



**Nillumbik
Climate
Action
Team**

NEWSLETTER October 2026

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1. Climate Cafe 2026:



It's every parent's dilemma. How to speak to children honestly about climate change without causing distress and overwhelm. How to answer their questions without giving them false reassurances. Our speaker last Thursday at Platform 3095, **Dr Aimee Maxwell**, covered these questions and much more as she took us through the complexities of navigating climate change issues with children.

Clear, honest and practical advice was integrated with scripts appropriate for children at different ages, as well as what not to say. Tips such as listen, ask questions and allow room for the expression of emotions; do not feel you have to have all the answers, but offer '**honest loving company**' along the way.

This is an invaluable toolkit, not only for parents and grandparents of young children, but for all of us trying to find our way through these uncertain times.

Click [here](#) for a summary of Aimee's presentation, together with a list of resources. Aimee's presentation slides can be viewed [here](#).



Our next climate cafe will be on **The Fight to Save Our National Parks**, presented by **Jordan Crook** from the **Victorian National Parks Association**.

Jordan Crook is a **Parks and Nature Campaigner** at the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA). His role focuses on protecting and caring for our wildlife and natural places.

Jordan's talk will look at **why we have national parks and the campaigns that led to their creation**. He'll cover some of the wins, such as the **Central West park**, and then let you know about the **cuts and harm currently being done to our precious parks and what we can all do to help**.

Jordan's background is in conservation work ranging from the ocean to the tall forests of the Central Highlands, and he has worked with all levels of government to get results for the natural world for many years. Jordan teaches conservation and land management at a tertiary level and has an academic background in conservation and land management, arboriculture and training and assessment.

The program until October 2026 is as follow

October 29: The Fight to Save Our National Parks	2. Victorian State Election 2026
November 26: Getting off Gas - Ben Russell, Goodbye Gas	

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. More info: nillumbikclimateactionteam.org/ncat-climate-cafe

2. Victorian State Election 2026

Victorian State Election 2026

Candidates Forum

for Eltham, Yan Yean and Eildon electoral districts

Thursday 12 November 7:00pm
online via Zoom



Book now



It's coming up to **state election time**, and Nillumbik Climate Action Team will again be out there in the community and at pre-polling handing out **Candidates' Scorecards**. We will also be hosting an online **Candidates Forum** for the electoral districts of **Eltham, Yan Yean and Eildon** on **Thursday 12 November**, where we will be asking candidates for their policies on a range of issues related to climate and environment, including renewable energy infrastructure, transport, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, household electrification and renters equity, local climate adaptation funding and more.

Bookings for the Candidates Forum are now live and available [HERE](#).

Help needed to hand out Candidate Scorecards!

Candidate Scorecards are in process of being prepared. These are cards which **rate candidates on their climate and environment policies**. They can provide useful information to the public on which candidates and/or parties will best support strong action on climate. We are looking for people who would be willing to hand out Candidate Scorecards at pre-polling venues and other locations ahead of the forthcoming state election. **Pre-polling voting centres will be open from Wednesday 18 November to Friday 27 November from 9am-6pm every day except Sunday 22 November**. Locations will be announced closer to the time. **Click [here](#)** for more information about voting options.

If you are interested and have some time available in the lead-up to the election, please email Elizabeth at info@nillumbikclimateaction.org and you will be contacted when the cards are ready to be distributed.

3. Why building large-scale renewable energy infrastructure needs to be at the forefront of the state elections

Our colleagues at [Bayside Climate Change Action Group \(BCCAG\)](#) have nailed **one of the key issues in the upcoming state elections**, as set out in their powerful newsletter editorial recently.

'Climate change is a lived, daily reality marked by record ocean warming, and increasingly volatile weather systems. Standing at the intersection of this crisis is El Niño, amplifying droughts, destabilising agriculture, and pushing fragile ecological grids to their breaking points worldwide.

As Victoria prepares for its state election, the campaign must reflect a much larger, global imperative: **the urgent, undeniable necessity of building resilient, large-scale renewable energy infrastructure**.

Relying on an **ageing grid powered by fossil fuels** is a fast-fading strategy. Ageing coal and gas plants are notoriously vulnerable to extreme heat, suffering forced outages precisely when the population needs power most.

