



**Nillumbik
Climate
Action
Team**

Newsletter September 2026

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1. Climate Cafe 2026: August - Nurturing Local Biodiversity/Caring for Country



There is wonderful work happening in our community helping to preserve and restore Nillumbik's remaining fragments of remnant bushland. Last Thursday we heard from two convenors of Friends' groups - Vicky Shukuroglou and Jill Kellow coordinate working bees for Hohnes Hill (Vicky) and McMahon Ball Paddock and Moor-rul Grassland (Jill).

Such groups provide us with an opportunity to participate in hands-on revitalisation of the land we live on - to experience at first hand the transformation that can occur in biodiversity when care and effort are invested in our local patch, strengthening our connection to place, benefitting our mental and physical health, and restoring habitat for wildlife.



A summary of Vicky and Jill's presentations can be found [here](#), along with further information on how to join Friends Groups in the shire. Also included is information and a link to Vicky's book, the [ACE Guide to Eucalypts Melbourne](#).

A selection of Vicky's presentation slides can be viewed [here](#).

Jill's presentation slides can be viewed [here](#).

Caption: Working bee at Moor-rul Grassland.
Photo: Vicky Shukuroglou

At our next climate cafe we will be hearing from local psychologist, **Dr Aimee Maxwell**, on the topic of **Talking to Children about Climate Change**.

Children are already encountering climate change information through school, social media, extreme weather, family conversations and the emotional atmosphere of the adults around them. Even when they do not fully understand what is happening, they may absorb the fear, urgency, anger or helplessness surrounding it.

How can adults speak honestly about climate change without overwhelming children? How do we respond when a child is frightened, angry, grieving or convinced that the future is already lost? And how can we support hope without offering false reassurance or placing responsibility for a global crisis onto young shoulders?

In this presentation, Dr Aimee Maxwell will explore how children understand climate change at different developmental stages and what helps them process difficult information. The session will consider climate anxiety, emotional regulation, age-appropriate honesty, the protective role of trusted adults and the difference between constructive action and burdening children with adult responsibility.

Participants will leave with practical language and principles for talking with children and young people in ways that are truthful, emotionally containing and appropriate to their age. The aim is not to shield children from reality, nor to ask them to carry it alone, but to help them develop the emotional resources, relationships and sense of agency needed to live meaningfully in a changing world.

Dr Aimee Maxwell is an Educational and Developmental psychologist based in Eltham. She works with children, families, educators and school leaders, with particular expertise in emotional regulation, developmental psychology, neurodiversity, psychological safety and the emotional demands of work and leadership.

Aimee's work helps people engage with difficult realities without becoming overwhelmed, avoidant or falsely reassured. She brings a developmental, evidence-informed and deeply human approach to questions about how adults support children through uncertainty, distress and social change.

The program until November 2026 is as follows:

September 24: Talking to Kids about Climate Change - Dr Aimee Maxwell

October 29: The Fight to Save Our National Parks - Jordan Crook, Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA)

November 26: Getting off gas - Ben Russell, Goodbye Gas

Hope to see you there!

Where: Platform 3095 Cafe, 965 Main Rd, Eltham

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

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

2. Nillumbik Climate Fresk, Saturday 5 September 2-5pm, at Edendale Farm Eltham

The poster for the Climate Fresk Melbourne event features a central image of several cards laid out on a table, illustrating the interconnectedness of climate change factors. The cards include titles like 'Human activities', 'Fossil Fuels', 'Climate Change', and 'Societal Responses'. The top left corner displays the 'CLIMATE FRESK' logo with the tagline 'All the cards are in your hands!'. Below this, it states 'Climate Change Uncovered: A 3-Hour Journey to Learn, Play, and Take Action'. The bottom left corner shows the 'Nillumbik The Green Wedge Shire' logo. The bottom right corner features the 'People for Nature' logo. The entire poster is framed by a dark blue border.

Climate Fresk Melbourne - September 2026

Learn about the elements driving climate change through a fun and collaborative card game, and work on solutions collectively.

 humanitix_team

We at Nillumbik Climate Action Team are very excited to be bringing you this special event! Join us and [People for Nature](#) for an interactive and informative game-based workshop to learn about climate change.

[Climate Fresk](#) represents a transformative approach to climate literacy. Climate science can sometimes be complex, dry and technical – and often overwhelming. In this collaborative team-based approach to learning about climate change, you will work together to assemble a ‘fresk’ (from fresco) – a visual representation of how climate change works – using 42 illustrated cards that represent causes, effects and societal responses.

