



# Benalla Sustainable Future Group

Newsletter 30

May 2021

Benalla Sustainable  
Future Group Inc.  
PO Box 642  
Benalla 3672

## ***President's Message***

### ***Are the wheels of climate change action turning more quickly - or is it just spin?***

Joe Biden's recent climate conference with the heads of state from 40 nations may just be the turning point for real action on combating climate change. However, ambitions and actions don't always align, as we are currently seeing in attempts to control the Covid pandemic.

Many countries have now pledged to make much greater cuts to emissions than they signed up for under the Paris agreement, and most are committing to net zero emissions by 2050.

Sadly, Australia is not one of those countries, and to make matters worse, our government continues to push for a 'gas led recovery' from the pandemic. It is crucial that we take every opportunity to push back against this insanity - gas makes no sense from every angle you look at it, except of course, if you have been receiving political donations!

Economically, it is 50% more expensive to produce electricity from gas-fired power stations than from renewables; environmentally, gas fracking has been proven to have severe impacts on ground water quality because of the chemicals used in the extraction process; health impacts of gas extraction on local communities are well documented, and recent reports are highlighting long term exposure to gas cooking and heating in homes as a major cause of the increase in asthma and like illnesses, especially in children. All of these reasons, plus of course the fact that gas is just another fossil fuel contributing to our greenhouse emissions, are why we must not allow the government to proceed with their plans. However, my greatest concern is that, in spite of the apparent acceleration of world-wide action on climate change, politicians are still ignoring the constant messages from the climate scientists - **this decade is the critical time in the Earth's history to restrict global warming to 1.5 degrees.**

Technology, industry and commerce are changing faster than government policy, and the lack of clear policies is hindering our progress towards a safer, cleaner future. It is possible to reach net zero emissions much sooner than 2050, and in order to achieve that goal, we need to continue to promote the economic, health and environmental benefits of doing so. These messages need to be heard clearly by all levels of government, and by our local communities, so BSFG needs to continue to focus on promoting the positive outcomes from taking real and urgent action to combat climate change.

Congratulations to Renewable Energy Benalla on the installation and launch of their first community energy project at Munro Ave Pre-school on the 6<sup>th</sup> May. The project launch was attended by Helen Haines, BRC Mayor Danny Claridge, CEO Dom Testoni, and Councillors Gail O'Brien and Puna Gunaratne. REB convenor, John Lloyd has sent out an appeal to all members and supporters to consider supporting REB, so please contact John if you can help in any way, as they continue to promote community energy.

***Peter Holmes***

## ***Annual General Meeting***

We would like to invite you to attend our Annual General Meeting:

**7.30 pm Thursday 27th May 2021**

**Benalla Uniting Church Fellowship Room**

**Guest speaker Dr Lisa Farnsworth**

**Winton Wetlands Restoration Ecologist**

Supper will be served at the conclusion of the evening.

***Judy Schwarzman***  
***Secretary***

*"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed." - Mahatma Gandhi*

## ***Climate Emergency Petition to Benalla Rural City Council***

After the Climate Science talks held at the Benalla Town Hall on the 26<sup>th</sup> February, which addressed the current state of the Earth's climate, and future projections based on current policies and actions, the next step in the process took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> March. BSFG President Peter Holmes, local GP Dr Gerard Brownstein, and the four student leaders of Benalla P-12 College, Charlie Paterson, Cheyane Vaughan, Lachie Sands and Jessica Patterson, addressed Council, all expressing their concerns that our local community needs to take urgent actions to combat climate change.

The petition, asking Council to declare a Climate Emergency, was officially received by the Council at their meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> April, and will now be discussed and voted on at a later date, yet to be determined, but apparently after the new Manager of Economic Development and Sustainability has been appointed. Hopefully, this process does not delay a decision on the petition for too many more months. Ultimately, we hope that Council will concur with the community and in declaring a Climate Emergency, their focus will be much greater on promoting actions to achieve net zero emissions by the end of the decade.

