



**Nillumbik  
Climate  
Action  
Team**

## Newsletter March 2026

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### 1. Climate Cafe 2026

At last Thursday's Climate Cafe we heard from **Dr David Jamieson**, who expanded the climate context to encompass big picture climate science - **how our climate fits into the environment of the solar system. There are many factors in our solar system which influence Earth's**

**climate - but the overwhelming change agent affecting the climate in more recent times has been the increase in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere as a result of human activity on Earth.**



A **summary** of David's talk can be found [here](#).

Our **March climate cafe** will be on the topic of **Nurturing Local Biodiversity/Caring for Country**. Two speakers will present, and lead the discussion. Jill Kellow is a member of NCAT and former lecturer in Horticulture at University of Melbourne, Burnley Campus. She is convenor of two Friends groups - Friends

of Moor-rul Grasslands in Kangaroo Ground, and Friends of McMahon Ball Paddock in Eltham. Vicky Shukuroglou is founder and convenor of biodiversity group [Nillumbio](#), and founder of Friends of Biodiversity: Hohnes Hill in Eltham. She is co-author with Bruce Pascoe of 'Loving Country: A guide to sacred Australia.' In their presentations, the link between the the climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis will be explored, and the amazing regenerative and restorative work of these Friends groups will be described and explained.

The program for the **first half of 2026** is as follows:

- March 26**                    **Nurturing Local Biodiversity / Caring for Country**  
Jill Kellow, Friends of Moor-rul Grasslands,  
and Vicky Shukuroglou, Friends of Biodiversity: Hohnes Hill
- April 30**                    **TBC**
- May 28**                    **Innovative Housing**  
Teresa Dominik, Brougham St Co-housing Development
- June 25**                    **Environmental Sociology**  
Assoc Prof Rachel Busbridge (ACU)

**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 6:00pm onwards, or just come at 7.30pm for the speaker.

[nillumbikclimateactionteam.org/ncat-climate-café/](http://nillumbikclimateactionteam.org/ncat-climate-café/)

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## 2. Set a deadline to end coal and gas



The Albanese government has yet again given the go-ahead to a coal mine expansion, this time to the [Middlemount Coal Mine](#) in Queensland, extending the mine's life out to 2044. The burning of coal exported from this expansion will equal more than half of Australia's annual domestic emissions.

Australia is experiencing its hottest summer ever, with temperatures hotter than any other place on the planet, but the government is pouring petrol on the fire by approving new coal mining projects that will heat the planet even faster. With every new coal mine they approve, the Albanese government is burning our future and burning their own credibility. The government must commit to a clear plan and a timeline for the phase-out of fossil fuels, including exports.

Nillumbik Climate Action Team joined with other climate groups in a coordinated action on Monday 23 February to hand out flyers at railway stations, and push the message that the government must set a deadline to end coal and gas.

Pictured above are NCAT members Leanne and Virginia with flyers outside Eltham Station last Monday.

To get involved with actions like these, contact us on [info@nillumbikclimateactionteam.org](mailto:info@nillumbikclimateactionteam.org), or visit our website, [nillumbikactionteam.org](http://nillumbikactionteam.org)

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### 3. Rising Tide hero!



**NCAT supporter and Nillumbik resident Alicia Polakiewicz** has courageously taken a stand for her principles. Alicia, who was arrested late last year at [Rising Tide's People's Blockade of the World's Largest Coal Port](#) at Newcastle Harbour has become the first Rising Tide activist to be sentenced under the government's new anti-protest laws. In a win for democracy and the right to protest, **no conviction was recorded.**

Alicia, a **retired GP**, had this to say about her experience:

"My arrest at the Rising Tide blockade at Newcastle Harbour is by far **my most significant act in a 45 year privileged career of saving and caring for lives.** I am now standing up for the lives of future generations.

I recently retired from 45 years as a General Practice medical doctor. **Climate change is the biggest public health emergency of our time.** I cannot stand by passively, having taken the Hippocratic

Oath, as our Government **knowingly escalates the climate crisis by continuing to approve new coal and gas projects.** I took action with Rising Tide out of deep worry for the futures of my two adult children and deep concern for all my fellow human beings that I paddled out into the Newcastle port.

