



**Nillumbik
Climate
Action
Team**

Newsletter July 2025

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1. Climate Cafe 2025



Last Thursday we heard a powerful presentation from **Rosemary Storey** on the topic of **The State of the Forests: Where are we now?** Rosemary systematically uncovered what can only be described as a situation of **state-condoned lawlessness** currently prevailing in the forests.

While **Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV)** has a code of practice, there is no **external regulation** to protect the environment. Practices such as clearing vast areas for strategic firebreaks, 'forest farming', planned burns, salvage logging, logging on private land and logging under licence on crown lands all cause enormous damage to wildlife, habitat, human health, water catchments, and threaten the integrity of entire forest ecosystems, including the iconic mountain ash forests.



Aftermath of a planned burn in Kinglake. Photo: Kinglake Friends of the Forest

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

A full **summary of Rosemary's talk** is available [here](#), including resources for further information and follow-up action. In particular, you are encouraged to sign **Kinglake Friends of the Forest's [open letter](#) to the Premier about planned burns.**

Our next climate cafe will be presented by **Dr Peter May**, Environmental Services professional and horticulturalist, and former Head of Burnley College of Horticulture. Peter will discuss how **climate variables affect plant growth** and what climate change forecasts might do to our gardens. He will also explore whether there are strategies that might be useful counters to those effects. He will share some of his experiences as a home gardener, in a garden that attempts to address climate challenges.

Peter May taught at **Burnley College of Horticulture** for thirty odd years. He was Head of Campus on retirement. His interests are wide-ranging and include many aspects of horticulture, including **plant interactions with climate**.

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

July 31 - Gardens for a Warming Climate

- Peter May (Environmental services professional and horticulturalist)

August 28 - The Science behind Climate Change

- Tim Davis

September 25 - The North West Shelf/Browse Basin Gas Project

- Mitzi Tuke

October 30 - The Aviation Industry and Climate Change

- Geoff Collis

November 27 - Novel Crops

- Chris Williams

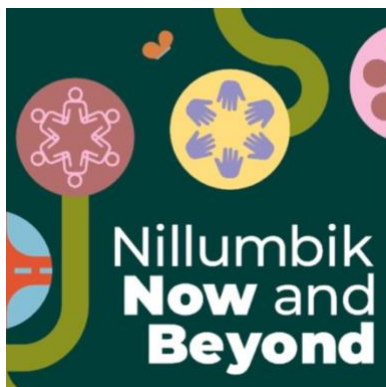
Where: Platform 3095 Cafe, 965 Main Rd, Eltham

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. Nillumbik Now and Beyond: Feedback Invited



The draft **Nillumbik Now and Beyond** documents are now available for public comment. These critical documents will guide Council's work for the next four years. They include the **Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan** and **Asset Plan**.

This is an opportunity to have your say about the **future direction of our shire**. Feedback can be provided by:

- Completing an online feedback form by **11.59pm Wednesday 9 July**
- Speaking to your submission at the **Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting (PCC) on 12 August**

Visit the [Participate Nillumbik website](#) for information on completing the feedback form and to register to speak at the PCC meeting on 12 August.

3. Vigil for No More Coal and Gas: Action outside Kate Thwaites office



On Thursday 26 June, a group of dedicated NCAT supporters conducted a **vigil for No more coal and gas** outside Jagajaga MP Kate Thwaites' office in Burgundy Street Heidelberg. The mood was quiet and reflective, with appropriate props such as flowers, candles and black cloaks. The vigil attracted some attention from passers-by, who were interested to hear about the issues that were the focus of the vigil. Kate Thwaites emerged briefly from her office to listen to her constituents' concerns, and promised to take these to parliament.

A further vigil will be held at 37 Burgundy Street, Heidelberg, on 10 July in two hour shifts from 10am to 4pm. Please contact Mitzi at tukemitzi@gmail.com if you would like to be involved.

It is critical that we continue to put pressure on the Labor government by actions such as this one. The recent approval of the **North West Shelf** gas project - the most polluting gas project in decades - has highlighted the need to ensure that the government gets the message that the social licence for such projects is gone.

Kirsten Tidswell of the Climate Council asserts that individuals and climate groups need to work together to dismantle the fossil fuel industry's influence over our politics and make it politically toxic for any Government to approve new coal and gas projects.

Greg Bourne, another Climate Council campaigner and formerly President of BP Australasia, worked on the North West Shelf in the 1990s. He has inside knowledge of how fossil fuel corporations work.

This is what he says:

'Let me tell you how fossil fuel corporations get what they want.

Gas giants like Woodside play the long game. They don't just wait for the political environment to be perfect; they actively shape it.