## ***BSFG Presentation to BRC 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021***

I represent a group of approximately 80 paid up members, and 400 other community members with whom we are in regular contact. All of us, and many more within this community, share a very real concern about the current and future health of our planet. We recognise that there is irrefutable scientific evidence that human induced climate change is occurring, that the data trends on temperature, rainfall, sea levels, ice-cap melts, and greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, are all heading in the wrong direction, and more significantly, the rates of change are not actually slowing down.

In Australia in the last 18 months, we have experienced extreme events that were predicted long ago by climate scientists - the prolonged drought and heatwave conditions leading to over 12 million hectares of our forests and farms burning, and in the past week in NSW and SE Queensland, extraordinary rainfall which is causing widespread destruction of both built and natural environments. No, these are not 1 in a 100 year events - these disasters are going to be much more prevalent in the future.

We understand that having recognised the problem, we have an urgent responsibility to do all we can to fix it, because we have a responsibility, not just to our present generation, but to all who follow. We are acutely aware that as the Earth continues to warm, many regions will become uninhabitable, our food production systems will completely break down, our health systems will struggle to cope with the increased number of diseases, and the rate of creature extinctions will accelerate. This is not a future I, and all of us here want to leave for our descendants.

The problem with climate change is, that it appears to be happening so slowly, that we don't all quite see the urgency, unlike the coronavirus pandemic. The reality is however, that in Earth years it is happening rapidly, because over the last 200 years, this is the first time

there have been so many humans on the planet, and all of our processes have become so industrialised, and dependent on energy consumption - energy largely produced by burning fossil fuels, releasing greenhouse gases into our atmosphere. What we also need to understand, is that there are critical areas on our planet that control the weather, and a number of these places have possibly already reached their climate tipping points, from which it will be extremely difficult to pull back. Eg. the Arctic region is already 3.5 degrees warmer than pre-industrial times, compared to the average increase across the whole of Earth of 1.2 degrees. Already in the Arctic, permafrost ice has melted, resulting in methane gas escaping into the atmosphere, and this gas is 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

The solutions are not simple, but not impossible either. We just need the collective political and community will to achieve what is required. Unfortunately, over the past couple of decades, action has been suppressed by various means, so that now we have reached the point where the solutions need to be implemented so much more urgently, than if we had started 20 years ago. Just last week, four eminent Australian academics released a report that stated that if Australia simply continues on its current path to reducing emissions by up to 28% by 2030, a reduction of over 12% per year would be needed in the next decade to try to contain warming to less than 2 degrees. This was tantamount to passing the buck to the next generation in our community they wrote.

There are two major parts to the solution. Firstly, we must stop adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere (we were able to achieve repair of the ozone layer by virtually eliminating the use of hydrofluorocarbons), and we need to do this much sooner than 2050. Climate Scientists are telling us that on all the current evidence available, we need to do this by 2030, if warming is to be kept below 1.5 to 2 degrees. The second part is that we also need to draw down carbon from the atmosphere, because if we don't, the carbon that we have already put up there will continue to magnify the effects for decades to come.

We believe that the solutions are not just the responsibility of government, but all sectors of our communities must take action. Federal and State governments obviously have a role to play in enacting legislation and policies that facilitate solutions, so that businesses and individuals can then more readily make the changes required. But, we as a community and Local Government have just as important a role to play, in agitating and advocating for change, and in leading by example.

So what are we requesting Council to do? Over the past month, I appreciated the opportunity to chat with most of you about climate change, and to ask you to share your thoughts on Council's role in tackling this problem.

All who I talked with acknowledged that climate change is real, but not all agreed that the problem was urgent, or that council could do any more than they perceived it was already doing. Some even suggested that to take all the required actions might send Council broke. Our concern is that not to take the required actions now, will certainly put future generations in this community in a very precarious

position, as they struggle with livability, health, and economic issues - all of which will be on a much greater scale of difficulty than we presently face.

We acknowledge that Council has already undertaken a number of measures which reduce the municipality's greenhouse gas emissions. Amongst these are the installation of solar systems on Council properties, residential street lighting upgrades (which are currently saving around \$50,000 and 250 tonnes of GHG annually), and Council property lighting upgrades, planning being undertaken to introduce EVs to the Council fleet, planning for cabling to be installed in a new carpark for EV charging points, solar battery off-grid at the landfill facility, and we also acknowledge Council's role in approving planning applications for a number of solar farms in the district, which although assisting with reducing greenhouse gases, cannot be directly counted in our own municipality's reductions. All these actions are excellent, but there are many others that we believe will send an even stronger message to the community, and that will actually convey to the community that there is hope for a better future.

