

BCCAN MISSION

A community based network of organisations and individuals that work together to promote action on climate change & equitable & sustainable development.

BCCAN AIMS

To involve the Bathurst Community & liaise & communicate on their behalf with Council.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Achieve sustainable & equitable development in the Bathurst Region

Adoption of renewable energy technologies throughout the Bathurst region

Bio-sequestration of CO₂

Raise public awareness of associated problems



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Renewable Energy – State Governments ‘go it alone’

As we know, at the federal level, for the past few years, there has been no substantial commitment to actively address Climate Change. One of the Abbott Government’s first acts in office was to shut down the Climate Commission and drastically cut funding for tackling Climate Change. And no clear commitment has come from the Turnbull government on addressing Climate Change during his first term in office, nor during his second term thus far.

Some of the State governments however have shown greater leadership in dealing with Climate Change by embracing alternative energy projects.

On 20 July 2016, the Victorian Government has given the green light to one of the biggest wind farm projects in the State’s history: A \$650 million project near Dundonnell, in South-West Victoria is expected to generate enough energy to power 140,000 homes. The 96 turbine wind farm, with construction due to begin in 2017, would save an estimated 700,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. Up to 300 direct and indirect jobs are expected to be created during construction, and up to 16 full-time positions when operational.

The Federal Government’s decision to merge the Environmental and Energy portfolio has sparked hopes among advocates that renewable energy will play a greater role in energy policy.

The Australian Wind Alliance’s Andrew Bray said the incoming minister Josh Frydenberg has been ‘positively disposed’ to renewables. But the Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews said he would not be waiting on the Federal Government to lead the ‘battle’ against climate change. On its commitment to tackling climate change Victoria is prepared to ‘go it alone’.

South Australia too has made great leaps forward and the State’s power generation is now completely coal free. South Australia’s last coal-fired power station closed in May this year, following the closure of the Leigh Creek coal mine that supplied brown coal to the power station. This leaves South Australia dependent only on gas and wind for power generation.

The information on the Victorian wind farm and South Australia’s power generation are from articles on the ABC news website, the opinions expressed are those of the this newsletter’s editor

UPCOMING EVENTS

Great 21st Century Energy Challenge Presentation in Bathurst

Monday 22 August 2016
At 5pm
Bathurst Panthers
132 Piper St, Bathurst
For further info contact
Steve Ives at
draxcel@gmail.com

Green Drinks

Friday 26 August 2016
At 5:30pm at Rahamim
34 Busby St Bathurst
Guest Speaker
Cilla Kinross
Presents on the Central
West Environment
Council

Bathurst Farmers Markets

Saturday 27 August 2016
8am to noon
Bathurst Showground

Next BCCAN steering committee Meeting

September 20, 2016
Bathurst Information and
Neighbourhood Centre,
(BINC) Russell Street at
4:30 for 5pm start

Next Building & Energy APT meeting

Tuesday 6 September
2016 at the School of
Teacher Education
building, Charles Sturt
Uni, Bathurst at 5pm

The Great 21st Century Energy Challenge – Presentation in Bathurst

Dr Matthew and Dr Mike Ives (brother and father respectively of BCCAN member Steve Ives) will give a presentation on choosing the right mix of energy alternatives to combat Climate Change at Bathurst Panthers on Monday 22 August (from 5pm)

Dr Matthew Ives is a research scientist from the University of Oxford where he manages the National Infrastructure Systems Model currently being used to inform the UK government and the UN on Climate Change related policy.

Dr Mike Ives has fifty plus years working as an engineer and project manager around the world in a wide spectrum of industries including energy supply.

The presentation, based on their new book, examines the energy options available to Australia and their likely effectiveness in helping us meet this great challenge of our times. To download their free eBook go to www.energychallenge.info. BCCAN member Laurana Smith will also give a presentation on the evening.

Entry fee is a gold coin donation with tea and coffee provided. For more information **or if you miss the event and wish to view a recording of the presentation** please contact Steve Ives at draxcel@gmail.com.

An Open Letter by David Goldney to the Premier of NSW regarding Proposed Changes to the Native Vegetation Act

I am writing to you and your government asking that you reconsider the proposed changes that you are planning to the Native Vegetation Act. I have already signed a number of eloquent submissions from the scientific community. This is a more personal response. I write to you as both an informed scientist/ecologist with half-lifetime engagement across the Central West of NSW since 1972.