I feel that in future, my actions will not be considered criminal, but the actions of fossil fuel companies and the governments that support them will be remembered as **criminally negligent.** "

Magistrate Stone said he did not condone the action but understood its motivations, comparing it to the **suffragette movement that secured women's right to vote.** A follow-up social media post to this statement concluded, "When (the magistrate) said that, I knew that he understood the importance of non-violent civil disobedience in critical situations. As we know, this is how all major transitions to a just society and a healthy, happy Mother Earth occur."

Go Alicia!

Rising Tide calls on the government to **cancel new fossil fuel projects, increase tax on fossil fuel exports, fund community and industrial transitions, pay for climate loss and damage, and end coal exports from Newcastle by 2030.**

To read more in an article from the **Newcastle Herald**, click [here](#).

Click [here](#) to view Alicia's response to the magistrate's decision outside court.

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

Photo: Will, Rising Tide activist

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#### 4. The failures of centrism

Two recent publications have thrown light on pivotal issues around decision-making with our current government, which have significant consequences for how climate change is managed. Richard Denniss in [Dead Centre: How political pragmatism is killing us](#), and Sean Kelly in [The Good Fight: What does Labor stand for?](#) both address the Albanese government's **risk averse tendencies** and the **dominance of centrism in policy-making**.



Fear of failure leads the government to make decisions that do not work well for the big questions that democracy faces. Taking the sensible, middle approach, as in the government's recent decision to set climate targets that are 'achievable' rather than what science says is needed, ignores the inescapable time frame facing the world. As Richard Denniss says, ' For those determined to avoid dangerous climate change the goal isn't to decarbonise the economy, but to **decarbonise it before scientific thresholds are reached**. It is physics that says we will melt the ice caps, raise sea levels radically and warm waters so much that we don't just kill the Great Barrier Reef, but we will kill whole food systems in our oceans and on our farmlands...committing to the goal of decarbonising and not committing to the physics-imposed deadlines is like **committing to stopping smoking after you have your second heart attack**.'

Both writers urge our government to reject the tendency to appeal to the lowest common denominator, the 'politics of the bland', and, in the words of Paul Keating, 'head for the most sparkling outcome...in leadership there are only ever two ingredients: **imagination and courage**.' (Sean Kelly, *The Good Fight: What does Labor stand for?*). We need leaders who are '**brave enough to do bold things**, not just good economic managers whose main job is to *manage* our expectations.' (Richard Denniss, *Dead Centre: How political pragmatism is killing us*).

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## 5. Why Forests Matter! Solving the Climate and Biodiversity Crises

A recent Lighter Footprints webinar reinforced again how **inextricably linked the climate and biodiversity crises are**. Virginia Young, director of Wilderness Australia and ecosystems expert, emphasised that **the biodiversity crisis is as serious a threat as the climate crisis** - although it is often neglected in discussions around decarbonising - and neither can be solved unless they are solved together.

Biodiversity is the **system driver that underpins ecosystem integrity**, and a healthy, richly biodiverse ecosystem is essential for the storage and sequestering of carbon. She described the complex feedback loops between biodiversity loss and the decline of ecosystem integrity. Reversing this downward spiral begins by **preventing further harm to ecosystems**, especially forests, and **reducing use of fossil fuels**. She stressed that meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement is not feasible without protecting and restoring forest ecosystem

carbon reservoirs.

From a policy point of view, this requires **separate emissions targets** for 1. fossil fuels, 2. land, forests and other ecosystems. Furthermore, **geo-carbon (fossil fuels) and bio-carbon (ecosystems) are not fungible** - you can't trade off one for the other. Which invalidates one of the government's main planks for reaching net zero - **carbon offsets**.

To hear a recording of the webinar, click [here](#).

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## 6. Rethinking the carbon tax

The article below is reprinted from **Darebin Climate Action Now (DCAN)** newsletter.