BSFG is not going to present you with a complete list here tonight, as we believe that is a function of a community consultation exercise which we hope can be urgently implemented, not just as part of the Council Plan discussions currently underway, but as a dedicated discussion around the topic of climate change action. We think there are a number of advocacy roles that council can undertake, such as facilitating large battery storage installation adjacent to the solar farms, and encouraging new technology industries to Benalla - industries associated with renewable power production and EV sales and maintenance are two that come to mind.

Other areas we have identified as possible are the further upgrading to LED lighting in all residential street areas of Benalla and surrounding townships (which again will lead to an additional saving of \$50,000 and 250 tonnes of GHG per year), signing up to greenpower electricity plans, identifying suitable EV charging station locations in Benalla, and encouraging suppliers to install them now, advocate for electric buses on our town bus routes, develop a much more extensive bike lane route around Benalla to encourage more students to ride to school, and residents to ride to the shops, further upgrades of our landfill to possibly introduce a recycle material Tip-shop, and through council's planning department, encourage developers and builders to establish sustainable communities with cooler green open spaces, and higher star rating buildings which will considerably reduce energy consumption. Some of these suggestions will require an initial financial outlay, but in a short period of time will be paid back in savings, as well as far into the future.

We have come here tonight to respectfully request that Council receives our petition, signed by approximately 600 residents, from all walks of life, across all age groups. These people are not lunatic, scare-mongering Greenies, as some in the media like to portray us - there are farmers, business people, health professionals, shop assistants, students, pensioners, factory workers, educators, and environmentalists all included in this petition.

### **Our request is that Council:**

- A. Acknowledges that human actions have contributed substantially to the increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere, resulting in the warming of the planet, and leading to an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events,
- B. Declares a Climate Emergency, and that within six months, it implements policies and actions to reduce our community's greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030.

*Peter Holmes*

### ***Student Address to Council Meeting***

#### **Cheyane Vaughan:**

Good Evening everyone, my name is Cheyane Vaughan and I am a school captain of Benalla P-12 college. I am here tonight on behalf of the students of Benalla P-12 College along with my fellow captains Lachlan Sands, Charlie Paterson and Jessica Patterson.

We would like to voice our concerns about the impact that climate change will have on young people like ourselves across the country, especially in rural Victoria. Young people like ourselves often feel as though they do not have a voice, so we greatly appreciate the invitation to speak to you tonight. As demonstrated by the climate strikes and the number of school students who attended in 2019, the issue of climate change exists as an extremely important issue for young people.

A study conducted in February 2019, found that 96% of participants aged between 7 and 25 identified climate change as a serious problem. With prior knowledge and after attending the Climate Change presentation hosted by Benalla Sustainable Future Group we feel increasingly concerned with the ever growing facts surrounding the urgency of required change. This urgency does not seem to be reflected by all levels of our community. Declaring a Climate Emergency will demonstrate to all in our community that our council recognizes the problems which are very important to Benalla's future.

#### **Charlie Paterson:**

By taking this action it will show that the council is taking initiative and recognising the concerns we and many other members of the community have. It's no secret that climate change will have an especially devastating effect on younger generations. As Peter has explained, by 2030 the progression of climate change will be past the point of no return. Many of us will be just starting our families. What kind of future will our children have if we don't do something now? The number of local governments in Victoria that have declared a Climate Emergency can only increase and Benalla has the potential to lead that charge. From this declaration we will be able to bring awareness to the district as a whole about the urgency of our current climate situation and spark conversations and action in our community. Our jobs, our health and ultimately our future will be affected by the actions and decisions of the leaders of today. The leaders of tomorrow implore you to declare a Climate Emergency. The leadership group of Benalla P-12 College would appreciate opening up further discussions with councillors. On behalf of Benalla P-12 College, Thank You for listening.

