



**Nillumbik
Climate
Action
Team**

Newsletter May 2026

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1. Climate Cafe 2026

Our speaker at last Thursday's Climate Cafe was **Melinda Miles** from [Clean Energy Nillumbik](#). Melinda spoke on the topic of **Sustainable Housing: Using energy wisely across the whole life of your home**. In a wide-

ranging talk drawing on her professional expertise as a sustainability advisor, as well as personal experience in building her own sustainable home, Melinda took us through a comprehensive analysis of all types of energy in the home. She emphasised that this was not about solutions, but about building knowledge to make the best decisions for your home, bearing in mind that there is no such thing as perfection!



A **summary of Melinda's presentation** can be [found here](#).
A copy of **Melinda's presentation slides** can be [found here](#).

Our **May Climate Cafe** (Thursday 28 May) will be on the topic of **Environmental and Climate Resilience Benefits of Cohousing**, and will be presented by **Teresa Dominik** from the **Brougham Street Cohousing** initiative.

Teresa will use the example of the Brougham Street Cohousing development (currently under construction in Eltham) to highlight the environmental and climate resilience advantages of cohousing communities.

Teresa has over 30 years experience (including 10 years in South Africa) in local government planning and environmental management, and in retirement is a Board member of Cohousing Australia, committed to advocating for cohousing as a socially, environmentally, and financially sustainable housing option.

Cohousing communities prioritise smaller private dwellings, offset by access to generous shared amenities and common spaces that support reduced environmental impacts through collective resource use. This approach reduces the overall environmental footprint and enables sustainability to be pursued collectively rather than as an individual responsibility, reducing long-term operational costs with features such as car sharing, renewable energy, and local food systems. This presents significant opportunities to strengthen climate adaptation and community resilience as its design intentionally fosters social connection and builds social capital and mutual support among residents.

This strong sense of community is crucial for resilience in times of crisis or climate-related challenges. By combining thoughtful design with a collaborative spirit, cohousing offers significant opportunities to advance environmental sustainability and strengthen climate resilience. The Brougham Street project will not only reduce environmental impact but strives to enhance wellbeing and collective preparedness for the challenges of a changing climate.

The Climate Café program in June 2026 is as follows:

June 25: Planetary Justice - Dr Rachel Busbridge, Environmental Sociologist

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 if you can, or come at 7:30pm for the speaker event.

nillumbikclimateactionteam.org/ncat-climate-cafe/

2. Make Big Polluters Pay Campaign



Angela Davies and Mitzi Tuke collecting signatures for MBPP campaign at Eltham Farmers Market

The [Make Big Polluters Pay campaign](#) is up and running, and NCAT members and supporters have been active in gathering signatures to petition Nillumbik Council to pass a Polluter Pays motion to support a **Climate Compensation Fund**, which would help protect local services, strengthen and repair infrastructure, and fund disaster response and preparedness – ensuring our community can stay safe and thrive. This fund would be paid for by a levy on major coal, oil and gas export corporations, not ratepayers and taxpayers. These big polluters are making billions exporting Australia's resources, often while paying no tax and pocketing huge government subsidies.

So far, around 250 signatures have been collected, and we are aiming for many more.

If you have not already done so, please sign the Shire of Nillumbik petition to make big polluters pay their fair share. [Click here to sign the petition.](#)

We are looking for volunteers who would be willing to go on a roster to help collect petition signatures. There will be a "script" with messaging to help with talking to people. Please contact Mitzi on tukemitzi@gmail.com if you would like to go on the roster.

In addition to the petition targeting local councils to pass a Polluter Pays motion, the Make Big Polluters Pay alliance is asking organisations to sign on to an **open letter to the Treasurer**, Jim Chalmers, calling on him to implement a 25% gas export tax, and to then go further and make the big coal and gas corporations pay for their climate damage.

[Click here to read the letter](#) to the Treasurer that NCAT has signed on to.

