



**Nillumbik
Climate
Action
Team**

Newsletter April 2025

In this newsletter

1. Climate Cafe - Rebuilding Democracy to Solve the Climate Crisis
 2. Other NCAT events/actions
 3. Election messaging
 4. Australia's nature laws on the chopping block
 5. Climate Change: Where are we now?
 6. Climate Council's heat map of Australia
 7. A Fossil Fuel Behemoth: Report exposes Australia's hypocrisy in wake of Cyclone Alfred
 8. Rehydrate Earth
 9. The Climate Anxiety Toolkit
 10. Planned Burns: do they achieve what they promise?
 11. A win against the fire ants
 12. Quote of the Month
 13. Upcoming events
-

1. Climate Cafe 2025



Our climate cafe on **Thursday 27 March**, was on the topic of **Rebuilding Democracy to Solve the Climate Crisis** with **Sonia Randhawa** from the **Sortition Foundation**. Sonia laid out some of the reasons why representative democracy is falling seriously short of providing effective solutions for deep-seated problems like the **climate and biodiversity crisis**. For a summary of Sonia's talk, please click [here](#).

Our next climate cafe, on **24 April**, will be presented by **David Collis**. David will speak on the topic of **Active Transport, Urban Planning and Sustainability**.

David will look into the issue of **sustainable transport** - why electric cars are not the complete solution, and why we should **prioritise active transport and public transport** first. He will investigate how transport systems influence other aspects of sustainability, including **land use** and **consumption habits**—particularly in relation to urban sprawl and habitat destruction on the urban fringe. This approach will be applied to the **Nillumbik context** and how residents can advocate for change, with a focus on local government action.

David completed his **Master's of Urban Planning** at the University of Melbourne in 2024, with a particular focus on transport planning. His master's thesis was titled **Cooperation and Conflict: Exploring Intergovernmental Relations in Cycling Infrastructure Implementation**. It studied the interactions between state and local government in delivering cycling infrastructure projects across jurisdictional boundaries. This research was key to understanding the political dimensions of cycling infrastructure planning and implementation, which has been useful in forming an understanding of how to push political actors for sustainable transport infrastructure.

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

- **May 29**
Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design
- Sarah Bekessy (RMIT)
- **June 26**
The State of the Forests: Where are we now?
- Kinglake Friends of the Forest
- **July 31**
Gardens for a Warming Climate
- Peter May (Environmental services professional and horticulturalist)

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/

2. Other NCAT Events/Actions

- **Eltham Roundabout Actions**



We need to get climate on the agenda and in people's minds in the lead up to the election and we need action!

Nillumbik Climate Action Team is holding weekly **NO MORE COAL AND GAS** protest actions on Thursdays with banners and placards in Eltham.

We meet in Eltham township on the corner of Luck Street and Main Road and then go onto the roundabout where we hold a banner and placards to attract attention to motorists. People also remain on the pavement with placards.

What: Eltham Roundabout Action - High visibility anti-fossil fuel action with banner and placards
When: Every Thursday, 4.00-5.00pm (meet at 3.45pm on corner of Luck Street and Main Road, Eltham)
Where: Main Road and Luck Street Roundabout, Eltham township

Banner and placards provided

These actions are weekly. However times may change, and we always confirm that a Thursday action will be going ahead at the beginning of the week. If you would like to be a part of these fun, high visibility actions, please email Mitzi at tukemitzi@gmail.com, and she will confirm details from week to week.

Come and join us, we need more people.

- **Help us hand out election Climate Scorecards**

We are looking for people who would be willing to hand out Candidate Climate Scorecards ahead of the forthcoming federal election. These are cards which **rate candidates on their climate policies**. They can provide useful information to the public on which candidates and/or parties will best support strong action on climate. If you are interested, please email Elizabeth at info@nillumbikclimateaction.org and you will be contacted when the cards are ready to be distributed.

- **Artwork for sale**



A generous supporter has donated this Sandra House painting (48 cms x 48cms). The artist had requested that money from the sale of this painting be used to promote climate change causes. Our supporter would like the money to be used to purchase Climate Scorecards.