## Health Effects of Climate Change

In 2019 Australia's peak medical bodies have declared Climate Change a Public Health emergency. This includes RACGP of which I am a member.

There is clear evidence that climate change is and will cause:

Increased death and illness from heat stress

- injury and death from increasingly severe weather events
- increases in transmission of vector borne diseases such as dengue fever
- food insecurity from declines in agricultural outputs
- increased mental illness

These effects are already being seen internationally and in Australia. During the Victorian heat wave of 2009 there was a 62% increase in all cause mortality. Ambulance Victoria reported a 46 % increase in emergencies during this time.

The 2019-2020 catastrophic and unprecedented bush fires saw millions of people exposed to hazardous bush fire smoke, thousands of people had their lives upended, 34 people died. We don't know what the long term mental and physical effects will be on the millions of people who experienced these fires either directly or indirectly.

The burden of these health effects fall on the most vulnerable in our community - those living in poor quality housing, the elderly, the unwell, the isolated and the disabled.

We shouldn't forget how a hotter and more unpredictable climate is affecting the 60 volunteer fire fighters in the Benalla Group that are in harms way each fire season on our behalf and people who earn a living working outdoors

Looking ahead Benalla may have to contend with diseases we haven't seen before and others that become more wide spread. Air borne allergens are expected to increase resulting in a greater incidence of Asthma and seasonal allergies.

It becomes harder to earn a living, particularly from agriculture. Understandably there will be considerable Mental Health consequences as lives and livelihoods are disrupted.

The Australian Academy of Science made 5 recommendations in their 2015 report on Climate Change and Health. One of these was to encourage local councils, and community groups to exercise self-determination and not wait to be told what to do.

There are opportunities to build a healthy future for our community by acting now.

Australia's response to the Covid 19 health emergency was arguably one of the worlds best. We followed the science and while there has been an economic and psychological cost. Lives have been saved.

As a community we should also follow the science and call climate change for what it is, an emergency that requires us to care for our most vulnerable. In doing so we also lend our weight to a call for urgent action that reduces the likelihood of the other health impacts of climate change becoming our enduring reality.

**Dr Gerard Brownstein**

## Grow Free Cart

The bright green "Green Machine" Grow Free food swap cart has been relocated from Benalla Health to the corner of Cecily Court/Nunn St with the Tomorrow Today Foundation!

What you can share on the cart:

- Home grown fruit, vegetables, herbs, preserves, eggs
- Preferably grown with organic principles
- Seeds, seedlings and cuttings
- Promotion material e.g. recipe booklets, gardening guides (Benalla Grow Your Own materials)

Things not allowed on the cart

- Meat
- Mushrooms
- Compost/scraps
- Selling anything
- Alcohol

*Grows by the community, for the community*



**Take what you need, Give what you can!**

This is a perpetual sharing cart for home produce, preserves and the like, provided by Grow Free.

*Love grows by Giving*

Please return pots/trays to the cart



**New cart at Tomorrow Today!**

**Kathryn McQualter  
Dietitian, Benalla Health**

## It's Time to Kick Gas

**Bill McKibben, 'The Climate Crisis Newsletter',  
The New Yorker, Thursday May 13, 2021**

We're used to the idea that CO<sub>2</sub> - one carbon atom, two oxygen atoms - is a dangerous molecule. Indeed, driving down carbon-dioxide emissions has become the way that many leaders and journalists describe our task. But CH<sub>4</sub> - one carbon atom combined with four hydrogen atoms, otherwise known as methane - is carbon dioxide's evil twin. It traps heat roughly eighty times more efficiently than carbon dioxide does, which explains why the fact that it's spiking in the atmosphere scares scientists so much.

Despite the pandemic lockdown, 2020 saw the largest single increase in methane in the atmosphere since we started taking measurements, in the nineteen-eighties. It's a jump that, last month, a scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration called 'fairly surprising and disturbing'.