[Click here to read a report](#) released on 30 April by Oxfam and Make Big Polluters Pay showing that 1 in 3 fossil fuel corporations pay no corporate tax, and that overall coal, gas and oil corporations pay a corporate tax rate of just 5% (compared to 24% for you and me).

3. Securing Nillumbik's energy future with renewables

Nillumbik Council's April edition of the [Environment and Sustainability](#) E-news is full of tips on how to speed up the energy transition for Nillumbik residents. See their hot tips below:

In the past month we have seen how vulnerable our energy needs can be when relying on imported fossil fuels.

Renewables aren't just the solution to the climate crisis. They can help build energy independence and protect citizens from price and infrastructure shocks.

For example, electric vehicles can cut down significantly on fuel spendings, especially when paired with solar at home. Having one or the other also means that if the power goes out, you'll have a secondary source in emergencies.

As a bonus, it also helps [cut down on air pollution and impacts on health](#).

Visit our energy page to find access to free resources on how to join the energy transition, including:

- Hearing from Nillumbik homeowners on how they have electrified their home and car
- Accessing rebates and grants to cut down on the upfront investment
- Free workshops and webinar recordings
- Energy efficiency tips and tricks.

[Click here for the full list of resources](#).

4. Pedal to the Metal: A budget to break free from fuel chaos

As the devastating conflict in the Middle East destabilises global fossil fuel markets, Australian households are once again paying the price for a system built around polluting, expensive and unreliable oil, coal and gas.

With the **Federal Budget** approaching, our Government has a choice. To keep spending public money propping up the polluting fossil fuels driving these shocks, or to back the affordable clean energy solutions that reduce our exposure in the first place.

The **Climate Council** has released a new report that sets out the practical measures the Government should keep, strengthen and introduce now, in the upcoming Federal Budget, to help protect Australians from ongoing fuel price shocks.

geographical, topographical and ecological boundaries, such as river catchments (watersheds), rather than straight lines on a map. It promotes localised economies and re-asserts a human relationship to nature.

AELA convenor and co-founder, Michelle Maloney, began by pointing out that bioregional law is the oldest form of law, common to many indigenous cultures throughout the world. A return to this system of law can help mitigate many of the evils of our current human-centred, extractivist legal and governance system.

Our current western legal and economic system is underpinned by the following assumptions and characteristics:

- nature is a resource for human exploitation
- society is hierarchically-based and promotes inequality
- governance enforces top down, centralised control
- reinforces patriarchal laws and culture
- reinforces the power of corporations.

In the words of Ian Lowe, Australian academic and writer, this system "is based on the principle of dominance of nature. We urgently need to re-orient to a nature-based approach which recognises the limits of natural systems and is committed to working within those limits."

[Click here](#) to listen to a recording of the webinar, Exploring Bioregioning - Bioregional Law

For those wanting to gain an overview of how a bioregioning ethos and system of governance could transform our communities, [click here](#) to watch the video, The Future is Bioregional.

The 11th Turtle Island Congress will be held in Oregon in September this year. The purpose of this Congress is to amplify the wave of bioregional organising across the North American continent for increased community resilience, indigenous leadership, local self-governance, climate action, ecological regeneration, and a flourishing future for all.

6. Fossil fuel Treaty – Santa Marta, Columbia, April 24-29 2026

A significant global summit has taken place over the past week. Santa Marta in Colombia played host to the world's **first diplomatic conference dedicated to transitioning away from fossil fuels**. This was more than just another summit. It represented the start of a new pathway, led by nations ready to move beyond pledges and take on the fossil fuel industry directly.

Alex Rafalowicz, Director of the [Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative](#), had this to say about the conference: "For too long, climate negotiations have focused on managing the symptoms of the crisis while ignoring its root cause: the unchecked proliferation of oil, gas, and coal. Fossil fuels aren't just warming our planet. They're polluting our air, driving conflict, trapping nations in debt, and deepening inequality.