This reality places Victoria's political choices in sharp focus. The state's forthcoming election is a **referendum on energy security and climate adaptation in an era of extreme weather**.

Decisive investment in renewable energy infrastructure offers the only viable path forward. To build real resilience against supercharged El Niño cycles, policy must move beyond superficial commitments and deliver on foundational infrastructure by:

- Upgrading high-voltage interconnectors to transmit clean energy efficiently.
- Rapidly deploying utility-scale batteries to buffer peak demand spikes caused by heatwaves.
- Accelerating solar and wind farms to systematically replace fragile, ageing coal generators.

The Victorian state election serves as a **critical turning point**. Choosing to accelerate renewable infrastructure buildouts is **not merely an environmental preference**—it is a baseline requirement for maintaining economic stability, sustainability and ensuring our society remains functional on this warming Earth.'

Further reading:

[Environment Victoria 2026 Victorian Election](#)

[Record warmth a warning that Victoria can't go backwards on climate at this election](#)

[Misinformation: A climate policy risk](#)

[Climate Authority's "misinformation" report hit a nerve at News Corp for a reason](#)

Reprinted from BCCAG September 2026 newsletter.

4. What Albanese could have said

Richard Flanagan, writer and national treasure, is known for his insights into Australian politics, culture and policy failure. His genius lies in the fact that those insights are so witheringly accurate and prescient years before they become obvious to the rest of us.

In reading the compilation of writings in his new book [Heresies](#), I was particularly struck by one where he imagined what Anthony Albanese could have said as opposition leader in December 2019 as the Black Summer bushfires loomed. At that time, the speech Albanese did give reassured the fossil fuel corporations that **there would be no ending of coal exports under a Labor government**.

He was true to his word. By May 2026, his government had approved **thirty-six new coal, oil and gas developments**, including the catastrophic extension to 2070 of the **North West Shelf gas project**.

Unfortunately for us all, he didn't give the alternative speech that Richard Flanagan wrote for him back in 2019. We would be in a very different position if he had.

Here is an extract of the alternative speech:

'Today we witness an unprecedented situation as a people and as a nation. Our country is burning and there is no end in sight, nor will there be an end **unless we have the courage to face the truth**. Our country is burning because it is warming up and drying out, and these things are happening because of a climate crisis for which human beings all over the world are responsible.

We cannot escape our responsibility to act on these truths.

It was not possible to say we were serious about addressing the climate crisis and yet promise \$1.5bn to **subsidise the development of the Beetaloo gas basin** as we did during the election. It strained belief of both our supporters and opponents that we could be for Adani and not for Adani. In truth we were too much for ourselves.

All we achieved was to entrench the fossil fuel industry as our most powerful vested interest. Today that industry has as its handmaiden the most authoritarian government in our history. It attacks journalistic freedom, derides those who question it, uses parliament as a forum for lies and criminalises democracy.'

Click [here](#) to read the full Guardian article from 2019.

Hear also Richard talking about Heresies on ABC podcast [Richard Flanagan sees 'goodness in the midst of our apocalypse'](#).

5. We can finally measure the damage each coal, gas and oil project will do to people and nature



We have long known **every tonne of carbon dioxide matters to the climate**. But governments keep approving new fossil fuel projects – even as climate change worsens.

In recent years, great strides have been made in **attribution science** - the amount of damage attributable to the emissions of a single project.

New research has taken this a step further. An open-source climate tool – the **Carbon Impacts Tracer** – shows how much a new project will warm the planet – and how much damage it will do across eight areas, from loss of crops to heatwave deaths in Europe.

This will help **make fossil fuel companies and governments approving these projects accountable for the damage they will do**.

Read more [here](#)...

6. Energy Vampires: the AI data centres draining Australia (and open letter to sign)

A new report from **Greenpeace Australia Pacific** and independent expert **Ketan Joshi** reveals how the frenzied rollout of AI data centres in Australia is set to **derail the renewable energy transition, entrench gas and turbocharge climate pollution**, prompting calls for an urgent moratorium on data centre approvals until appropriate guardrails are in place.

Click [here](#) to read more about the report.