The **12 February 2026** edition of ABC Radio National's **The Economy, Stupid** asks whether it's time for Australia to revisit carbon pricing — not only as climate policy, but as economic reform. With government spending outpacing revenue and Australia off track to meet its 2030, 2035 and 2050 emissions targets, the question is gaining urgency.



Guests **Ingrid Burford** (Superpower Institute) and **Ben Potter** (The Energy) outline a revamped carbon pricing model designed to cut emissions while strengthening the economy. They argue carbon pricing **should be reframed as a market signal that drives cleaner investment and innovation**, rather than as a punitive environmental tax. Crucially, they propose returning half the revenue raised directly to citizens as cash payments to offset higher fuel costs.

Although carbon pricing was rejected more than a decade ago, Burford and Potter contend that **economic pressures** and **growing climate impacts** have shifted the debate. Making major polluters pay, they argue, could help repair the budget and **put Australia back on track to meet its climate goals**. Click [here](#) to listen.

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## 7. Our changing climate in 2025 in pictures and graphs



Image: ABC news

The following article is reprinted from the **Bayside Climate Change Action Group** (BCCAG) newsletter.

Like most places around the world we're getting used to extreme weather becoming more frequent. In Australia, **2026 started with searing heat, bushfires and a cyclone**.

It may feel like a distant memory, but 2025 was a big year in the world of weather and climate. It was the **third hottest year on record**, closely behind 2024 and 2023, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service.

Climate scientists are now warning that, based on the current rate of warming, **the Paris Agreement's limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius for long-term global warming could be reached by 2030 — more than a decade earlier than initially predicted**.

Have a look [here](#) at how this ongoing trend of exceptionally warm years played out across Australia and the globe in 2025, in pictures and graphs.

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## 8. The case for up-to-date bushfire detection and suppression



Photo: AAP Image / Diego Fedele

After a summer of **out of control bushfires across the state**, it's time for a rethink of Victoria's firefighting and fire prevention strategy.

Bushfire experts say Victoria's firefighting strategy is in **urgent need of upgrading**, given its over-reliance on back-burning and underinvestment in early detection. In a recent article in The Saturday Paper, **Sue McKinnon** from **Kinglake Friends of the Forest (KFF)** notes that Victoria is "effectively allowing one in five fires to grow beyond initial attack" by setting an **"unambitious" containment target of 80 per cent**. These low targets result in a situation that, while climate change escalates megafire risk, frontline firefighters are left **operating with outdated equipment and disproven methods, without the support of new technology in rapid detection and suppression**.

Victoria currently **prioritises back-burning** as a preferred firefighting strategy. Since 2024 it has scheduled **6000 kilometres of forest firebreaks** – some 40 metres wide – for felling. These firebreaks "enable firefighters to get access to the forest to respond to fires and carry out back-burning in the event of a major bushfire".

Back-burning is a tactical tool used during active fires that involves lighting a controlled fire ahead of a bushfire. These breaks potentially **worsen the spread of bushfire** and endanger firefighters by creating wind tunnels, according to Curtin University fire behaviour scientist **Dr Phil Zylstra**, who is a former remote-area firefighter. Wind and compromised forest structure are primary drivers of bushfire spread, he says.

Experts such as **Professor Marta Yebra**, head of Bushfire Research Centre of Excellence at the Australian National University, argue that the state should instead **prioritise investment in early detection technologies** such as integrated systems of drones, remote-sensing, remotely piloted aircraft, satellite data and tower cameras. In addition, Dr Zylstra argues, allowing forests to mature into their **low flammability, long-unburnt state** reduces fire risk to the point where it will be **"possible to have less wildfire in 2100 than there is today**, even under worst-case climate projections". Read more [here](#).

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## 9. CCS isn't climate action, it's an offset scam

This opinion piece from **Louise Morris** in [The Point](#) dispels any last remaining doubt about the credibility of CCS.

**Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)** is an offsets zombie the government keeps trying to raise from the dead to prop up the future of fossil fuel projects.

