the Beetaloo Basin does go ahead, it will have a **huge impact on the NT environment and its water resources** and a **considerable impact on global warming** due to the exported gas being burnt at end point.

Send an email to "Climate Caucus" Labor MP's

An effective quick action we can all do is to send an email to "climate caucus" Labor MP's using an email template from Lock the Gate. 307 emails have already been sent since January - let's add to them: <https://www.lockthegate.org.au/beetaloo>

“Rapid Response” Actions

I welcome anyone who is prepared to sign up for **rapid response actions** in front of Kate Thwaites' office to protest against more coal and gas projects. These actions take place periodically, and are part of similar actions that take place at other MP electorate offices. I send out an email and the more people who come to an action, the more effective is the message that people want progress on emissions reduction. Please email me to go on the list: tukemitzi@gmail.com. **Every action counts to keep pressure on the government for more action on climate.**

4. How climate change has fuelled the LA fires, and why pre-burning is no magic bullet



Photo: The Conversation

The **recent bushfires in LA** have been devastating for those impacted, and for those of us who live in bushfire-prone areas such as the fringes of Melbourne, a wake-up call for what could happen here. But let's be clear about what is the key driver of these fires - **extreme climate conditions fuelled by climate change** - and focus our attention on what is needed to reduce the risk for us.

The first article by **Danielle Veldre, Director, Climate Media Centre**, clearly sets out the factors that led to the disaster.

The second article by **David Lindenmayer, Phil Zylstra and Chris Taylor**, explains why pre-burning is not the solution to the threat to our cities.

How climate change has fuelled the LA fires

By Danielle Veldre

Recently we have seen the **devastating impacts of climate change-fuelled fires** in one of the world's wealthiest enclaves in Los Angeles. Our thoughts are with those who have lost loved ones and their homes, as well as the many firefighters who continue to battle these wildfires.

Unfortunately, Australians are all too familiar with disasters on this scale. This is an important time to be explaining what's happening, and why, as we see some **harmful and disturbing mis- and dis-information** being peddled by those with large platforms.

Reprinted from CANAchat, 14 January 2025

Click [here](#) for full story and further messaging and resources.

Can we really fight fire with fire? Why pre-burning is no magic bullet

By David Lindenmayer, Phil Zylstra and Chris Taylor

Like clockwork after every wildfire, such as those in the Grampians and now in Los Angeles, politicians and other commentators **invariably call for more prescribed burning**. They say low intensity fires deliberately lit by authorities will reduce fuel loads and so limit damage from these extreme blazes.

The debate has also taken off in California, [where some commentators](#) have blamed the tragedy in Los Angeles on the decision of authorities in October to stop prescribed burning “for the foreseeable future”. The loudest voices on Australia’s east coast claim **little to no prescribed burning has occurred in recent years** and cite this as the reason for catastrophic fires.

The Age, 19 January 2025

[Read more...](#)

5. Brave New World

Photo: AP news

Since our last newsletter, the world has turned several shades darker, with the inauguration of Donald Trump as President of the United States. The implications of this for the climate have yet to fully play out, but already, **Trump has signed an executive order [withdrawing the US from the Paris climate agreement](#)**, as well as a raft of other actions including ramping up domestic oil and gas production and removing incentives for electric vehicles. Even more worrying, the inauguration dais was stacked with right-wing tech billionaire sycophants in thrall to the fossil fuel industries.

It is not always easy to know how to respond with anything other than anger, despair and hopelessness at such scenes, but now, more than ever, we need to push back against these reactions and actively continue the fight for a world of climate justice, connection and kindness.

The following piece by **Tim Hollo, Executive Director of the [Green Institute](#)**, written at the time of Trump's inauguration, points the way towards this approach, and **cautions against the normalisation of fascism, hate and lies**.

'This morning, we woke up to the news that, at the celebrations for Donald Trump's re-inauguration, the world's richest man - and a man who has been telling us for years that he's a fascist, and has turned the social media platform he bought into a Nazi zone - very obviously and deliberately [threw a Nazi salute](#).

This is not an accident.

The global right has been building in this direction for a long time.

What Trump's win does (more than anything else it will lead to, in my opinion) is enable the **normalisation of fascism**. The normalisation of hate. The normalisation of lies. The normalisation of a worldview of hyper-"masculine", hyper-individualist, hyper-domination.

...

I don't need to tell you that this is incredibly dangerous. **These men will destroy anything in their way in their quest for more power**. People. Communities. Ecosystems. Our entire planetary life-support systems.

But I do want to emphasise that the normalisation can affect all of us. And it often does. And we need to work incredibly hard not to be captured by any aspect of this destructive, genocidal, omnicidal worldview.'