Image: Toby Davidson/Greenpeace

Right now the Federal Government is drafting new laws that will decide how data centres will be built and powered in Australia. There are already 225 proposed data centres planned in Australia - and **we have until 9 October to make our voices heard.**

Click [here](#) to **add your name to an open letter from the Climate Council** urging that data centres be powered by renewable energy.

See also an opinion piece from Jo Shulman, CEO of **Environmental Defenders Office**, on Australia's only chance to get the data centre boom right.

7. Electrify-AI everything

In contrast to the above newsletter item, electrification guru **Saul Griffith** is not a fan of the doom and gloom talk about AI. He has recently launched **Electric Saul**, an AI trained specifically to help advise on household electrification. Here is what he has to say:

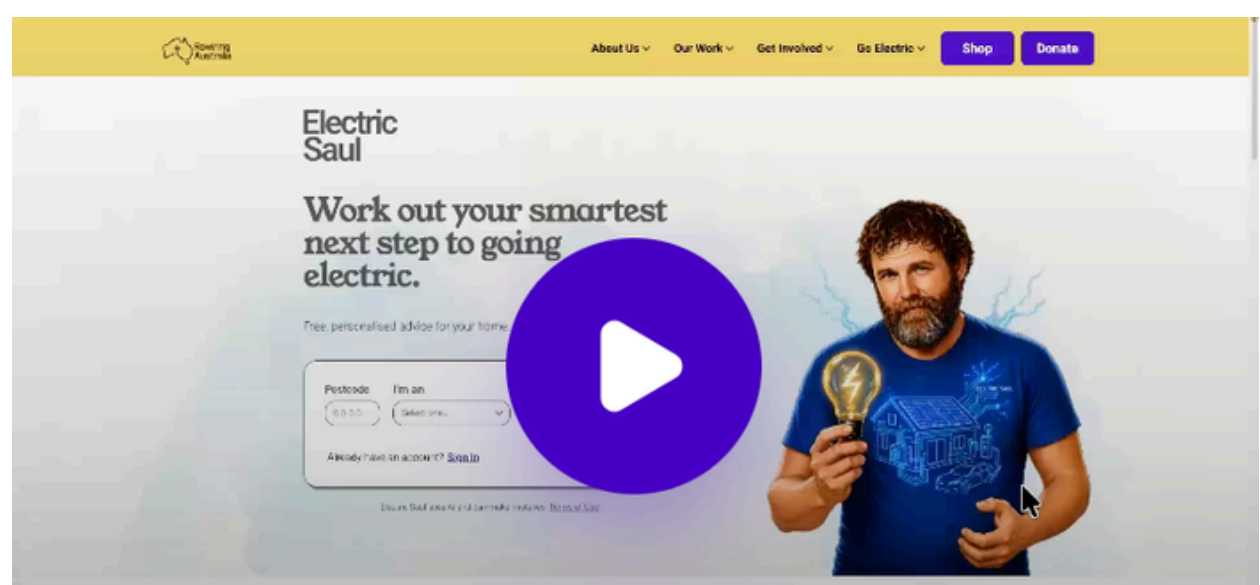
"There are plenty of doom stories out there about AI. I don't believe most of them. In fact my own experience of AI is that it has really got quite good. There is more room here for optimism than doom. Don't believe the hype.

Electric Saul is an AI we trained specifically to help advise on household electrification....Uptake has been great, as has been the feedback. Evidence is that it is genuinely helping real people make good decisions about electrifying their lives.

I like the idea of **trusted sources of information that can be engaged conversationally to help on electrification and decarbonisation.** The future can be intimidating and electrification should be easy (and cheap) but we aren't quite there yet so help... helps.

Lots of people ask about the **energy cost and impact of all of these AIs.** My opinion is that we will find **enormous code efficiencies** and the data centre build-out will be far, far smaller than the hyperventilating stock boosters say, which will put a cap on the resources it will use. We know for Electric Saul that **a comprehensive conversation about household electrification costs about 30 cents to host.** The climate impact of that 30c is less than spending 30c on petrol or gasoline, and probably about the same as spending 30c on a coffee. One day when it's all wind and solar and fusion power, and when we get serious about recycling, the impact can be zero. For that 30c though we can lock in thousands of dollars of savings per year and tonnes of carbon reduced per year in economic and climate impact. This AI isn't coming for your job, it's the type of AI you can imagine tradespeople and contractors using to demystify the things they are installing at your house."