A key part of the process is the opportunity at the end to reflect on your findings and to discuss solutions and actions.

The event is open to anyone, whether you are new to the topic of climate change, or an advanced campaigner. Whatever your knowledge level, you will come away more informed, energised and empowered to take action!

You will also enjoy a delicious afternoon tea at the end of the afternoon.

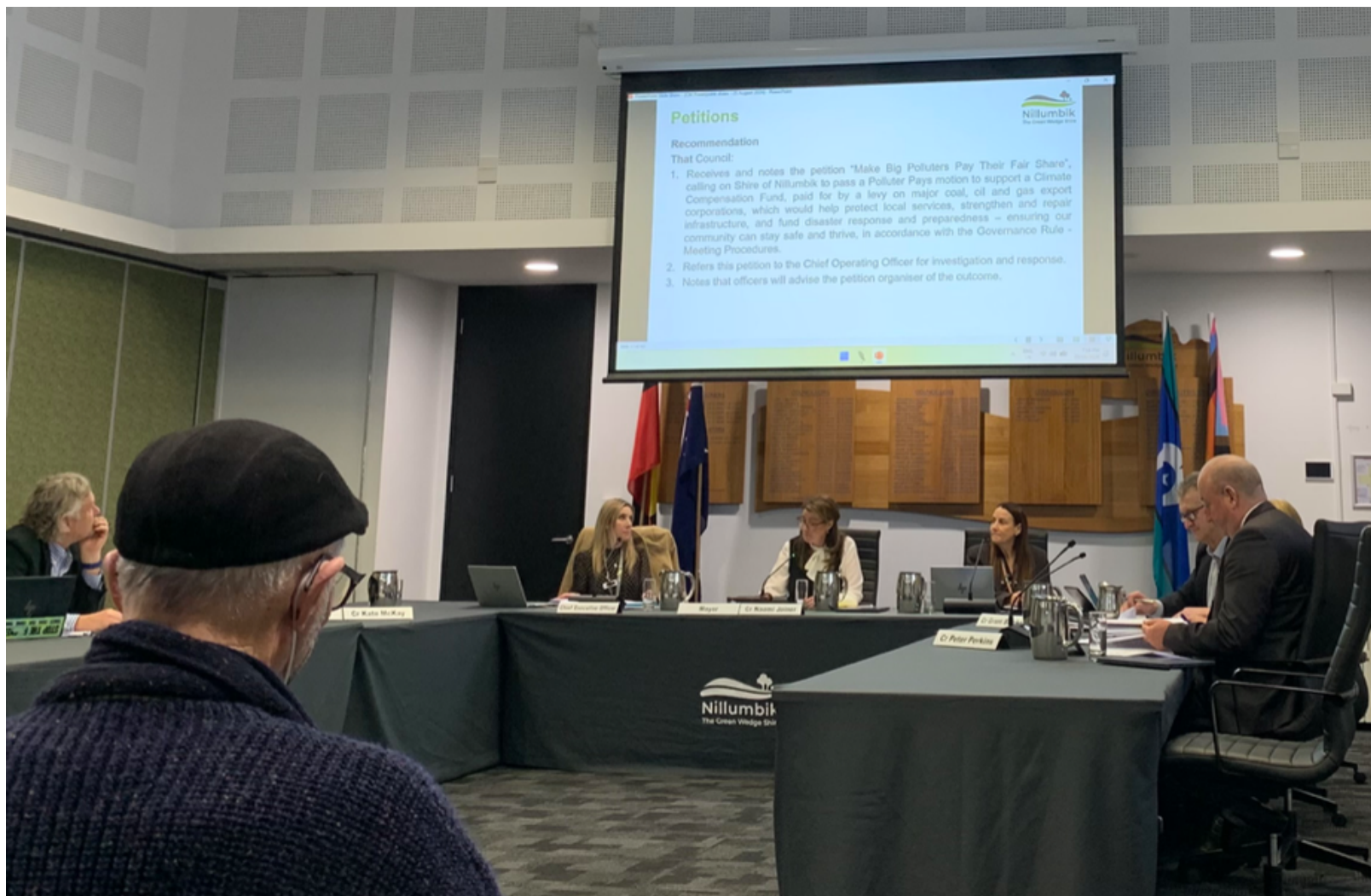
This event is supported by Nillumbik Environment and Climate Action Hub (NECAH).