If there's any good news, it's that the spike in methane doesn't yet seem to be coming in large percentages from the runaway melt of methane-ice formations beneath the polar oceans or those in tundra soils. That would be a nightmare scenario because there wouldn't be anything we could do about it - it's global heating on automatic. For the moment, most of the increase seems to be from sources we *can* control: rice paddies, livestock and, especially, the rapid rise in drilling and fracking for gas. Two decades ago people thought that natural gas, though a fossil fuel, might help slow climate change because, when you burn it in a power station, it produces less carbon than burning coal does. Now we understand that natural gas - which is primarily made of methane - leaks unburned at every stage from fracking to combustion, whether in a power plant or on top of your stove, in sufficient quantities to make it an enormous climate danger. The Trump Administration abandoned any effort even to reduce that leakage, an absurd gift to the fossil-fuel industry that the Biden Administration is preparing to take away.

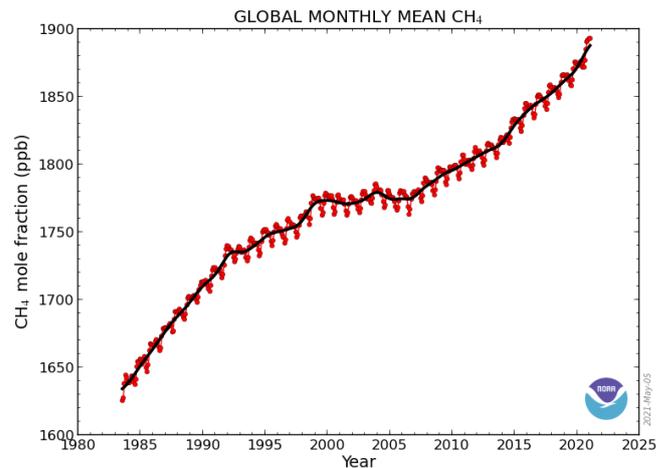
But plugging leaks isn't enough: we've got to stop producing natural gas as quickly as possible, and replace it with renewables that generate neither carbon nor methane. That's now entirely possible; sun and wind power have become so cheap so fast that they're more economical than gas, and batteries are coming down the same kind of cost curve, so nightfall is no longer the problem it once was.

But there are other reasons to kick gas. A report from Australia's Climate Council, released last week, finds that the health impact of having a gas cooktop in your home is roughly equivalent to having a cigarette smoker puffing away in the corner, and accounts for about twelve per cent of childhood asthma. "It's odourless, it's invisible, it's a bit of silent enemy," the C.E.O. of Asthma Australia said. "People might feel differently if they understood that their gas appliances were emitting a range of toxic substances." That is why the gas industry has lobbied so hard to prevent that perception.

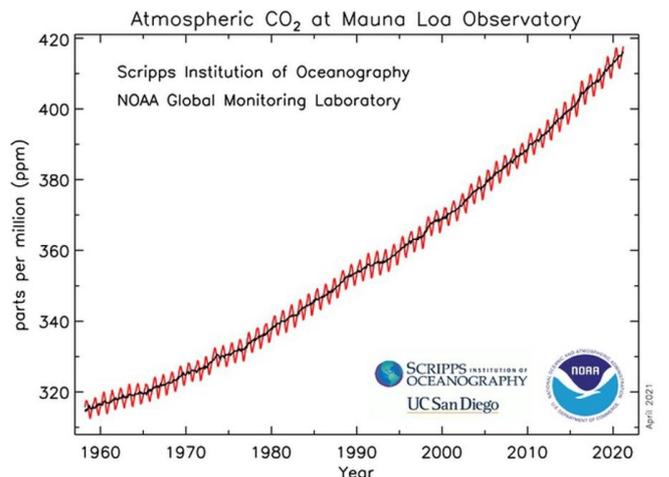
In at least fourteen U.S. states, the industry lobby is pushing bills that would prevent local governments from restricting the use of gas; a particular threat comes from the new appliances - chiefly air-source heat pumps and water heaters, and induction cooktops - that are now widely available and increasingly cheap.

(Even the *Wall Street Journal*, whose opinion pages unflinchingly defend the oil-and-gas industry, admitted in a review that induction cooking is 'safer and faster than gas.') Indeed, leaked documents obtained last week by E&E News show that fifteen big gas utilities have mounted a Consortium to Combat Electrification. "None of these companies want to write their own obituary," Deborah Gordon, a former petroleum engineer now at the Rocky Mountain Institute, an energy think tank, said. "If you're going to bend this curve, and we bend it quickly, there are going to be casualties. Some will transform, some will consolidate, some will go away."