Reprinted from Saul's blog, [Energy and Stuff.](#)



8. The agony of speaking

TAt NY Climate Week recently, **Dr Genevieve Gunther** in her **End Climate Silence** newsletter was reflecting on a 1967 speech by Dr Martin Luther King titled a Time to Break Silence, in which he famously noted "**a time comes when silence is betrayal**" — an observation equally apt with respect to media and political silence on climate as it was with respect to clerical silence about US war crimes in Vietnam.

She notes the parallels with a speech **Vice President Al Gore** gave at Climate Week that "brought tears to my eyes. The VP had been rehearsing the same facts about carbon dioxide and climate impacts that I've heard him repeat at least since I did his Climate Reality training when I became an activist in 2017 (almost ten years ago!) — but suddenly Gore turned into much more personal territory, leading into a discussion of despair and his thirty-year endurance of **the agony of speaking and not being heard**. 'Do I despair?' he asked. 'Do I want to give up?' And he answered: 'not for a minute. On the contrary. It is a privilege to have work that justifies pouring every ounce of our spiritual energy into it.'

Reprinted from End Climate Silence newsletter.

9. Australia's dependence on gas generation during evening energy peak falls by almost 70%

Australia's dependence on **gas for power during the evening, when the grid is under the most pressure, has fallen by almost nearly 70% over the past year** as batteries surged in, replacing the fossil fuel.

Gas generation during the busy early evening, between 5pm and 8pm, fell by 67% in the year to August, as large-scale batteries continued to come online and 500,000 home batteries were installed under the government's subsidy program, analysis by consultancy EnergyEdge found.



Read more...

10. Quote of the month

“Our economic system and our planetary system are now at war. Or, more accurately, **our economy is at war with many forms of life on earth, including human life.**

What the climate needs to avoid collapse is a contraction in humanity's use of resources; what our economic model demands to avoid collapse is unfettered expansion.

Only one of these sets of rules can be changed, and it's not the laws of nature.

— Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate

11. The Burning Conversation - The science behind burning off and bushfire practices

The questions around the efficacy of planned burns continue to reverberate in forest, environment and climate circles, and have broad implications not just for the immediate physical safety of wildlife, ecosystems, people and infrastructure, but for long-term health impacts.

At a Royal Society of Victoria event on 21 September, these issues and more were hotly debated. The event was moderated by Gregg Borschmann, host of ABC Radio National Big Ideas program, in conversation with Phil Zylstra, fire behaviour scientist and Adjunct Associate Professor at Curtin University, and Trent Penman, Professor in Bushfire Behaviour at the University of Melbourne.

Click [here](#) to watch a recording of the event.



12. Open letter sign-on - Gas and its overlooked health risks

Recently, [Doctors for the Environment Australia](#) (DEA) launched a new report, [Gas and its overlooked health risks](#), at Parliament House, hosted by Kate Thwaites, special envoy for DCCEEW. The report outlines how fossil gas harms health in the home and at work, during extraction and processing and as a cause of global heating.



Recently, [Doctors for the Environment Australia](#) (DEA) launched a new report, [Gas and its overlooked health risks](#), at Parliament House, hosted by Kate Thwaites, special envoy for DCCEEW. The report outlines how fossil gas harms health in the home and at work, during extraction and processing and as a cause of global heating.

Fundamentally gas is a public health issue and **getting off gas is good for you and good for our environment**. For a bit of light entertainment, watch the [coverage on News24](#).

An **open letter to the PM and Mark Butler** has been drafted, and is available for health professionals and concerned citizens to sign.

The letter is asking the Labor government to **protect human health** by:

- Providing targeted support to the community to replace gas appliances and disconnect from the gas network
- Establishing a clear timeline for phasing out fossil gas and rule out approving new gas projects
- Making the gas industry bear the costs of the health and environmental harms of their product.

Click [here](#) to sign the open letter to the PM and Mark Butler.