The Central West of NSW, Wiradyuri Country, occupies approximately a quarter of the land area of NSW. It is also home to Australia's oldest inland European agricultural-lands; Bathurst being proclaimed a town in 1815 on the once fabulously productive and biodiverse Bathurst plains. This was a cultural landscape created and maintained by the Wiradyuri for 22,000 years. That is no longer the case. The Central West was once dominated by vast areas of park-like eucalypt woodlands as well as a range of other vegetation communities. On private land, it is now a region dominated by Terminal Native Tree Landscapes, more often than not, incapable of self-regeneration under current land management practices, or patches of sub-optimal disconnected, poorly managed, crowded, regrowth woodland patches. The proposed legislative changes will likely adversely impact on the 25 million paddock trees that are scattered across most of the Central West that have an irreplaceable ecological role in the existing over-cleared landscape. More disturbing still, there are up to 0.6 billion (yes – 600,000,000 trees!) at risk within degraded remnant patches of woodland in the Central West. The situation now is likely to be much worse than when these estimates were determined over 20 years ago by Charles Sturt University scientists.

To facilitate further native vegetation clearing in a landscape already self-clearing through poor stewardship is completely unacceptable. The great cycles of nature (e.g. the carbon, nitrogen/nutrients and water cycles) are in disarray at all landscape scales; soil carbon levels have plummeted; an unacceptable portion of the one-way flow of energy from the sun underlying all plant and animal production is now causing agricultural landscapes to overheat with negative consequences on production

UPCOMING EVENTS (cont.)

BCCAN AGM with Okham's Razor contributor Dr Steb Fisher

Tuesday 18 October
2016 from 6pm at the
Bathurst RSL

Bathurst Regional
Council has invited
community members
to share their vision
for Bathurst's future –
so please - have
Your Say at

<http://yoursay.bathurst.nsw.gov.au/>

*"Instead of trying to
sustain the way we
live, it's time to ask
how to create
a sustainable way of
living."*

Dr Steb Fisher –
BCCAN AGM guest
speaker

outcomes; the extraordinary capacity of trees to modify local climates via evapo-transpiration has been severely tested with often unintended adverse outcomes; key ecological threshold have been crossed; precious top soil losses more often than not, continue to exceed the rate of soil production; salinity degrades our lands, and the abysmal condition of our rivers, creeks and natural water retention systems, are well documented.

Land degradation in all its forms is often associated with over clearing of native vegetation not to mention the losses in stock production from chilling winds and cold snaps that trees help to ameliorate. A better than average wet year such as we are currently experiencing tends to hide the result of past follies. Of great concern too are the significant losses of soil organisms (ploughs are no longer stopped by masses of earth worms), the highest rate of regional extinction of native vertebrates in Australia (and arguably the greatest number of regionally threatened/endangered species in Australia). Just as worrying are the very significant losses of invertebrates, including terrestrial insects that have occurred over 200 years of European land management. These organisms, together with their stressed native vegetation communities are not just landscape ecosystems that drive the ecology of the Central West and underwrite sustainability. As one of Australia's leading biologists once exclaimed 'Our land is Crying'. The evidence points to a landscape where symptoms of desertification are pronounced.

I inwardly weep at the havoc we Europeans have caused to natural systems. But I am also one full of optimism in this Age of Restoration where so many farmers and graziers are leading the way in creating cultural landscapes that work well to conserve and increase biodiversity that underwrites their land's productivity. These innovative farmers are pushing the boundaries as to how best we can sustainably manage and restore agricultural landscapes. No farmer that I know welcomes the changes to the Native Vegetation Act. This farming cohort embrace tree planting and the conservation and restoration of remnant native vegetation. Where the proposed changes to the vegetation act will impact the greatest is likely to be in the wheat belt in the marginal lands of the semi-arid zone where farmers with large landholdings gamble each year at their 500-2,000ha crop will pay off handsomely or that the resale value of their properties will increase dramatically, once it has been cleared for cropping. Such 'business decisions' in these marginal landscapes result in an economic return around two to three years out of ten, some landholders strike gold, others go broke in the process or continue to add to already unsustainable mortgages, leaving their land in the process more degraded than when they first began to farm it. Leaving one's land in a worse condition than when one became steward is farming's unpardonable sin.