They walk the corridors of power, lobby federal and state governments, and build relationships with junior public servants who rise through the ranks. That's how approvals that span decades quietly gain traction until the political path of least resistance is a rubber stamp.

They peddle myths about "clean gas" and "carbon capture ready", but what they're selling is delay - and every day is a win for their shareholders. I've seen the playbook: they don't just profit from a fossil fuel habit - they create it, and feed it.'

Key to change is to push our political leaders to stand up to the influence of the fossil fuel lobby, and to strengthen our currently weak climate laws. The Environment Protection and Biodiversity (EPBC) Act at present ignores greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, the Safeguard Mechanism excludes exported emissions and relies mainly on offsetting to regulate fossil fuel industries. As Greg points out, 'lobbyists exploit all the grey areas and loopholes.'

To read more, see Greg's article in Saturday Paper, **The real reason for the North West Shelf project**, [here](#).

4. Walk for Truth march and rally, and petition to sign



Several NCAT members participated in the **Walk for Truth** march and rally on Wednesday 18 June. This historic event commemorated the **completion of the Yoorrook Justice Commission's four year long truth-telling process**, which was marked by a 370km long walk from Portland to Parliament House. As part of the truth-telling process, Yoorrook heard powerful truths from people right across the state, giving evidence on the **impacts of colonisation**, including systemic injustice, as well as the **strength, resistance and achievements of First Nations Peoples**.

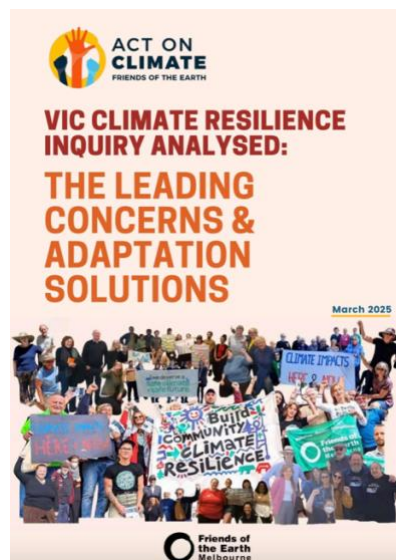
Thousands gathered on and in front of the steps of Parliament House to show solidarity for First Nations Peoples and to hear **Deputy Commissioner Travis Lovett** speak movingly of the significance of this event for all Victorians.

The next step in the process began on Wednesday 25 June, with an **online national campaign launch** for **Together with Treaty**, hosted by [Common Threads](#). The launch emphasised the need for **strong community backing** for the truth-telling and Treaty process in Victoria, to counteract the continued attacks from the far right. Through strategies such as **sparking kitchen-table conversations, sharing the story through social media** and **lobbying to shift the politics**, the Together with Treaty movement hopes to gain momentum to ensure that Victoria's commitment to truth-telling and Treaty continues to grow.

Join the Movement for Truth and Treaty!

Sign the [petition](#) to add your support for truth, Treaty and justice. Pledge your support and Common Threads will be in touch with practical actions you can take in your community and online to amplify the campaign over the months ahead.

5. Resilience Inquiry Report and Community Resilience Mapping Workshops



Climate impacts are being felt right now by Victorians. In spite of some rain recently, most of the state is in the grip of a crippling drought, which will lead to the risk of increasingly severe bushfires over the coming summer. Communities are crying out for **climate adaptation solutions**, and for government funding to support these solutions.

Friends of the Earth Melbourne Act on Climate Collective's Resilience Inquiry Report, [VIC Climate Resilience Inquiry Analysed: The leading concerns & adaptation solutions](#), has recently been completed.

This report looks at data from the state government's **2024 Resilience Inquiry submissions** and summarises the **most mentioned climate impacts of concern** and the **most popular climate adaptation solutions put forward**. It shares how Victorian communities can and want to adapt, as well as inspiring examples of what community-led climate adaptation looks like.

Significantly, **83.75% of submissions** called for **more funding for climate adaptation solutions**.

NCAT has organised to visit state **Eltham MP** and **Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Natural Disaster Recovery Vicki Ward** in early July to present this report to her and to ask her to **advocate for increased funding of climate adaptation and climate adaptation solutions**. In particular, she will be asked to support a permanent [Victorian Community Climate Adaptation Fund \(VCCAF\)](#).

The report found that the Victorian government is **falling behind on climate adaptation** in a number of areas, including **haphazard, disparate and disproportionate implementation and funding of Adaptation Action Plans, lack of transparency** around climate risks, and **failure to release a public climate change risk assessment**.