The DEA conference is coming up later this month in Melbourne, at which this and other issues will be discussed. Click [here](#) for more information.

13. Podcast - More proof we need to touch the grass

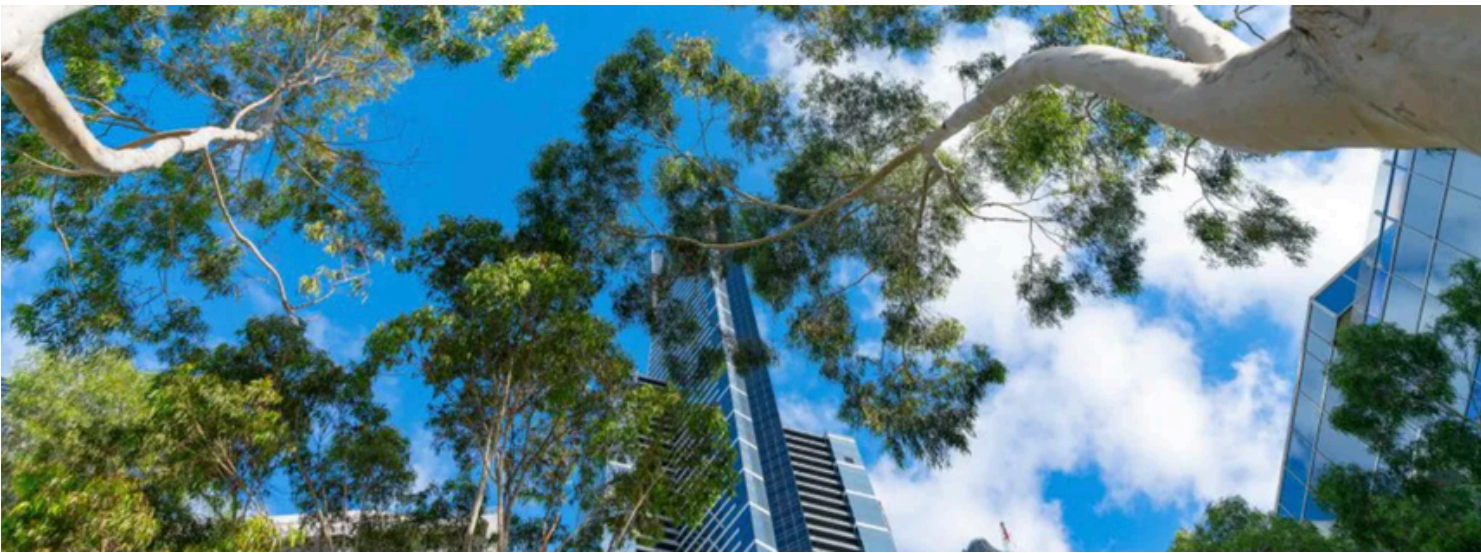


Image: [Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW](#)

In case you were still in any doubts about the **benefits of access to green space in our urban areas**, this RN Life Matters podcast will dispel them.

Urban planning researcher **Sebastian Pfausch** and Gardening Australia's **Hannah Moloney** talk about the healing power of nature, and discuss new research from Scotland which shows that **people who live close to woodland areas are 10% less likely to be prescribed antidepressants**. They point to **the need for urban green infrastructure to be recognised as critical infrastructure** at all levels of government, and for the 3-30-300 rule to be applied at the planning level.

Click [here](#) to listen...