The painting is worth about \$250. If you are interested in purchasing this beautiful painting, please email Elizabeth at info@nillumbikclimateaction.org.

3. Election messaging

Now that the election has been called - **Saturday 3 May** - we need to get our election messaging in order for those convos with family, friends and neighbours, and people in the street. Nelli Stevenson from [Solutions for Climate Australia](#) has put together this quick and easy messaging package that covers nuclear, gas and renewables.

Nuclear messaging:

- Dutton's nuclear scheme takes too long, costs too much and will only give us 6% of the energy Australia needs
- Dutton's nuclear scheme will make your power bills explode. Solar and a battery would slash them by thousands.
- Solar saves, nuclear costs
- If you have solar power your bills will double under Dutton
- Dutton's nuclear scheme has too many risks: health risks, safety risks and waste risks.
- Nuclear will send up household electricity bills an extra \$665 each year, even more if they have solar [\(1\)](#)
- The Liberal's nuclear plan would cost up to \$600bn [\(2\)](#)
- If nuclear is built in Australia around four million households will have their solar shut off, adding over \$1,200 per hear to energy bills

Gas messaging:

- The Coalition's nuclear energy scheme bombed. Now it's trying to push expensive and polluting gas
- Gas is an expensive fossil fuels that's driving dangerous climate change
- Australia doesn't have a gas shortage problem. Australia has a gas export problem.
- Gas plays a small and shrinking role in Australia's energy system. As we roll out more batteries and hydro it won't be needed.
- Fast tracking new gas mines won't do anything to lower energy prices right now.
- Gas mines are being proposed in places like WA's Scott Reef, and Victoria's whale migration paths.

Renewables messaging:

- Most people agree that renewables are the fastest way to bring down our energy bills
 - Renewables are already powering 40% of our grid
 - Solar on your house brings down your household bills, and solar in our grid can bring down everyone's bills
 - Most country Australians support renewables, it's only a noisy minority who don't.
-

4. Australia's Nature Laws on the Chopping Block



Photo: Guardian

Environment groups have been shocked and devastated by the news in the past week that the Labor government has introduced legislation that will allow the foreign-owned salmon industry to bypass Australia's environmental laws.

This will sign the death warrant for the endangered Maugean Skate, which is battling extinction in the heavily polluted waters of Macquarie Harbour.

Even worse, this move sets a dangerous precedent that threatens to gut existing environmental protections.

This legislation, which was passed by Labor and the Coalition on 25 March, will prohibit third-party civil society organisations like the Australia Institute and the Environmental Defenders Office from challenging environmentally damaging projects.

What Labor is proposing will make it harder to use existing environmental laws for their intended purpose. It limits who can challenge projects on their environmental impact. The research and modelling that organisations like the Australia Institute provide would become inadmissible, leaving community groups fighting against multi-million dollar consultants and corporations alone. This highly undemocratic legislation must be revoked at the next sitting of Parliament.

For more information on the damaging salmon industry and the danger to Australia's environment laws, click [here](#).

5. Climate Change: Where are we now?

A webinar hosted by the LaTrobe University Ideas and Society Program on 17 March, and featuring a wide-ranging discussion between Tim Flannery, Greg Mullins and Robyn Eckersley, facilitated by Lauren Rickards, did not hesitate to raise uncomfortable questions about the current state of play in this country with regard to climate.

Tim described the current battle of humanity to find solutions for the climate crisis as 'a mighty struggle for the soul of our species', in which the need to move away from a patriarchal world model was at the core.

He felt that the time to talk about 'net-zero' emissions reductions had passed - the conversation and action needed to focus instead on real emissions cuts. Most of the work in reducing the national carbon footprint rested with our government, rather than individuals, and required measures such as

- reducing fossil fuel subsidies to zero,
- stopping new coal and gas projects,
- increasing taxes for major polluters,
- repairing our landscapes to increase drawdown, in particular, protecting and restoring forests.