[Book your tickets here.](#)

4. Make Big Polluters Pay their Fair Share petition motion accepted at council

At its most recent council meeting on Tuesday 25 August, Council passed a motion to accept a petition with 764 signatures from residents supporting the call for a Polluter Pays Climate Compensation Fund. This fund will be paid for by a federal government levy charged to big fossil fuel companies.

The signatures were collected by NCAT members as part of the [Make Big Polluters Pay campaign](#). The petition called for Councillors of the Shire of Nillumbik 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.



Councillors Kim Cope and Kate McKay spoke to the motion. Cr McKay had this to say:

"Big polluters and fossil fuel companies pay no tax, they take our resources and they sell it overseas for profit. We pay tax and then we pay for our own resources. It's the biggest con in the world.

And what do they give? Their legacy is warming climate and terrifying summers. Nillumbik is in one of the most bushfire-prone places in the world. It's not a matter of if we have a climate-related disaster, but when. And it's almost too terrifying to think about, but we need to think about it. We need to support our community, make them resilient and keep people in our shire safe, let alone start to consider what the repair and rebuild will look like, and the astronomical cost involved.

Fossil fuel companies need to be compelled to pay to this fund so that we can do the basics after a disaster, like looking after our people and looking after the environment."

The petition motion was accepted unanimously.

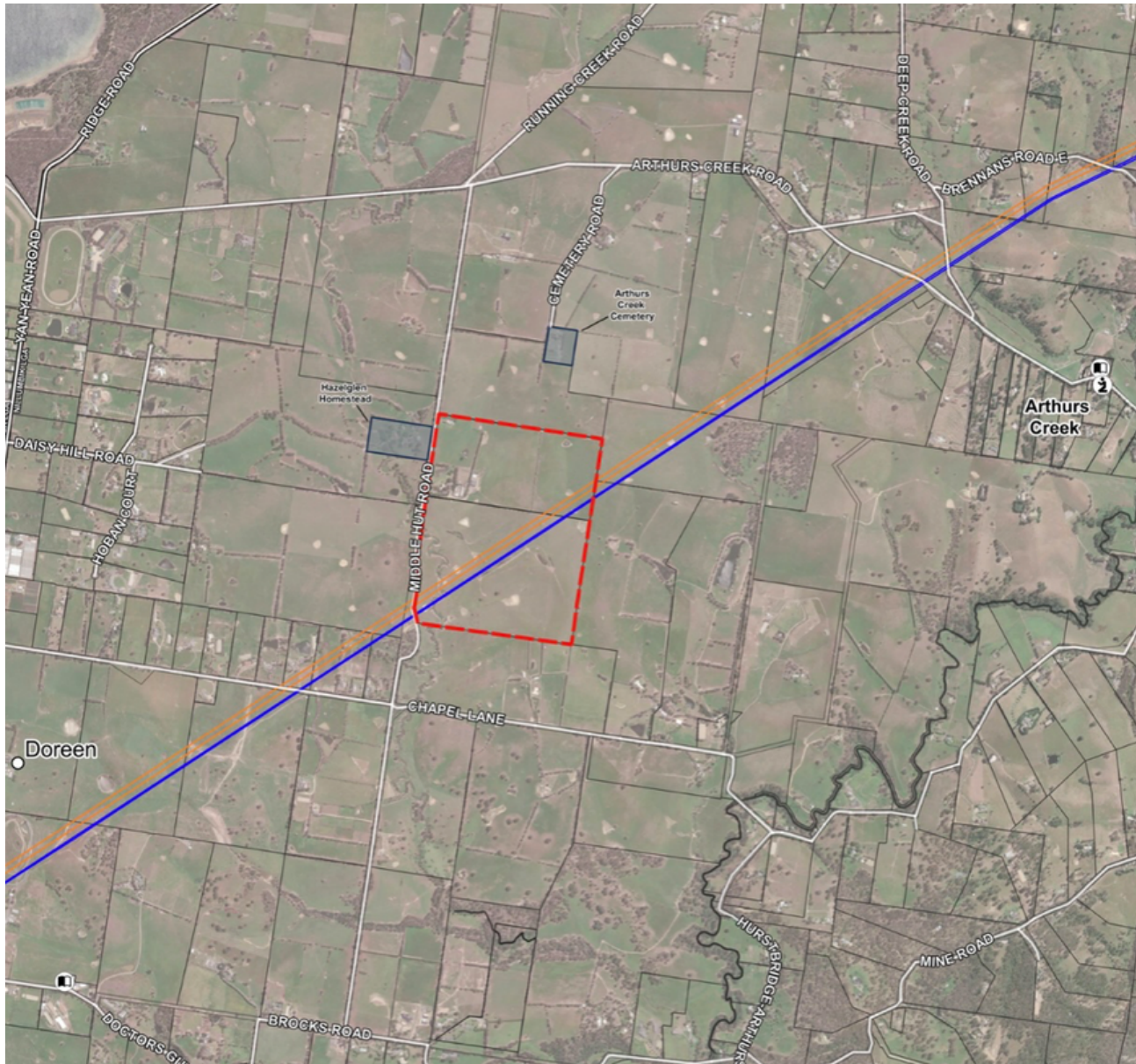
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The move to make big polluters pay is also gaining traction overseas. US climate commentator Katharine Hayhoe noted that a study had found that 'that emissions from major fossil fuel companies contributed to "about half of the increase in intensity of heatwaves since preindustrial times, and that this contribution is rising".