The Australian Government keeps talking up CCS like it's a breakthrough that will become viable – one day – and solve our 'energy and climate realities'. That reality being the Government's plan to keep offering up new areas for exploration and approving new coal and gas.

Fossil fuel companies talk about it like it's essential. Regulators talk about it like it solves the problem of rising emissions. It doesn't. **CCS is a proven failure.** It is a political tool designed to **keep fossil fuel extraction going** while pretending something meaningful is being done about dangerous climate change.

[Read more...](#)

Image: The Point



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## 10. Report exposes big tech's AI climate hoax

The big tech industry's claims about the **climate benefits of artificial intelligence (AI)** are a hoax, according to a new report released on 17 February. **A staggering 74% of claims about AI's climate benefits are unproven**, serving the profits of tech and fossil fuel industries, while downplaying the major climate harms of generative AI.

The research looks at 154 statements claiming AI will serve as a net climate benefit – including from companies like **Google** and **Microsoft**, and from institutions such as the **International Energy Agency** – and, for the first time, critically analysed the assertion that AI will be a net benefit to climate action, making up for the increased fossil fuel demand by AI-driven data centres.

According to the findings, only 26% of the claims cited published academic papers and 36% did not cite any evidence at all. Overall, these claims tend to rely on **weak forms of evidence rather than robust, peer-reviewed academic papers.**

Reprinted from CANAchat, 17 February 2026. Click [here](#) to read the report.

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## 11. How to align your finances with your values

[Asian Australians for Climate Solutions](#) (AAFCS) have just launched [Wealth Solutions Club](#) - a 90-day, peer-supported **online program** that helps people take simple weekly steps to move their super and banking away from fossil fuels. The goal is to **turn climate concern into a practical, repeatable habit**.

Many people want to align their finances with their values but feel unsure where to start or struggle to follow through. This program provides structure, accountability, and community support to make those changes manageable and sustainable.

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## 12. Wall Street fossil fuel deals get climate groups to change tactics

**Alec Connon**, chief architect of a months-long, headline-grabbing protest against corporate giant **Citigroup's funding of fossil-fuel companies**, says it's now time for climate campaigners like him to acknowledge that the methods they've been using haven't worked as intended, and to come up with a new playbook. "For too long we believed that if we could **tarnish the reputation of financial institutions by linking them to the companies causing the climate crisis**, we could get them to act," he said. "That was a mistake."

**Lucie Pinson**, founder and executive director of **Reclaim Finance**, a Paris-based nonprofit that's made a name for itself targeting European banks and insurers over their oil, gas and coal ties says, too often, the focus was "narrow and disconnected" from social and economic issues. Activists today would do well to **frame climate as "an energy security issue,"** she added.

[Read more...](#)

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## 13. NCAT membership

We warmly invite you to become a **member of Nillumbik Climate Action Team**. Members and supporters participate in and help with various events, activities, and public actions according to ability and interest. If you would like to become more actively involved there is also the possibility of joining our monthly planning meetings.

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

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## 14. Upcoming Events

### REthink Nillumbik 2026 program

The **REthink Nillumbik Program** is a series of fun, interactive workshops designed to create a more sustainable and liveable Nillumbik. Sessions include a range of activities to help local residents reimagine our collective approach to energy and waste.

REthink events are collaborative, hands-on, and can help people take small actions that can lead to serious, positive change. They include practical demonstrations, creative activities, and simple ideas for rethinking everyday choices and behaviours.

Click [here](#) for more information about upcoming REthink Nillumbik events for 2026.

# GO ELECTRIC!

FREE info about electrification and home efficiency



Info & bookings

PRESENTED BY Going Green Solutions  
FUNDED BY Nillumbik Shire Council  
SUPPORTED BY Edendale Farm



**Electrification 101: Making the switch**  
Eltham Library: 19 February, 6.30 to 8pm  
Essential information on why going all-electric is a smart move and how to best go about it in your home.



**Electrification 102: Ask an expert**  
DC Living & Learning: 21 February, 2 to 4pm  
Get advice from an installer on solar panels, batteries, EV chargers, reverse cycle systems, heat pump hot water, and induction cooktops.