As noted by many submissions to the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Climate Resilience, the Government needs to lead on climate adaptation by **providing guidance through certainty, consistency, clarity around responsibility, and an integrated response**.

For more information, read [FOE AoC's Climate Briefing](#).

Community Resilience Mapping Workshops coming up in September!

Just a heads-up to let you know that **NCAT**, in partnership with **Friends of the Earth Act on Climate Collective**, will be hosting two **Community Resilience Mapping Workshops** in September, one in **Eltham on 7 September**, and one in **Hurstbridge on 13 September**. This will be an opportunity for Nillumbik residents to discuss what climate resilience measures they would like to see in their community. The workshops have been designed to help residents **identify risks** and ensure good **climate resilience strategies are put in place** to help keep community members safe.

Look out for **more information in a future newsletter.**

6. Returns on Resilience

While we're on the topic of resilience, **Katharine Hayhoe** has a few things to say about how investing in **climate adaptation can be one of the smartest investments we make**. She points to a new [study](#) that shows that climate adaptation can be far more than a defensive move. Below is an extract from her blog article:

'After analysing over 300 climate adaptation investments across 12 countries, the **World Resources Institute** found that, for every \$1 USD equivalent spent on resilience, it yields more than \$10 in benefits. They calculated an **annual average return of 27%** through healthier communities, stronger local economies, and more secure infrastructure.

In the health sector alone, investments showed **returns as high as 78%**, thanks to the benefits of preventing heat stress, controlling mosquito-borne illnesses, and strengthening medical systems. And of course, **that's only what you can measure with money**: many positive benefits that can't be quantified may be even more meaningful.

What makes this so encouraging is that many of these benefits can be realised *even if a disaster doesn't strike*. Irrigation systems designed for drought resilience can increase crop yields all year long. Evacuation centers often **double as community hubs**. Tree-planting projects that stabilise slopes during heavy rainfall also **cool neighbourhoods, filter air pollution and absorb carbon**.

As WRI's Carter Brandon put it, "Policymakers don't need a disaster to justify resilience—**it's simply smart development**." And that's the key takeaway here: climate adaptation isn't just a safety net. **It's an engine for progress**.

This kind of research makes the case for adaptation as **an economic no-brainer**. Resilience doesn't just protect us from what's coming. **It helps us thrive, right now.**'

Read the full article [here](#).

7. The beginning of the end for gas

[Environment Victoria](#) has recently announced **new gas regulations** put in place by the **Victorian government**. These regulations spell the beginning of the end for the gas industry.

The new regulations at a glance

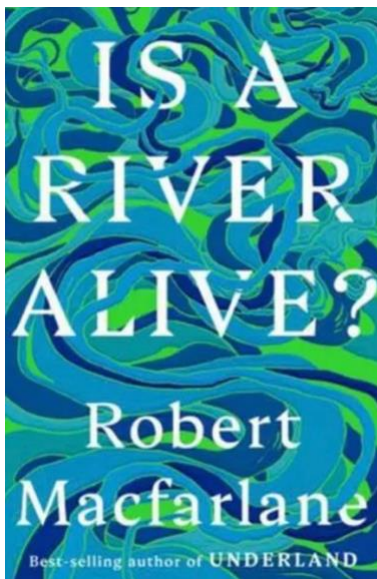
- **Phasing out gas hot water.** From March 2027 only efficient electric hot water systems can be installed. When existing gas systems break, they will be replaced with an efficient electric one.
- **New buildings to be all-electric.** From January 2027 *all* new residential and commercial buildings will be gas-free (with a few logical exceptions such as large industrial facilities).
- **Renters get the right to live in efficient electric homes.** From March 2027 the upgraded minimum standards for rental homes will give tenants access to cost-effective heating, cooling and hot water as well as better insulated, less draughty homes, saving an estimated \$1000 per year.

What's missing?

- **The announcement stopped short of phasing out gas heating** – the biggest gas guzzlers of all. However, the government has already created significant incentives to switch from gas to electric heating (including rebates of up to \$8,000).
- **Some of the most vulnerable renters will have to wait longer** for change as a decision on minimum standards for community housing has been delayed.

Read more about these new regulations in Environment Victoria's [explainer](#).

8. Book Review: Is a River Alive? by Robert Macfarlane



The concept of legal 'personhood' of a river is one that Robert Macfarlane explores in his recent book **Is a River Alive?** The concept grew out of the philosophical and legal **Rights of**

Nature movement, the principles of which are summarised by [Australian Earth Laws Alliance \(AELA\)](#) as follows: 'Recognising the Rights of Nature in law, means that we reject the notion that nature is human property and we legally recognise the rights of the natural world to **exist, thrive** and **evolve**. Recognising that the natural world is just as entitled to exist and evolve as we are, necessarily changes the way humans act.'