'BP, Chevron, Eni, ExxonMobil, Shell, and TotalEnergies will earn a combined \$45 billion in the second quarter of 2026—nearly twice the previous quarter. There is a staggeringly obvious solution to this massive inequity, where the richest companies make more money while the communities least responsible bear the brunt of the impacts (apart from the most obvious, of course: transitioning away from fossil fuels entirely). **Why not tax these record profits and use the money to help communities prepare for extreme heat and recover from climate disasters and transition to clean energy so they don't need to use fossil fuels?**' (See Katharine's blog, [Talking Climate](#), for more on this.)

Why not indeed?

4. Battery project for Doreen



Proposed battery site for BESS.
Image: [Middle Hut BESS website](#)

The development of a **large-scale Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)** is being proposed for land in Middle Hut Rd, Doreen. The proposed lithium-ion battery energy storage system will occupy approximately 14 hectares, and is expected to store enough electricity to power 90,000 houses a day. Battery energy storage systems provide critical reliability, load-shifting and grid-stabilisation benefits to Australia's power system, according to the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO).

The site is located in a Green Wedge Zone in a designated bushfire prone area (but not in a Bushfire Management Overlay area), is partially affected by an Environmental Significance Overlay and is an area of aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity. The location has been chosen because it is underneath two high-voltage transmission lines, meaning the battery could be plugged directly into Melbourne's energy grid.

The developers, Turnbull Renewables, are expected to apply directly to the state government for a planning permit this month. The proposal will not be assessed through a Nillumbik council planning permit application, but will most likely be referred to Council for comment. Residents and other stakeholders will have an opportunity to make a submission once the proposal has been publicly advertised.

An information session was held at Arthurs Creek on Saturday 29 August, at which locals expressed their concern about the possible fire risk of the proposed installation, in an area close to that affected by the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009. Fire risk assessment and mitigation is currently being carried as part of the planning application.

Further Information:

[Nillumbik Shire council statement](#)

[Middle BESS website](#)

[Article in The AGE: Turnbull-backed battery proposal sets off sparks in Doreen](#) (Note: this article is behind a paywall.

For a transcription of this article, click [here](#)

5. Climate Tragedy in Nepal



Image: from
Bill McKibben

The images coming out of Nepal recently have shocked the world. But they shouldn't have been a surprise. **Climate scientists have been predicting this for decades.** Twenty years ago **Bill McKibben** had stood on that border crossing reporting on what was already known to be an enormous threat: the fallout from the rapid melt on what is sometimes called Earth's Third Pole.

The danger of these collapses, and the blocked lakes they can create, are well-known to scientists; they happen often, but usually in unpopulated valleys. And **there is a lot more ice up there.**

"Nepalis produce about four-tenths of a ton of carbon emissions annually, compared with about 14 tons for an American. More than 99 percent of the country's electricity comes from hydropower (though much of that capacity was wiped out in last week's floods). **They are not causing the crisis that is killing them: we are.**"

Read more at Bill McKibben's Substack 'The Crucial Years'
<https://billmckibben.substack.com/p/the-growing-rumble>

6. Native forest protection to become a national political issue

In the latest forest news, environmental groups are launching a coordinated push to make native forest protection a national political issue. They are arguing that communities can no longer be left to fight logging and clearing "one forest at a time".

The Point has this to say:

'The Australia Institute has joined other national organisations such as the Australian Conservation Foundation, Wilderness Australia, the Bob Brown Foundation and the Wilderness Society, partnering with regional and grassroots groups to develop a common national strategy.

"With government failing to protect our forests, conservation organisations and grassroots groups are coming together to demand a national approach – because protecting Australia's forests can't be left to communities to fight one forest at a time," said Melanie Audrey, the Wilderness Society's Biodiversity Policy Campaign Manager.