The wars in Ukraine and the Middle East show just how dangerous our dependence has become. No country can solve this alone. We need true international cooperation — real, fair, and just — to make sure no one is left behind."

The resulting **People's Declaration for a Rapid, Equitable, and Just Transition for a Fossil-Free Future** begins with the global context and sets out the historical and systemic roots of inequality, followed by fifteen principles and four demands.

The demands are as follows:

- A. Complete equitable and just phase-out of fossil fuels aligned with meeting the goal of keeping warming below 1.5°C and reach global REAL ZERO emissions by 2050
- B. Rapid, direct, equitable, and just transition to 100% renewable energy; Ensure equitable and universal access to renewable energy
- C. End barriers to the transition and pursue solutions
- D. Achieve a comprehensive just transition

To read the full People's Declaration, [click here](#).

To read The Guardian's article, Historic Breakthrough: Colombia climate talks end with hopes raised for fossil fuel phaseout, [click here](#).

7. Climate Fresk - an interactive climate game



Photo: [People for Nature](#)

Last week I (Elizabeth Doig) participated in a [Climate Fresk](#) at Docklands. I had never heard of a Climate Fresk until very recently, so I was curious to see what it entailed, and to see whether it could be adapted to an NCAT event in Nillumbik.

There were around 20 attendees with several facilitators from the host organisation People for Nature. The entire event lasted for three hours, from 5.30 to 8.30pm. Sounds daunting, but the time went very quickly. We were divided into three tables, each with a facilitator. The facilitators were welcoming, and the atmosphere was friendly and non-judgemental. The participants were mostly young(ish) and professional, with some personal or professional interest in, or experience with, climate issues.

The format was an **interactive card game** (cooperative, not competitive), where we were presented with climate cards (based on climate science facts consistent with IPCC research) that we placed on the table to illustrate causality and connections. It led to a lot of discussion and debate. There was a section following the card game where we had a chance to reflect on any emotions that arose in response to the information that unfolded in the course of the card game, and what solutions could follow.

It was a huge amount of fun - engaging and informative, with a few surprises. Even the facilitators say that they learn new things every time (and I certainly did!). The **visual flow chart format** helped to clarify connections and interrelationships between climate facts/events and I ended up gaining a much clearer understanding of the global climate picture. The game did not require a high degree of climate literacy, but some knowledge of climate science is helpful.

On the basis of this experience, we at NCAT are looking to host a Climate Fresk event in Nillumbik soon.

Stay tuned to this newsletter for more information about an upcoming local Climate Fresk event in a future issue.

8. How to build a degrowth movement



Photo: [Degrowth is the Answer](#)

For some inspiration from the other side of the world, hear what Matt Orsagh has to say about the **degrowth movement in Estonia**.

"I see more and more people talking openly about the **polycrisis** each week. They have seen the planetary boundaries framework. They understand the limits to growth on our planet. Then they look around and see an enormous capitalist system around them that is unyielding in its demands on their time, their work and their dreams.

It's enough to drive people into depression, drink, both, or to seek advice from bloggers on the internet writing about degrowth. Dark times.

There are however places out there where the **conversation on moving to a post-growth world is advancing**, and there are people advancing it. There are many more ecological economics and degrowth conferences out there each year, more podcasts, more articles, more documentaries, and yes, more blogs.

But the real action of moving to a post-growth world is going to happen when people get together in person and start hashing out what they want tomorrow to look like, and then work to make it so. Here is one example of how that is happening, that I (and the people doing it) invite you to steal. There are others out there, but this example is a recent one, and the people involved put out a handy report saying what they did and how they did it."

To read more, [click here](#). Reprinted from [Degrowth is the Answer](#).

9. Roadmap to end deforestation and forest degradation update

In the upcoming round of COP 31 negotiations **Minister Chris Bowen** will take up the role of **President of negotiations for UNFCCC COP 31** and keep that role through until COP32.