He did not discount the need for major geo-engineering projects in the future, as the need to drawdown CO₂ from the atmosphere is likely to become more urgent, but acknowledged the risks inherent in such technology.

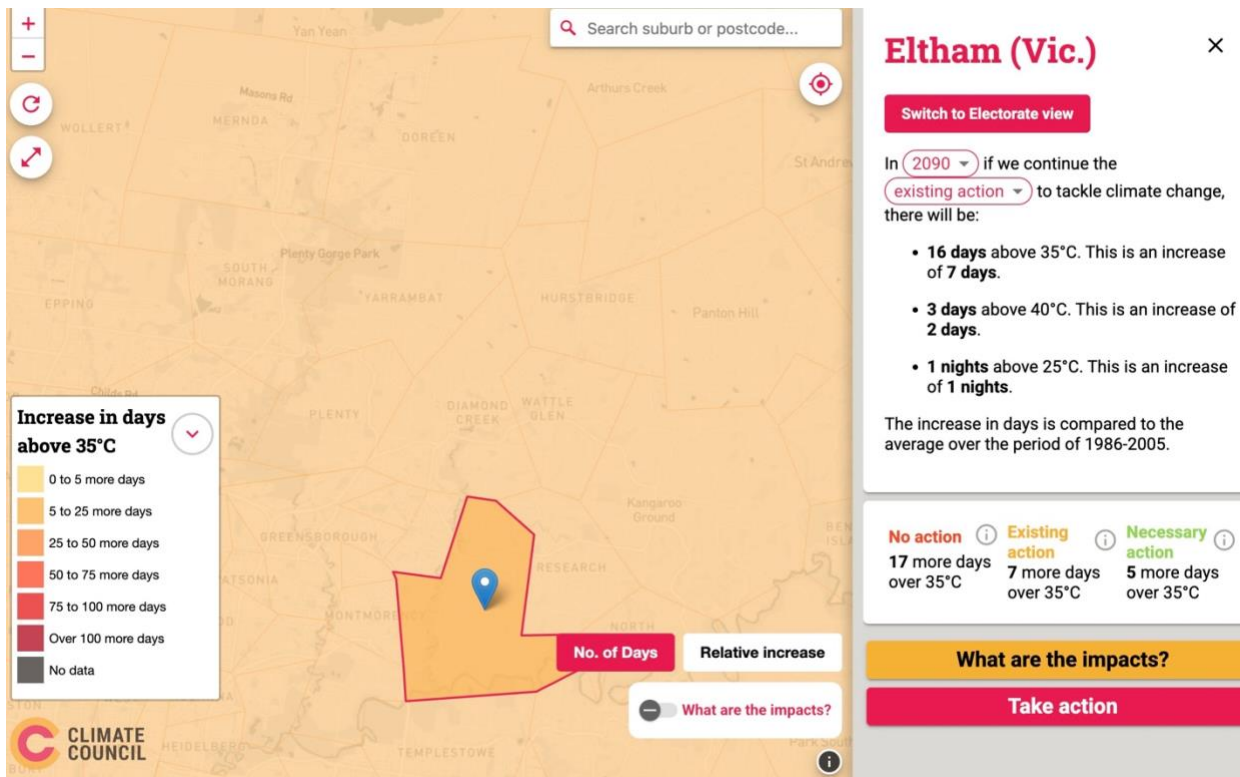
Robyn Eckersley talked about the tendency of the Australian government to refuse to take responsibility for exported fossil fuels, and to leave these exports to market forces. She pointed out that all the renewable initiatives in the world would not counteract this.

She described the process of democratic de-consolidation and decay that we are witnessing, including the rise of right-wing illiberal democracies, the anti-climate change policies of both major parties putting climate change off the agenda, and turning the Greens into climate extremists.

Our present democracy is not designed to deal with long-term problems, and she called upon government and corporations to become more reflective, long-term and considerate of the ecological implications of their actions. She raised the concept of the 'precautionary principle' - the onus should be on corporations to demonstrate that no damage will be done. There is a need for a cultural shift that sees ecosystems form the basis of the economy, not the GDP.