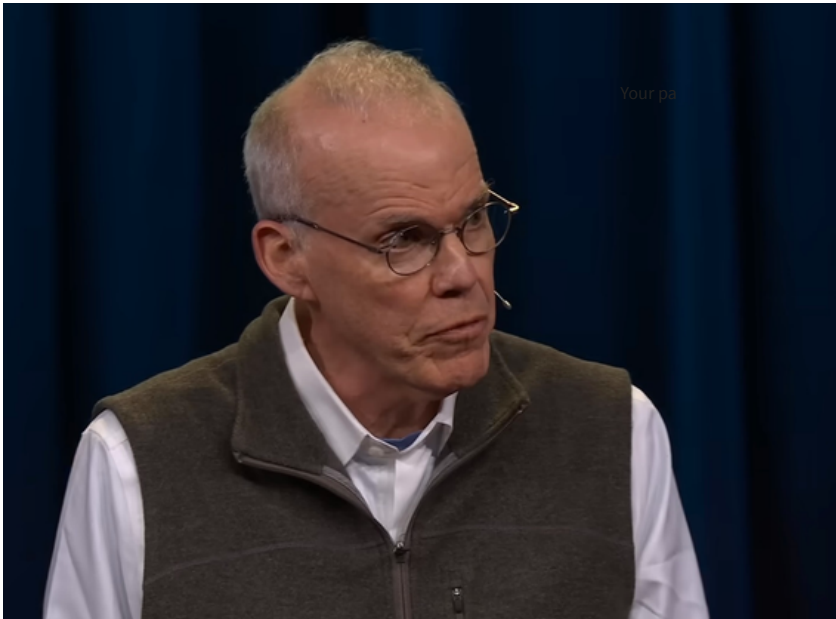
Representatives from almost two dozen groups gathered in Canberra a couple of weeks ago for a “historic meeting” to establish common forest protection principles that include calling for an immediate and permanent end to native forest logging, clearing and conversion.

“The conservation of the forests is one of the best ways we have to arrest climate change,” said former NSW environment minister Bob Debus.'

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

Click [here](#) to read the ten forest protection principles.

7. Our Last, Best Chance to Cool the Earth



Environmentalism, journalist and author, Bill McKibben explains how **the price of clean energy has plunged, making it cheaper than ever to power the world without burning fossil fuels.**

He delves into how energy from the sun has become the best option on Earth - and why this narrow window of time may be our last real shot at a different future.

‘Sunlight travels 93 million miles to reach the Earth, but none of those miles go through the Strait of Hormuz’.

[Click here to watch Bill's TED talk.](#)

8. Free energy in the middle of the day (for some)

While we're on the topic of free energy from the sun...

Victorians will soon be able to access three hours of free power in the middle of the day, every day of the week. This could save families up to \$300 per year off their energy bills, and up to \$1,070 if they have solar panels and batteries.

Victoria’s Midday Power Saver offer will be available from 1 October 2026. This will benefit households who can shift their electricity use to the middle of the day (or who are not on an embedded network or face other restrictions).

Click [here](#) for more information.

9. Quote of the month

*We don’t have time to sit on our hands as our planet burns.
For young people, climate change is bigger than election or re-election.
It’s life or death.*

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, US Politician & Activist

From [Bayside Climate Change Action Group \(BCCAG\)](#).

10. Tim Winton's outrage: This is not a natural calamity



Image: The Guardian

One of Australia's most beloved writers, Tim Winton, has vented his outrage on the calamitous situation we find ourselves in - made even more horrific with the knowledge that **'it is being done to us knowingly'**.

'There's nothing accidental or inadvertent about what we're all suffering through together. We've had enough time now and have sufficient expertise to understand that this is not a natural calamity. **This is something that is being done to us. Knowingly. Which makes it a crime.**

A narrow class of people is profiting from our anguish. They know they're setting our world on fire. They persist because they love neither the Earth nor its people. What they care about is money. Not just enough to get by on. Not even enough to become grotesquely rich with. They want the kind of money that bends others to their will. They seek power, buy it, co-opt it, leverage it and always thirst for more of it. As far as they're concerned, the rest of us can go to hell - so long as we bend the knee and keep paying them as we stagger towards the flames.'