This provides opportunities to push Australia to broaden and deepen its approach to climate change by properly engaging in and supporting further progress on international initiatives to align biodiversity and climate outcomes.

In addition to the development of this roadmap arising from COP30, there will be an important decision at COP31 that will influence the forest roadmap and implementation of decisions of each of the Rio Conventions (Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention to combat desertification (UNCCD) and the Climate Convention (UNFCCC)) to encourage synergistic climate and biodiversity action to **protect and restore ecosystem integrity**. There is a strong push by governments to **work together** and **align decisions on climate and biodiversity** in each of the Rio Conventions this year.

The **Climate Action Network (CAN) International Ecosystems working group** have prepared a comprehensive submission on the process, substance and rationale for the UNFCCC to encourage a strong decision at COP31.

Many Australian NGOs (including NCAT) have supported the international NGO submission by signing on to a shorter submission to the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) to inform a recommendation to COP 31. The submission illustrates one of the **key problems for climate and biodiversity created by logging native forests**.

The scientific imperative for **strengthening international cooperation** among the Rio Conventions in the UNFCCC, as stated in the submission, is as follows:

"The world's most authoritative scientific assessments – including those by the IPCC and IPBES2 – underline the **vital need to address the interconnected crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation in a coordinated, coherent and integrated manner**. The use of an **internationally integrated approach to decision making and implementation** will both maximise opportunities for effective and synergistic outcomes and help avoid unintended consequences."

[Click here](#) to read the draft submission to the UNFCCC SBSTA that NCAT has signed on to.

10. Flying in the face of climate change, or how a Jetstar Captain fell out of love with aviation



You might recall our climate cafe presenter from late last year, who spoke about his gradual disenchantment with the first love of his life, flying. **Geoff Collis** has revisited this topic in the following article about the airline industry, whose continued growth flies in the face of the reality of the climate crisis.

"**My first love was flying** and all to do with it. In my late teens I commenced flying lessons, embarking on what would ultimately become a 40 year career in the industry. Whilst working for a regional airline in the late 1980s, I became aware of what at the time was somewhat quaintly called, "the greenhouse effect". Now known as climate change or global warming, the knowledge that the burning of fossil fuels would increase atmospheric temperatures became widespread.

Like many, I only vaguely made the connection between my work and the impending changes in the climate. Yes, I burnt jet fuel for a living, but surely the bad guys were the coal fired power stations and heavy industry, not me flying to Albury or Mount Gambier.

But over time the **whispering doubts about my first love became louder**. I could see the efforts being made to decarbonise land based transport through electric vehicles and active transport options. I could see the decline of coal and gas fired power commence as mass solar and battery arrays began to supplement and then replace 19th century technology.

I tried to find out what the airline industry was doing to reinvent itself for a carbon constrained future and realised that my first love wasn't being entirely truthful to me. My first love was attempting to conceal some dirty secrets.

Whilst aviation was reassuring me that everything was ok, they had everything under control and there was nothing to worry about, a **different picture was clearly emerging** and it wasn't pretty."

[Click here to read more...](#)

11. Quote of the Month

When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realise that one cannot eat money. - Native American saying

12. B-doubling down on electric trucks



Image: New Energy Transport

While the Coalition claims electric trucks are not capable of transporting heavy freight, overseas usage and current trials in Australia show they **far outperform diesel on both overall cost and efficiency.**

Fuel price shocks are a reminder of how exposed Australia is. When conflict drives up global oil prices, it flows through to diesel, and onto the cost of transporting food, goods and essentials.

This isn't just a cost-of-living issue. **It's a sovereignty issue.** Heavy trucks move most of Australia's freight and rely almost entirely on diesel, leaving the system vulnerable to global disruptions.

Electric trucks offer a way out. Trials in Australia show they can travel **400–500km on a single charge, fast-charge in under 30 minutes, and run at a fraction of the cost of diesel.** In one case, it cost around \$50 in electricity compared to \$300 for the same trip with diesel.