Visit the [La Trobe University Ideas and Society website](#) for more information, and to watch the webinar on demand. Click on Book Now, complete the registration and the recording link will be sent to you.

6. The Climate Council's heat map of Australia



The Climate Council's Heat Map of Australia is an interactive tool that shows how cutting climate pollution will limit extreme heat in our neighbourhoods. It projects the average number of hot and very hot days, as well as very hot nights, for each suburb and electorate per year by 2050 and 2090, and across three scenarios: no action, continuing with existing action, and taking necessary action in line with Climate Council's recommendations.

Click [here](#) to access the interactive heat map for your area.

7. A fossil fuel behemoth: Report exposes Australia's hypocrisy in wake of Cyclone Alfred

In the wake of Tropical Cyclone Alfred a new report by the [Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty Initiative](#) has exposed Australia's role fuelling the climate crisis that is leading to more intense, frequent and severe storms and extreme weather events.

The report, [Exporting Harm: The Climate Toll of Australia's Fossil Fuel Expansion](#), details how Australia's fossil fuel exports have doubled twice in the past three decades, making it one of the largest contributors to global carbon pollution.

The report examines the pipeline of new fossil fuel projects and finds that in five years time, Australia's planned expansion of coal and gas exports will cause three times more climate pollution than its domestic emissions, pushing the country further out of step with the Paris Agreement.

Key findings:

Australia's fossil fuel exports have doubled twice in the past three decades—from 1990 to 2005 and again from 2005 to today.

Since 2021, despite global warnings, Australia has approved 30 new coal and gas projects under Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act with more approved under the offshore oil and gas regime.

48% of the world's metallurgical coal and 19% of thermal coal originate from Australia, making it the largest and second-largest exporter of each, respectively.

Australia's liquefied gas exports have increased seven-fold since 2005, with the country now producing 20% of all internationally traded LNG.

Australia's fossil fuel pipeline will add more still. A conservative selection of the projects currently being planned in Australia would create as much as 18.6 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions—equivalent to 6.2% of the world's remaining 1.5°C carbon budget.

Australia's exported fossil fuel emissions will be 3.3 times larger than its domestic emissions within five years.

Key Messages:

Australia is a fossil fuel behemoth. We are the largest exporter of coal in the world and produce 20% of the entire world's internationally traded liquified gas. Australia urgently needs to phase out coal and gas exports to cut pollution and act on climate change, but coal and gas exports have doubled twice in the last three decades and massive expansions of coal and gas exports are planned.

The Australian government has continued approving new coal and gas projects, directly contradicting the demands of Pacific nations, international agencies, and scientific consensus that fossil fuel expansion must stop. Australia is doing the complete opposite of what scientists, and international agencies, are demanding. By expanding coal and gas pollution Australia is going backwards on climate.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese [says climate change is making extreme weather events, like Cyclone Alfred, more frequent and more intense](#), but his government is making climate change more intense by approving new coal and gas projects. The world needs Australia to reign in its rampant fossil fuel expansion, and put the safety of people above the profits of coal and gas billionaires.

Click [here](#) for the full report. Reprinted from Cana chat email of 14/3/25.

8. Rehydrate Earth



As part of the National Sustainability Festival in February, filmmaker Damon Gameau (of 2040 fame) hosted a webinar with himself in conversation with international ecologists and hydrologists Michal Kravcik and Anastassia Makarieva. These earth system experts presented a compelling case for tackling the climate crisis through the practice of keeping all water in the landscape, rather than allowing it to run off into the ocean.

This is done initially through damming water with human-made structures and planting hardy soil-binding plants at the water's edge. By retaining and capturing all CO₂ molecules within the landscape and reducing run-off, not only is more water absorbed by the soil and erosion reduced, but it increases the opportunities for vegetation to flourish in the moist soil.