Read the full article in The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/membership/2026/aug/24/this-is-not-a-natural-calamity-it-is-being-done-to-us-knowingly>

11. New environmental laws fail to stack up

Australia's new environment laws promised strong national environmental standards to help protect nature. But the results are far from satisfactory. Environment Minister Murray Watt has now released the first four key national environmental standards - a core part of the legislative framework for some of Australia's biggest decisions about nature.

Environment groups wanted the new standards to establish a clear national benchmark for environmental decisions - with rules decision-makers actually have to follow, and meaningful protections for threatened wildlife and their habitat to survive and recover. Instead, under the standards, following the required process can be treated as delivering the right outcome for nature - even when that outcome hasn't actually been achieved.

[Click here to see the scorecard](#) that Environmental Justice Australia has prepared to rate the new standards.

Register on the same link for a webinar, 'New nature laws, weaker standards? Help shape what happens next.' Thursday 3 September 1-2pm.

12. David Suzuki on shifting baselines

David Suzuki ponders the phenomenon of shifting baselines during a walk on the beach with his grandchildren, and the implications of this in the legacy that is being left for future generations.

Shifting baselines is a socio-psychological phenomenon which describes how environmental **information is lost over time, so changes go unnoticed**. The term was coined in 1995 by marine biologist Daniel Pauly, who observed that fisheries scientists were measuring fish population sizes with reference to those present at the beginning of their careers. Fish stocks declined, and when the next generation of scientists started their monitoring, that declined state became the baseline.

'It's a slippery slope from scepticism to cynicism to fatalism. Proof is in the subtleties, and shifting baseline syndrome proves that fatalism becomes fatal. In one human lifetime, we're left with shrunken fish and shrunken ambitions, polluted ecosystems and polluted politics, extinct species and extinction of experiences with nature. What we forget or forego is killing us.'

'Shifting baseline syndrome lays bare all the ways past generations failed future ones.'

<https://davidsuzuki.org/story/on-love-and-legacy-shifting-baseline-syndrome-strikes-home/>



Photo: Greystone Books

13. Cartoon of the month



Image: Reprinted from [East Gippsland Climate Action Group](#) FB page

13. The farce of climate change tourism



Photo: TC Photography
/ unsplash, CC BY-SA

In a story that resonates with an earlier one we heard at our November climate cafe last year from Geoff Collis, the Jetstar pilot who quit his dream job because of climate change (see also a recent article about Geoff here), Antarctic guides are finding it difficult to reconcile the privilege of their jobs with the impacts of tourism on an increasingly fragile environment.

Antarctic tourism is growing fast, with over 120,000 visits in 2025-26 and up to 45,000 expected each summer within a decade. A new study reveals how Antarctic tour guides grapple with the dilemma at the heart of their work — bringing more and more people to an ecologically vulnerable area, and helping cause some of the greatest CO2 emissions of any form of tourism.

For the full article, click here: <https://theconversation.com/i-cant-work-in-the-farce-of-climate-change-cruise-tourism-any-more-why-antarctic-guides-quit-their-dream-jobs-286216>

15. NCAT Membership: New members always welcome

We warmly invite all newsletter readers to become members of Nillumbik Climate Action Team, and 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.

<https://nillumbikclimateactionteam.org/membership/>

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.

16. Upcoming Events

Three native plant events

1. Australian Plant Expo, Saturday 12 Sept 9.30am-3pm, & Sunday 13 Sept 9.30am-2pm, Eltham Community & Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham. Wide range of Australian native plants for sale.
[Click here for more information.](#)

2. Free indigenous plants at Edendale

Nillumbik residents are invited to collect a free indigenous plant (one per household) from Edendale's indigenous plant nursery, and help build a greener, cooler and more wildlife-friendly future. Registrants can also receive a 20% discount (off the single tube price) on the next 20 plants that they buy.
[Register for your free plant here.](#)

3. Request a street tree

Nillumbik residents can apply for a street tree to be planted on their nature strip. Offer open until the end of January.
[Click here to apply.](#)

Birrarung Riverfest 27 September - 18 October 2026

Celebrate the life force of the Yarra, Birrarung.

Riverfest returns in 2026 with 70+ events from the source to the sea and its tributaries. From walks, talks and paddles to art, music, storytelling, wildlife spotting and tree planting - there's something for everyong at Riverfest.
To see the program and register for events, [click here](#).

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](#).

For **Nillumbik Council sustainability and environment** events and activities, including introduction to bee keeping workshops, reveg. working bees, plastic free July activities and many more, [click here](#).

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 here for more information.](#)

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.



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



Nillumbik Climate Action Team

Advocates for stronger, faster action on climate heating

 Nillumbik Climate Action Team /