Powered by energy we can generate here, electric trucks can reduce our reliance on imported fuel and global oil markets. **The technology is already here. The question is whether we make use of it.**

Read the full article from The Saturday Paper, [B-doubling-down-electric-trucks](#), by Mark Secombe

Reprinted from DCAN Dispatch for April.

12. Practical Guide: Top tips for taking back control of your energy

The [Climate Council](#) has asked their community what steps they are taking to cut their power bills and reduce their energy usage. The following guide compiles people's everyday energy tips that help them reclaim control over home energy at a time of geopolitical instability and fuel shocks. [Click here](#) to check out the Climate Council's Practical Guide.

13. Friends Groups in Nillumbik - Friends of Moor-rul Grassland

by Jill Kellow



Photo: Jill Kellow

This month's Friends group is:

Name: Moor-rul Reconciliation Grassland Friends Group

Location: This grassland is one of only two remaining indigenous grasslands in the Shire of Nillumbik. It is located on a small area of volcanic, basalt soil on the western slope of what was once known as Garden Hill in Kangaroo Ground, next to the War Memorial Tower.

History and vegetation: Despite the grassland being on the side of a hill, the Ecological Vegetation Class of the Moor-rul Grassland is Plains Grassy Woodland. Before European settlement, grasslands provided an important source of food for local Wurundjeri clans. Grasses such as Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), Wallaby Grasses (*Rytidosperma* species), and Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) were grazed by kangaroos, making them an easy target for hunters, who hid behind widely spaced manna gums (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), while tubers of Yam Daisies, Chocolate Lilies and orchids provided starchy paste and breads. Frogs, lizards and small marsupials were found among the grasses and small plants, dry grass was used to draft proof willams (shelters) and *Lomandra* species provided material for weaving baskets and carry bags.

The Friends of Moor-rul Grassland was established in 2009 by the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, to regenerate an area of native grassland as a memorial to the people who used this land for hunting in former times. The group was formed and is supported by the Nillumbik Shire Environmental Works Department. An Environmental Works Officer from the Shire is available for advice and practical support, including the provision of indigenous plants, the loan of tools and equipment, and on-site training.

Aim: Our aim is to reinstate the area as closely as possible to what it was in former times, using the remaining grasses and indigenous plants still present, and eliminating weeds and other plants that do not belong there.

Working bees: 10.00 am - 12.00 noon every second Sunday. The next one will be on the 10th May 2026.

Like to join? Or come along for a try out? Contact Convenor Jill Kellow jnkellow@gmail.com

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.

15. 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.



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.

Reclaiming Democracy Together national launch, Saturday 9 May 1.30-4.30pm, Melbourne Town Hall

Across the Western world, democratic institutions face deep strain. Public trust is fragile. Civic life is unsettled. On 9 May 2026, Reclaiming Democracy Together is launched — a seven-year national initiative

dedicated to rethinking and revitalising democratic life in Australia and beyond. This launch marks the beginning of that long-term work.

[Click here to book](#), and for further information on the Reclaiming Democracy Together national launch.

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Home Truths on the Housing Crisis, Saturday 16 May 3-5pm, Ivanhoe Cultural Centre
Dr Greg Jericho (Australia Institute) and Dr. Kate Shaw (University of Melbourne) are teaming up to help unpick the housing crisis.

[Click here to book tickets.](#)

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Sustainable House Day - The Nillumbik Trail, Sunday 17 May 10am-4pm

Visit local homes for information and inspiration to make your home more sustainable. Various locations around Nillumbik. There's a mixture of retrofits, new builds, renovations, electrifications, town house to rural property, Alistair Knox to mudbrick - something for everyone! For more information, click [here](#).

Electrification Speed Date, Saturday 30 May, Edendale Community Farm

Hosted by Clean Energy Nillumbik, free 20 minute appointments with a range of home electrification and energy efficiency experts. [Click here to book tickets.](#)

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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.

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](#).**

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



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.

nillumbikclimateactionteam.org