What you and your government are proposing is not based on the best science nor is it in the interest of the long-term stewardship and sustainability of our agricultural lands. I implore you to rethink what you are planning to do.

The above is an extract from a letter sent to the NSW Premier in August this year by David Goldney Adjunct Professor, Charles Sturt University, and BCCAN Member

Upcoming BCCAN Annual General Meeting

Guest speaker at the BCCANs Annual General Meeting, on **Tuesday October 18** from 6pm at the Bathurst RSL, will be **Dr Steb Fisher**, who facilitates programmes exploring economic/political frameworks for sustainable communities and societies. Dr Fisher lectures in sustainability and resilience at Federation University Australia and Sichuan University in China. All executive positions will be declared open and we encourage BCCAN members wanting to be more involved to nominate for these positions. For more information please email us at bxclimateaction@gmail.com.

Solar Power - Life after Feed-In Tariffs

LIFE AFTER FEED-IN TARIFFS

Follow these five steps to make the most of your solar energy and keep your bills down when premium feed-in tariffs end this year.

- 1. Get the right meter (NSW only)**
You should move to "net" metering. This will probably be a smart meter, giving you more information and options.
Some network companies may offer to rewire your existing meter at low cost, but in the long run you may be better off with a new smart meter.
⚠️ Some retailers are offering free or cheap smart meters, but read the fine print on the contract.
- 2. Use more of your solar electricity**
Use your appliances more during the day. The main appliances that use energy are for hot water and heating/cooling your home.
Heat your hot water using solar electricity (e.g. using heat pumps or electric hot water systems).
If you've got good insulation, pre-heat or cool your house before you get home (e.g. using reverse cycle air conditioners).
- 3. Think twice about gas**
Using gas means you can't maximise the use of your solar electricity to run your appliances.
Using your solar electricity for hot water or heating/cooling your home is cheaper than using bottled or even town gas.
⚠️ At this stage you just need to make a plan for getting off gas, even if it takes a few years to implement.
- 4. Get the best electricity deal**
Some retailers are improving their offers for solar energy exported to the grid, so shop around.
But also think about your total annual bill, including the fixed charges, energy rate, discounts and tariff type.
⚠️ Take your time finding the best deal and always make sure you know what you are signing up for.
- 5. Consider more solar or a battery**
Down the line, as energy markets change and costs drop, consider a battery or west facing solar.
⚠️ Installing a small battery currently isn't cost-effective for most households, but as prices drop it may soon make sense.

Find out more at:
www.SolarCitizens.org.au/Life_After_FITs

This project was funded by Energy Consumers Australia (www.eca.org.au) as part of its grants process for consumer advocacy projects and research projects for the benefit of consumers of electricity and natural gas. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of Energy Consumers Australia.

Logos: Total Environment Centre, ABC, community power agency, SolarCitizens

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The Community Power Agency, Total Environment Centre, Solar Citizens and the Alternative Technology Association launched a report about what households should do when their premium feed-in tariffs come to an end and **we need your help.**

This is motivated by the fact that over 275,000 households will come of Feed-in Tariffs in NSW, Victoria and South Australia this year (note not all households on feed-in tariffs in Vic and SA are affected).

We'd love your help in disseminating this information to as many people as possible, particularly of course effected solar households. Post it on Facebook, email links to your friends, family or community group.

Supporting households as this change in FiT occurs in an important practical step in the clean energy transition, that we need to make a smooth as possible to try and avoid too much bill-shock and backlash. It is also an opportunity to highlight how ridiculously low the current solar feed-in tariffs or export prices are and to push for a Fair National Feed-in Tariff, a critical piece of the policy puzzle to transition to 100% renewables.

We've developed a suite of useful materials which you could view and disseminate:

- You could direct people to the homepage for the project with all the information on it www.solarcitizens.org.au/life_after_fits
- You can share the ABC news story on the report <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-07-19/bill-shock-looms-as-lucrative-solar-tariffs-roll-back/7638952>
- Share these cute videos <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxAVIh2tiFs>
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/156060d833f2791b?projector=1>
- You can also share the report done by ATA <http://bit.ly/2a6JJZ3>
- There's a more detailed info graphic accessible here - <http://bit.ly/2a7T1AC>