The resulting evapotranspiration, which is at the core of the water cycle and photosynthesis, encourages clouds to form over land rather than the sea, and ensures that rainfall lands where it is most needed, over the land. The rainfall events that occur are more likely to be mild as the latent heat is held in the water vapour, and reduce the high temperatures which lead to destructive storms and consequent flooding.

The YouTube video of the webinar can be watched [here](#).

9. The Climate Anxiety Toolkit

This free guide, created by health experts at the Climate Council, has been designed to give people suffering from climate anxiety positive coping strategies.

These strategies can both improve their mental health and help cut climate pollution - because looking after ourselves and taking climate action go hand in hand.

Inside you'll find:

- ✓ Five tools for managing climate anxiety.
- ✓ Ten actions you can take to feel more in control.
- ✓ Tips for supporting young people in your life with climate anxiety.
- ✓ Links to services where you can get more help.

To access the Climate Anxiety Toolkit, click [here](#).

10. Planned burns - do they achieve what they promise?



Collapse of hollow bearing trees after a planned burn at Flowerdale on 27/3/25. Photo: Kinglake Friends of the Forest

At this time of the year, the air is filled with smoke from forest management authorities 'burning off'. This sounds like an innocent enough phrase, so-called 'fuel reduction' burning to keep us safe from larger, more catastrophic bushfires.

But this is far from the case. [Scientific evidence](#) shows that, instead of protecting townships, recently burnt forests actually increase flammability a couple of years after the fire due to the sudden flush of scrubby growth that emerges following a fire. As forests mature, this shrubby layer dies back, and the forest becomes more fire-resistant.

At present a number of forest stands near to Kinglake are under threat from planned burns, or have already been burnt. In the past week, a forest stand beside McMahons Rd in Flowerdale and another at Andrew Hill in Kinglake have been burnt, releasing large quantities of CO2 into the air, and destroying habitat, wildlife and biodiversity.

This decision has been made in spite of the fact that the fuel hazard rating for one of these burns was described as 'moderate' in 2024 – the second lowest possible fuel hazard rating. This burn is unlikely to further reduce that fuel hazard rating. It is unclear why this planned burn has been undertaken, if the aim is not to 'reduce fuel'.

These forests have been home to a re-established population of endangered Southern Greater Gliders, following the 2009 fires. It is known that planned burns collapse around 25% of hollow bearing trees within the planned burn area, which is catastrophic for species such as Greater Gliders and Powerful Owls, that rely on these hollows for habitat.

Last November, [research](#) showed that 'frequent fuel-reduction burning...primes ecosystems for major disruption when the next wildfire hits', leading to 'catastrophic declines' in plant and animal numbers.

In addition to managing forests for maturity, Sue McKinnon from Kinglake Friends of the Forest states, 'we need to invest in remote area firefighting, and tower mounted cameras for rapid detection and suppression of bushfires, not spend time and money lighting fires where they achieve nothing for public safety, and cause damage to community health and to the environment.'

Sign the [Kinglake Friends of the Forest petition](#) to put an end to this destructive practice. For more information on Fire Fast Facts, visit the [Victorian Forest Alliance](#) fact sheet [here](#)

11. A win against the fire ants

After relentless advocacy by the [Invasive Species Council](#) the Queensland government has just announced an immediate \$24 million boost to ramp up the fight against fire ants.

It's a huge win. And one the Invasive Species Council directly called for to keep eradication efforts on track.

Fire ants are one of the most dangerous invasive pests Australia has ever faced. They sting people, pets, livestock and wildlife alike. Without urgent action, they will spread – and every family, community and council will be left to fight back with costly chemicals.

This new funding means more aerial treatments and more people on the ground to reduce the density of these super pests so that eradication efforts can be successful. It's proof that when we work together, we can make governments act!

This election, take action now by telling your federal candidate to protect nature and call for an end to the invasives-led extinction crisis. Click [here](#) for more information.