The book traces the implications of this concept through the author's personal journeys to three river systems - The **Rio de los Cedros in Ecuador**, the **river systems of Chennai in India**, and the **Mutehekau Shipu River in north-eastern Canada**. Each of these journeys is interspersed with reflections about the spring close to his home town of Cambridge in England, which is, like all watercourses in England, in poor health. He notes that it is easier to think and talk of rivers as dying rather than alive, and that our treatment of rivers as assets has left us in a desperate situation of grievously wounded and dying rivers. However, he observes that **extraordinary things happen imaginatively, morally and legally** if we think of rivers as **being alive and having rights**.

In Ecuador, it was the result of this country's complete '**reimagining of its fundamental governing principles**' in 2007 that led to the adoption of four rights of nature principles being placed at the heart of **Ecuador's constitution**. These principles, which made the state the guarantor of the right of a river to exist, to persist and to flourish, provided the jurisdictional framework needed to legally **force a mining company to withdraw its activities** from the forest of Los Cedros in 2017, thus preserving, at least for now, the life of the River of Los Cedros.

What a different world we would live in if all countries adopted these governing principles; if natural entities such as **rivers, mountains, forests** and **oceans** not only had **legal rights**, but could use these to fight back against mining companies' extractive and exploitative practices.

To listen to Robert Macfarlane talk about his book with **David Marr** on **Late Night Live**, click [here](#).

9. Quote of the month

".. fossil fuel has an inherent quality that we focus on too rarely: it's only available in a few places around the world, where the biology of ancient times (all those plankton and ferns) piled up to create the deposits of coal and gas and oil on which we currently depend. In the real world, that means that the people who control those small and scattered deposits have way too much wealth and power—which they have used to dominate the rest of us....

By contrast, the sun is everywhere, a liberating force precisely because it can't be hoarded or held in reserves. No one will ever fight a war over the sun....No one will ever be able to embargo it; decentralized power is a key part of the fight against the centralized power that Trump represents."

—Bill McKibben, "On Democracy, Liberated Energy, and the Perfect Moment."

10. A Controversial Play - and What It Taught Me About the Psychology of Climate. A TED talk by David Finnigan



When playwright David Finnigan launched a new play in 2014, controversially titled **Kill Climate Deniers**, he was not prepared for the blowback. But the conversations with climate sceptics of all stripes ultimately taught him a fascinating lesson about how many of us think about - and act upon - the climate crisis.

View the talk [here](#).

Reprinted from the **Bayside Climate Change Action Group (BCCAG) newsletter**.

11. Fungi stores a third of carbon from fossil fuel emissions and could be essential to reaching net zero

A **Sheffield University research paper** has made some interesting findings about the importance of fungi in storing carbon in the soil.

Researchers are now calling for fungi to be considered more heavily in conservation and biodiversity policies, and are investigating whether we can increase how much carbon the soil underneath us can hold.

They found that:

- Mycorrhizal fungi are responsible for holding up to **36 per cent of yearly global fossil fuel emissions below ground** - more than China emits each year
- The fungi make up a **vast underground network** all over the planet underneath grasslands and forests, as well as roads, gardens, and houses on every continent on Earth
- They are not only **crucial to storing carbon and keeping the planet cooler**, but are also **essential to global biodiversity**.

[Read more...](#)

12. Battery boom: Supercharging Australia's renewable rollout

At the ballot box this year, Australians voted for a future **powered by renewables and storage**. Australia is well known for setting, and smashing, records when it comes to renewable energy. Today, about **40 per cent of our power now comes from wind, solar and hydro energy**. Batteries are the next frontier when it comes to cutting bills as quickly as we can cut climate pollution.

The [Climate Council](#) has produced a [report on batteries](#) with the following key findings:

- **Rooftop solar and batteries are a permanent bill buster**, and Australians can collectively save more than \$4 billion on their power bills every year if we install two million more batteries in our homes and businesses by 2030.
- **Australia is on the brink of a battery boom**. Solar is already more common in our suburbs than the backyard pool, and the potential for storage in the outskirts of our cities is also enormous.
- **Batteries are getting cheaper and better at breakneck speed** making them accessible and feasible for more Australians.

Click [here](#) to find out about your **eligibility for rebates** under the **Victoria Home Battery scheme**.