**Window thermal efficiency**  
DV Library: 17 March, 7 to 8pm  
Explore different ways to boost the thermal efficiency of your windows on any budget.



**Solar and batteries for small business**  
DC Living & Learning: 24 March, 9.30 to 11.30am  
Hear if solar and batteries are a good fit for your business. Suited to home-based, freehold and leasehold businesses.



**Draught proofing your home**  
Eltham Library: 23 April, 7 to 8pm  
Simple techniques to identify and prevent draughts for a warmer, more comfortable home.



**DIY window upgrades**  
DV Library: 7 May, 6.30 to 8.30pm  
A hands-on workshop teaching how to make removable DIY panels for your windows, to boost their thermal efficiency.



GOING GREEN SOLUTIONS



REthink Nillumbik  
Positive change through local action



Nillumbik edendale

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**Webinar: Energy Efficiency Standards for Rental Properties, Tuesday 10 March 6-7.30pm**

Click [here](#) to register.

Presented by Mornington Peninsula Shire

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**March in March for Forests, Sunday 22 March, 11am Parliament Gardens, Naarm (Melbourne)**

March for Forests returns in March with thousands across Australia demanding an urgent end to native forest logging - for climate, wildlife, and our shared future.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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**Degrowth Festival 2026 – Naarm (Melbourne), Sunday, 22 March 11am–7pm**

The Degrowth Festival brings together people and groups working across local food systems, housing alternatives, community care, grassroots organising, climate action, democratic enterprise and more. It offers a hands-on, practical glimpse of the skills, relationships and cultural shifts needed to sustain us in the long game — particularly as ecological and economic instability intensifies.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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**Nature Strip Planting Part 2 Design and Plant Selection, Wednesday, 25 Mar, 5-7pm**

Get creative and hands-on in this practical workshop focused on designing the nature strip and choosing the right plants.

Click [here](#) to register.

Presented by Banyule City Council

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**Community video project**

[Clean Energy Nillumbik](#) is plotting to produce some fun community videos to share information on energy resilience. They would love to work with schools, clubs, sporting groups, community groups and others to get a range of community members and groups in the footage. Please send them an email if you're interested to [secretary@cleanenergynillumbik.org.au](mailto:secretary@cleanenergynillumbik.org.au).

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**Sustainable House Day - The Nillumbik Trail, Sunday 17 May**

Seeking houses to open for tours - share your story! Show your home! Every year Sustainable House Day helps people take action on their home - would your story help your community?

We would love to showcase a wide range of sustainable Nillumbik homes opening to assist our local community - small upgrades, retrofits, electrification projects, DIY, renovations, large or small! And even if you feel it's still work in progress, it's still likely to be helpful for visitors to see the process you working through. Clean Energy Nillumbik will support householders and promote the event. The national event is coordinated by Renew. Visit the [Sustainable House Day website](#) for more information and to apply to open your home. Please get in touch with [Clean Energy Nillumbik](#) if you're applying or considering participating ([secretary@cleanenergynillumbik.org.au](mailto:secretary@cleanenergynillumbik.org.au)).

Applications close 4 March (get in touch with CEN if you'd like to put in a late application).

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**Edendale Community Environment Farm events calendar**

Click [here](#) to view the wide range of events on offer from Edendale Farm, including Waterwise wicking beds, Basic bike maintenance, Repair, restore and upcycle furniture, Edendale repair cafe, Food, fibre and medicine plants of the local area, and many more.

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**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.

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### **Repair Cafes in Nillumbik**

Get your household items repaired for free by a team of volunteers. The aim is to help you fix things, learn new skills, and keep waste out of landfill.

**Edendale repair cafe** is held at Edendale Farm on the third Saturday of every month. **For more information click [here](#).**

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### **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.

## **DONATE to NCAT**

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### **Acknowledgement of Country**

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.

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**[nillumbikclimateactionteam.org](http://nillumbikclimateactionteam.org)**