[Read more...](#)

Reprinted from a blog by **Tim Hollo**, [The Green Institute](#), 21 January 2025

6. Climate anger can lead to action – or curdle into despair. Researchers found out why

Strong emotional responses to environmental problems are [remarkably common](#). We know people are [angry about](#) climate change – but how many?

Recent [research](#) surveyed 5,000 Australians and found **almost half (49%) are angry about our warming world**. So what do people do with their climate anger?

Anger can be a galvanising emotion, spurring us to action. But when faced by a seemingly insurmountable cause, it can also turn into despair.

This research found responses to climate anger depend on what aspect of the problem people are angry about – and who they feel is responsible.

The Conversation, 20 December 2024

[Read more....](#)

7. How does Australia's climate action rate on the global scale?

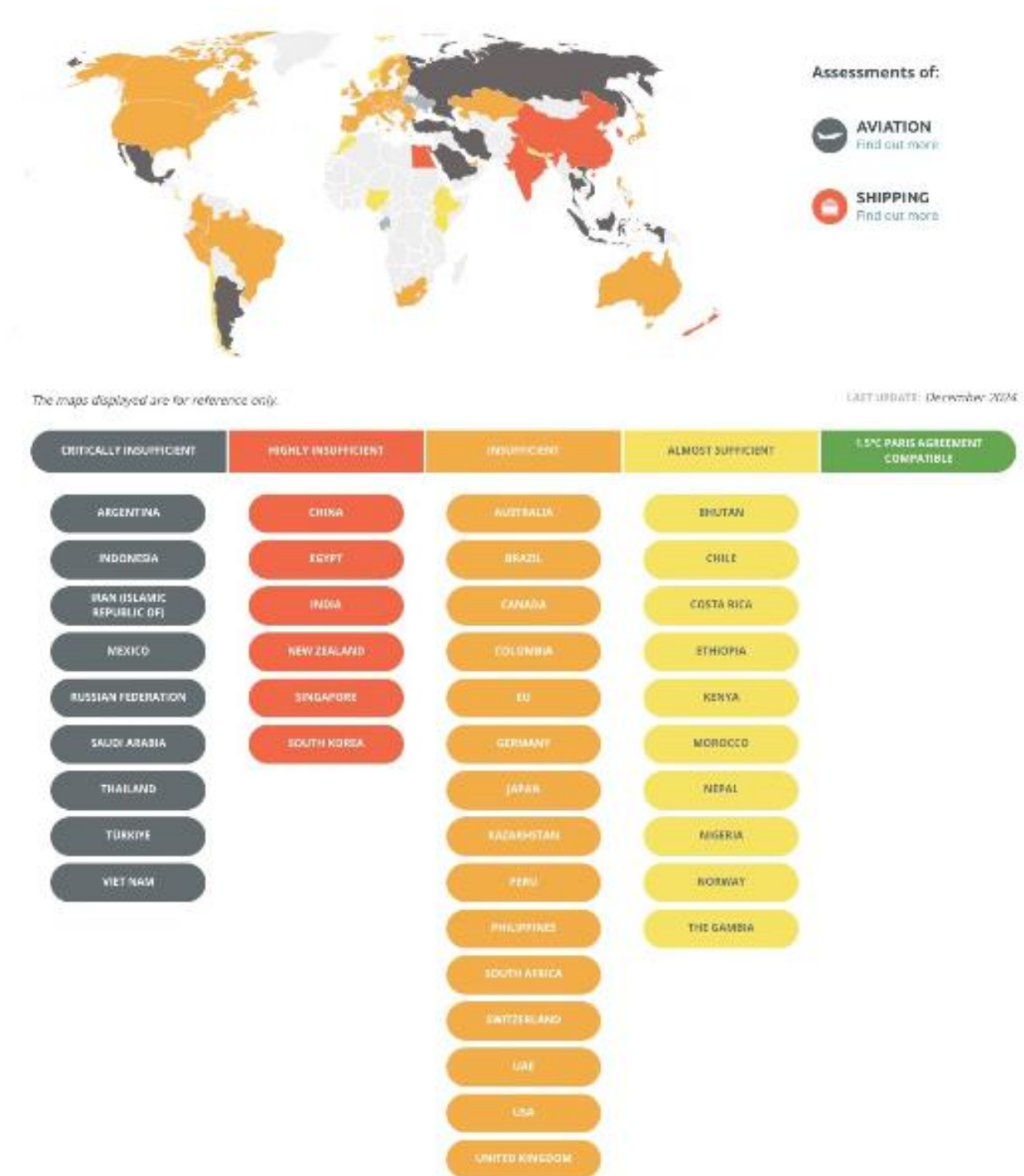


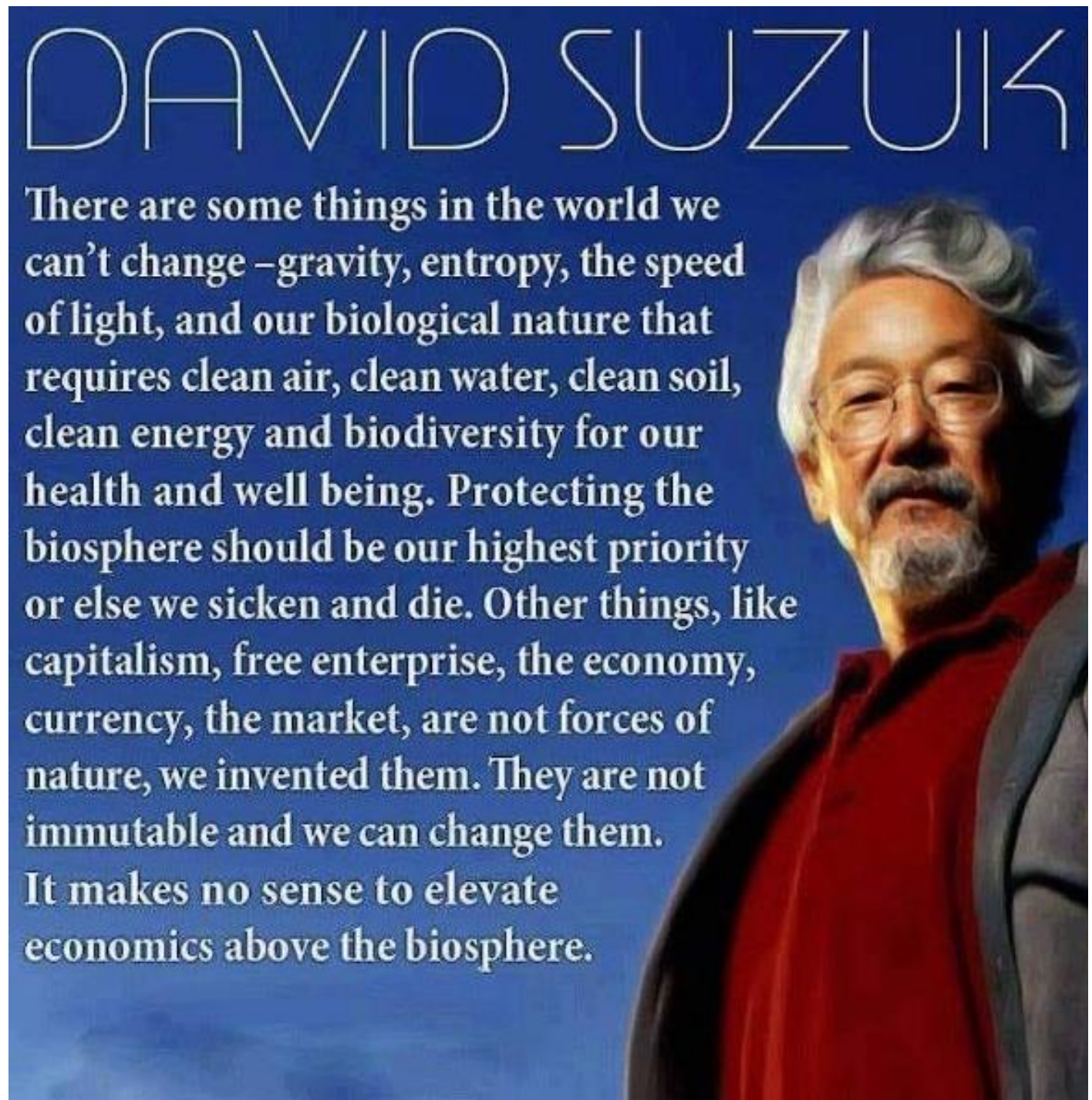
Image: [Climate Action Tracker](#)

The government has introduced several measures aimed at stimulating investment in large-scale renewable energy, green hydrogen production and clean manufacturing, and improvements to vehicle efficiency. However, in parallel, **the government has doubled down on fossil fuels**, embedding their role in Australia's domestic energy consumption and exports.

The government's approval of seven new coal mine projects in 2023 and 2024 will allow coal mining and exports to continue for many decades to come. This is **incompatible with the Paris Agreement's goals**, and with the government's own emission reduction commitments.

From [Climate Action Tracker](#)

8. Quotes of the Month



“The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it. “

– Robert Swan

9. Australia leads the world in arresting climate and environment protestors



Photo: ABC News: Patrick Rocca

A new study was released in recent days that should have been newsworthy, but it escaped the media's attention in Australia.