At the moment, however, they're still very much here, and they might as well call the effort a Consortium to Promote Asthma and Melt the Poles. But, if we can kick gas quickly, there's some hope that lies in the structure of that CH<sub>4</sub> molecule: it only lasts about ten years in the atmosphere, as opposed to a century for carbon dioxide. This means that, if we can somehow reduce emissions dramatically, it will fade fast, buying us a little time to take on carbon. "If we can make a big enough cut in methane in the next decade, we'll see public-health benefits within the decade, and climate benefits within two decades," Drew Shindell, an earth scientist at Duke University who has worked extensively on methane, told the *Times*. But it had better happen fast. Here's Euan Nisbet, a climate scientist at Royal Holloway, University of London, reacting to last month's news of spiking methane levels: "I knew it was bad, but I didn't know it was this bad. This breaks my heart."



**Global Methane levels**



**Global Carbon-dioxide levels**

## ***Benalla Food Co-op Celebrates Ten Years***

In the twelve months since I last gave an annual report on the Benalla food Co-op, there have been some considerable changes and events take place.

We had our first open day on 3rd May in 2011, having arrived at exactly ten years of operation.

In 2011, when we had our first open day with twelve members and 28 products on offer, we did not envisage the successful outcome we now experience. Apart from the aims of the co-operative that you will be familiar with, I believe a huge contributing factor is an underlying appreciation at the food coop for the friendly atmosphere when shopping, and the empowerment of an independent group running it. It has enabled friendships to develop and provides an opportunity for like minded people to share company and commitment. We now stock 120 food items determined by request, quality of the product, availability, from where that product is sourced, and of course, popularity.

Membership sits at around 70. This fluctuates over any given year, but importantly there is a large group of regular shoppers requiring us to open once per week.

Over the years, I have particularly enjoyed researching products and discovering new suppliers. There has always been opportunity to introduce new products and discontinue others not so popular. In all we have twelve product suppliers. We are proud to support many valued local and regional producers in our district such as King Valley Walnuts, Florence Court Olive Oil from Benalla, Lima East honey, nuts and seeds from the Pumpkin Seed Company, and our latest addition, Apple Cider Vinegar from Stanley.

There are a huge number of tasks required with running the food co-op. Duty managers, duty assistants, computer operators, taking delivery of products, unpacking products, paying the bills and the list goes on. It was always my belief that by spreading these tasks amongst the members, we are in the true sense a 'co-operative', run by the members. This has enabled us to keep the prices affordable whilst offering high quality products, benefitting all who participate.

Drastic changes to our operational procedures required to comply with COVID restrictions in 2020, became a serious focal point. We were no less busy than usual with a large number of community members joining the food co-op throughout the early part of COVID restrictions. In recent times we have been able to relax many of those procedures whilst continuing to maintain a COVID safe environment.

**Ten years is good reason for some celebratory events, the first being a lucky door prize for the tenth customer who shopped on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2021. Then on the 4<sup>th</sup> June, food co-op members are invited to attend a dinner to celebrate ten years of operation along with my retirement.**

After ten years as coordinator, I felt it was time that I hand over to someone else. Susanne Bennett came to mind and after some thought, she agreed to take on the position for which we can all be grateful. We can look forward to a committed member who will bring leadership and a lovely presence to the forefront. I wish Susanne all the best, lots of fun and with the knowledge that you have the support of all the committee with you.

I feel indebted to our dedicated committee members, who are committed to the well being of the food co-op and for me personally, are a wonderful group of people who are prepared to work through any issues that arise. We would not be operating today if it wasn't for your encouragement, suggestions and support. I am profoundly grateful to have worked with you all.

***Christine Holmes***



### **Ten Years marked**

New Benalla Food Co-op coordinator Susanne Bennett with original members Christine Holmes (former coordinator) with Glenys Gill and Val Stafford, both members of ten years.