14. Cartoon of the month

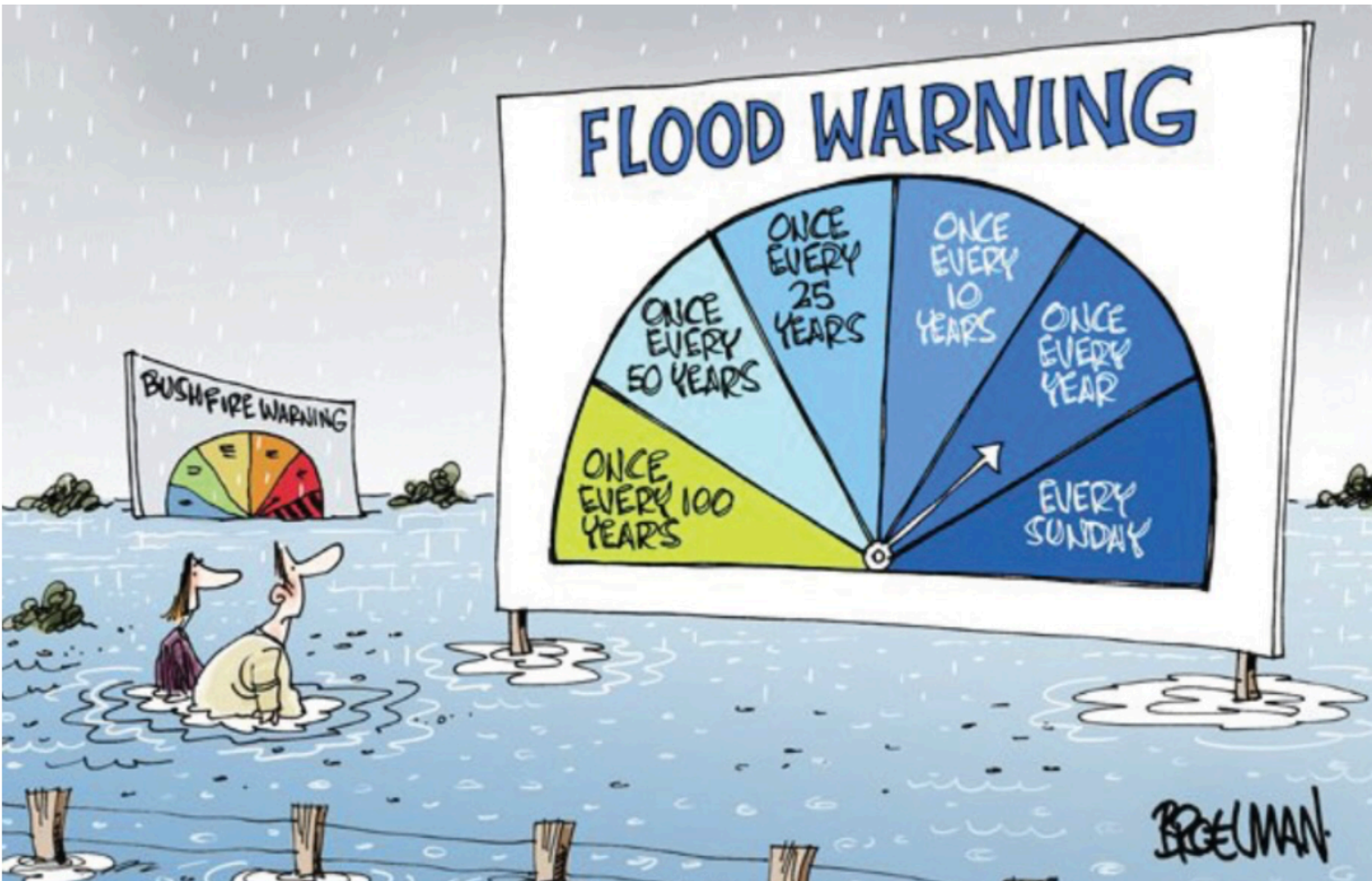


Image: Winner of [Climate council cartoon of the year 2023](#)

15. NCAT Membership: New members always welcome

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.

16. Upcoming Events



Film: Taking the Channel, Thursday 15 October 6.30-8.30pm, Patagonia CBD store

Join [Rising Tide Victoria](#) for the Victorian premiere of [Taking the Channel](#). In November last year, thousands of everyday people stood up for the planet at the **2025 People's Blockade of the World's Largest Coal Port**.

The film features a 17-year-old who will do anything to defend her future. A coal worker who knows the industry he works for is burning the planet. A law-abiding grandmother finding the courage to fight for future generations.

Book your tickets [here](#).

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](#).

People for Nature Citizen COP - online and in person events nationwide Oct/Nov 2026

Forums, workshops, citizen science days and locally-led action projects all running alongside the official COP 31 (Climate) and COP 17 (Biodiversity) negotiations.

[Click here to view the full program of climate and biodiversity events.](#)

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.

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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



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

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