It showed **Australian police are world leaders at arresting climate and environmental protesters.**

According to the study, **more than 20 per cent of all climate and environment protests in Australia involve arrests**, which is more than three times the global average (6.3 per cent).

Australia's arrest rate was the **highest of 14 countries in the global study.**

The Age News, 15 December 2024

[Read more...](#)

10. How climate science will hold fossil fuel companies to account



Photo: Renew Economy

Two weeks into 2025 and it already feels like a turning point for climate action – for good and bad. We start the year with news that **the Earth experienced yet another ‘[warmest year on record](#)’** and global temperatures surpassed the 1.5-degree mark for the first time. [Los Angeles is on fire in the middle of winter](#), and Donald Trump is returning as US President.

The task ahead of us – phasing out the use of fossil fuels, investing in clean energy technologies, and protecting vulnerable communities from the locked-in impacts of climate change – [remains huge](#).

But the task is not insurmountable and there are reasons for optimism that **fossil fuel companies will be held legally and financially responsible for the damages caused by climate change**, thanks to progress in the field of [climate attribution science](#).

Renew Economy, 20 January 2025

[Read more \(note: long read\)...](#)

11. Whatever happened to the government's National Climate Risk Assessment?

By David Spratt

The Los Angeles fires have again demonstrated the need for a **steely-eyed approach by governments to climate risks**, ensuring that the assessment of those risks is up-to-date, considers the plausible worst-case scenarios, and is made widely available so the public understands what we are facing.

But the Australian Government's work-in-progress National Climate Risk Assessment appears to be sinking fast, leaving us ill-prepared.

...

Australia's security now needs a climate focus. It would be a terrible result if a full term of a Labor Government produced half a risk climate assessment from ONI which was too hot to handle and locked in a bottom drawer, and another half which sank without trace.

For the full story, click [here](#).

Reprinted from CANAchat, 15 January 2025

12. Can Bluesky become the new Twitter?

In the face of Mark Zuckerberg's decision to [remove fact checking](#) from Facebook, making it even more difficult to share news in the climate space without inviting trolling, and Elon Musk's pushing of Twitter/X further into a twilight zone of [climate disinformation](#), **more and more climate and environment groups are turning to the social media platform Bluesky.**

[Lighter Footprints](#) has published a very comprehensive guide to joining Bluesky in their latest newsletter.

Click [here](#) for information on how to join Bluesky.

13. Upcoming Events

Edendale Farm Textile Workshops - February/March

[Tee Re-Made textile repurposing workshop - Edendale Community Environment Farm](#), Sunday 9 February, 10-11.30am

[Fabric Swap at Edendale - Edendale Community Environment Farm](#), Sunday 9 February, 11.30am-1pm

[Clothes Swap at Edendale - Edendale Community Environment Farm](#), Saturday 22 February, 11:30am-2pm

[REthink Nillumbik - Planet-friendly fashion - Edendale Community Environment Farm](#), Saturday 1 March, 10am-1pm

National Sustainability Festival, 1-28 February

A huge range of events from all corners of the state. Highlights include: **Climate Adaption Fair, The PM's Climate Speech we've been waiting for, Rehydrate Earth with Damon Gameau**

sustainabilityfestival.au/program/

Climate Adaptation Fair, 8 February 2025 10am-4pm. Borderlands Co-op, 30A Pickett St, Footscray

Showcasing all things climate adaptation through stalls, workshops, and talks.

[Click here for more info](#)

Boroondara Sustainable Living Festival, Saturday 15 March 2025 8am-12.30pm

[Click here for more info](#)

Council Events:

Power up Nillumbik Introductory Webinar, Thursday 20 March 2025, 7-8pm

Learn about the benefits of transitioning to electric energy, including cost savings, improved efficiency and environmental impact.

[Book here for tickets.](#)

Heat pump hot water systems, Thursday 27 March 2025, 7-8pm

Discover how heat pumps work, the environmental benefits they offer, and the significant financial savings they can provide.

[Book here for tickets.](#)

Support us

[Nillumbik Climate Action Team \(NCAT\)](#) is a small volunteer organisation. We rely on donations to support our work, and **thank you** to everyone who has donated to date. [Further details here.](#)

We'd be very grateful if you are able to support us, even in a small way.

Note: you can now donate online.

[Donate](#)

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of Nillumbik and its environs, and that this land was never ceded. We thank them for their custodianship of the land over millennia.

We acknowledge that we are in a climate emergency; there can be no climate justice without First Nations justice.

We support First Nations peoples in their striving for complete recognition, truth-telling, treaty and justice, and we are sorry for the hurt and injustice we have caused.