'We are in a mighty struggle for the soul of our species' - Tim Flannery

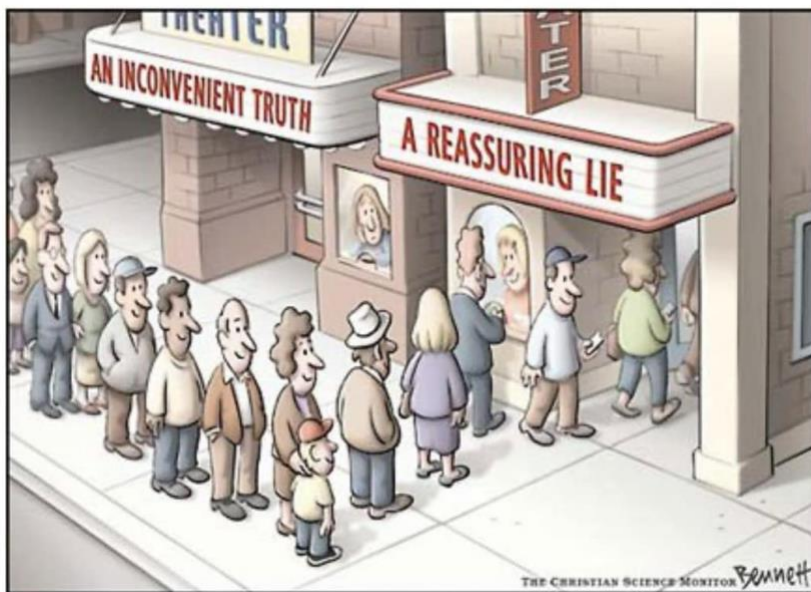


Image: The Christian Science Monitor (thanks to Geoff Collis for contribution)

12. Upcoming Events

Rethink Nillumbik and Going Green Solutions: All Electrification events program

GO ELECTRIC!

FREE info about electrification and home efficiency



Info & bookings

	Power up Nillumbik (online) 20 March, 7pm to 8pm A brief webinar to help make an informed decision about electrifying your home
	Heat pump hot water systems (online) 27 March, 7pm to 8pm Info on how they work, different models, financial rebates, and avoiding problems.
	Reverse cycle air conditioning (online) 3 April, 7pm to 8pm A short webinar about the efficiency and benefits of reverse-cycle air conditioning.
	Window thermal efficiency (online) 10 April, 7pm to 8pm Ways to boost the thermal efficiency of your windows on any budget.
	Draught proofing your home (online) 23 April, 7pm to 8pm Techniques to identify and prevent draughts for a warmer, more comfortable home.
	Electrification masterclass (in person) 3 May, 10am to 1pm Information and advice on powering your home for the future.
	Energy Heroes (in person) 10 & 17 May, 9am to 4pm Become a community leader in energy efficiency and electrification.
	Electrifying for winter (in person) 15 May, 7pm to 9pm How to maximise comfort while minimising energy bills.



A comprehensive lineup of electrification events to cover all your electrification needs!
Click [here](#) for more information and bookings.

Sustainable House Day Sunday 4 May

Sustainable House Day is an annual event presented by and run by Renew that provides the opportunity to explore some of Australia's most inspiring homes, and learn from the people who designed them, built them, and live in them.

There are 6 homes around Nillumbik participating in Sustainable House Day this year.

[Eltham Town Treehouse - Eltham](#)

[Bundy Gully – St Andrews](#)

[Electric Alistair Knox House – North Warrandyte](#)

[Kenarra \(earthship style house\) – Hurstbridge](#)

[Henry House – St Andrews](#)

[Rosie and Grant's House - Hurstbridge](#)

Book your tickets [here](#).

Electric Vehicle Webinar Wednesday 21 May, 7-8pm

Join EV expert Bryce Gaton for the latest information on electric vehicle models, running costs, charging, running appliances from your car, undertaking long road trips and much more!
Register [here](#) for this webinar.

Energy and Sustainable Living Advice

Nillumbik Council offers a personalised advisory service for Nillumbik residents and businesses, on how to navigate the confusing world of energy and sustainable living.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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](#).

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.