Thanks to Simon Ruppert and the Benalla Ensign for the use of this photo.

## ***Swanpool Environmental Film Festival 2021***

This will be our eighth SEFF, having commenced in 2013 and cancelled in 2020. All being well we will be holding the event on June 19th 2021:



Our speakers this year are Associate Prof. Michael-Shawn Fletcher and Dr Kerry Higgs. There will be two full-length films

'Once You Know' & 'Wild Things'

and two shorter films 'Beyond the Burning' & 'Fairytails of Growth' plus a half an hour of 'State of the Nation' discussion.

We also hope to have music to entertain at the entry before the show so arrive early. Doors open from 12 noon. A local band 'Handle with Care' will entertain at the end of the dinner break.

Program and menu details will be sent out to all BSFG members in coming weeks. Bookings open on June 1st via the [Swanpool Cinema](http://Swanpool Cinema website) website. The event is jointly run by Swanpool Landcare and BSFG.

***Ian Herbert***  
***SEFF Event Organiser***

## **Renewable Energy Benalla (REB) and its Activities**

REB was established following a very successful community forum held in October 2016 about a renewable energy future for Benalla. In 2017, Beyond Zero Emissions, a national think tank focussed on reducing emissions to zero, offered to help us develop a 10 year transition strategy to 100% renewables. The Benalla Stationary Energy Transition Strategy was launched at another community forum in November 2017 and REB's goal became 100% renewable stationary energy by 2028.

The Transition Strategy details three major steps to achieve 100% renewables:

- Reduce energy demand by one third through energy efficiency
- Replace one third of grid energy with renewable resources
- Switch one third - build utility scale renewables and storage.

Community engagement and advocacy are key first steps to implement the Transition Strategy. This is essential to promote and build support for REB's 100% renewables vision and build momentum and support for renewable energy within the community, as well as encouraging and supporting council action.

Since 2018 REB has been involved in the following activities:

- Conducting energy efficiency sessions aimed at improving the thermal performance of existing houses and reducing energy demand and energy bills.
- Investigating the possibility of establishing a utility scale waste to energy project in Benalla.
- Developed a set of pamphlets about: Energy Efficiency at Home; Keeping Rental Houses Comfortable and Energy Efficient; Installing Solar PV and Batteries.
- Partnered with BZE to conduct the regional launch of BZE's 'Electrifying Industry' report.
- Establishment of the Benalla Community Energy Project which is a donation based Community Energy Fund to make loans to community buildings to fund installation of solar panels or energy efficiency works. Loan repayments are based on savings on energy bills.
- REB obtained a \$5,000 grant from the Winton Solar Farm Community Benefit program to enable us to undertake our first Community Energy Project of installing panels on Munro Ave. kindergarten, without the need to conduct a fund raising program.

**But now, we urgently need more people to help us achieve our goal.**

Please consider offering your time and skills to REB. Your assistance would be very much appreciated.

**John Lloyd**  
**Convenor of Renewable Energy Benalla**  
**An Action Group of BSFG**

## **Benalla Community Energy Project (BCEP)**

REB has been successful in implementing the Benalla Community Energy Project (BCEP) which aims to establish a donation based revolving fund to install solar panels, or undertake energy efficiency upgrades, on community facilities in and around Benalla.

We were able to undertake our first project without conducting a fund raising program, as we obtained a grant from the Winton Solar Farm Community Benefit program, which along with a significant donation from Sandy Campbell and a significant in-kind contribution from SolarGain, enabled us to install panels on Munro Avenue kindergarten.

Following installation of the panels we conducted an official 'switch-on' ceremony. The project was officially opened by Federal member for Indi Helen Haines. Benalla Rural City CEO Dom Testoni, Mayor Danny Claridge and Councillors Gunaratne and O'Brien were present. REB Convenor John Lloyd addressed the audience, which included Alan Robertson (Winton Solar Farm), the Campbell family, Brad Foletta (SolarGain), BSFG members and the children from the kindergarten.

**John Lloyd**



**Helen Haines cutting the tape at the official launch**

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Sunday 25th July**



**Benalla  
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Future  
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[www.bsfg.org.au](http://www.bsfg.org.au)