12. NCAT membership

We warmly invite all newsletter readers to become **members of Nillumbik Climate Action Team**. We welcome all members to become involved according to their capacity. Some of the ways you can be involved include: tuning in to monthly meetings (online via Zoom where we catch up, plan and review); helping to promote events and activities (e.g. photos, social media, distributing flyers); or, helping with events when we hold them.

Membership of NCAT is free. **If you wish to become a member, please fill in the [membership form](#) and return to info@nillumbikclimateactionteam.org.**

13. Upcoming Events

Webinar: Is Democracy for Sale? Neoliberalism's final act, 7.30pm Tuesday 8 July

Democracy is in crisis in Australia as in much of the Western world, glaringly in Trump's America. Nor is it doing much better elsewhere.

The neo-liberal economic order ushered in the later 1970s with its emphasis on **deregulation, privatisation and the dominance of the unfettered market** seems to be crumbling. Inequality within and between countries has reached new heights.

How do we make sense of all this? Can we envision a more promising future? Is democratic renewal an option?

[Register here](#) for this informative discussion, hosted by [Conversation at the Crossroads](#)

Rethink Nillumbik and Going Green Solutions: All Electrification events program

A comprehensive lineup of electrification events to cover all your electrification needs!

Click [here](#) for more information and bookings.

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.

Edendale Repair Cafe, 9.30am-12.30pm, 21 June 2025, Mummery Room Edendale Farm

Get your household items repaired for free by our team of volunteers. Our aim is to help you fix things, learn new skills and keep waste out of landfill. Repair cafes are held on the third Saturday of every month. **For more information and to book, click [here](#).**

Documentary Australia's [Environmental Accelerator Film Festival](#), is available free and online from 18-27 July.

The festival showcases seven program-supported documentaries, including ***The Giants, Delikado, Rachel's Farm, Greenhouse by Joost, Climate Changers, Stay Tuned To Our***

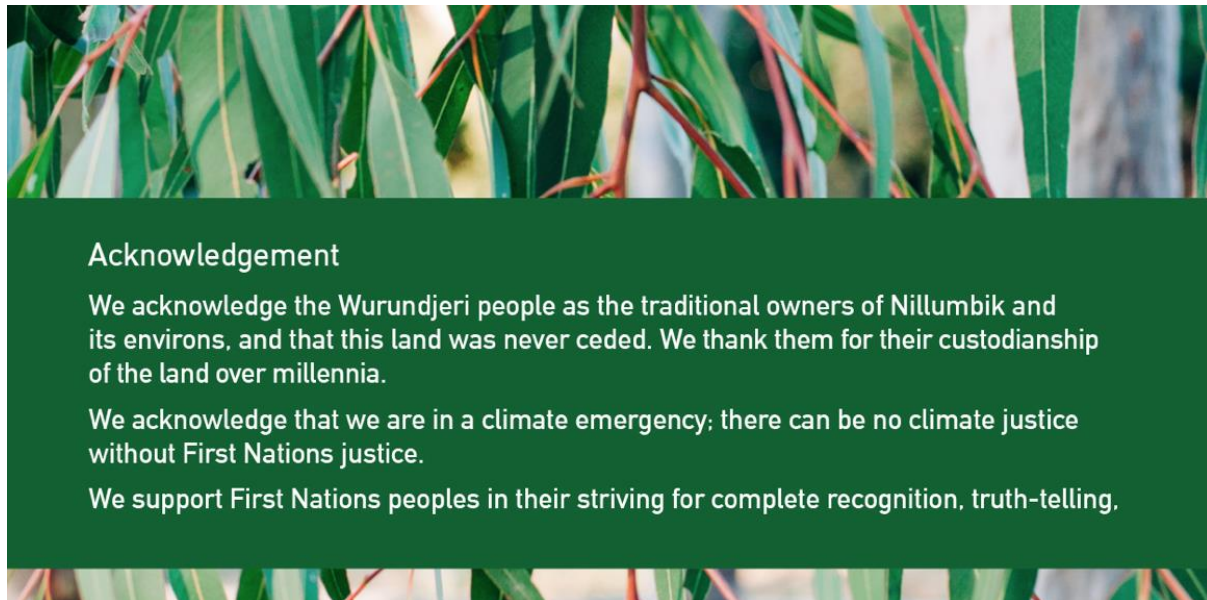
Planet, and new release, **White Rock**.

Register [here](#) for the **Environmental Accelerator Film Festival**.

Support us

[Nillumbik Climate Action Team \(NCAT\)](#) is a small volunteer organisation. We rely on donations to support our work. **Thank you** to everyone who has donated to date. We couldn't do it without you!

If you are able to [support us](#), even in a small way, we'd be very grateful.



nillumbikclimateactionteam.org