



Benalla Sustainable Future Group

Newsletter 24

July 2019

Benalla Sustainable
Future Group Inc.
PO Box 642
Benalla 3672

Next Meeting

The next General Meeting of Benalla Sustainable Future Group will be held at the Benalla Uniting Church on

Thursday the 25th of July from 7.30pm
until about 9.30pm.

Our Guest Speaker for this meeting is

Bruce Walker

Topic: 'Managing Queensland Fruit Fly'

Bruce was a researcher at the Rutherglen Research Institute and is the immediate past President of Benalla Rotary. In his talk he will address:

- Why manage QFF?
- Area wide approach
- Know your enemy
- Options for home gardeners
- Traps in detail
- Orchard and garden hygiene

We look forward to seeing you there.

Peter Maddock, Secretary

**NO FLIES
ON US!**
*Let's stop Queensland
Fruit Fly*



President's Message

A few weeks ago, I wrote a letter to all the BSFG members and people on our contact list, and in the letter I quoted Richard Flanagan's inspiring words to us at the climate rally in Canberra on the 5th May. In relation to the climate emergency, he said - "It is a time to act and it is for us to act. Because there is no-one else and there is no other time."

This got me thinking about my life, and whether I have really ever got out of my 'comfort zone' to fight for what I believe is an indisputable cause. Yes, I briefly flirted with "discomfort" at the age of 20, when I registered as a conscientious objector to conscription, but then my marble wasn't drawn out of the barrel, so my discomfort evaporated.

True, I have been involved in leadership roles with many work, community, sporting and church groups over the years, but I haven't felt too uncomfortable. The roles had responsibility, but not urgency. They made me busy, and at times tired, but not troubled. So why is becoming President of BSFG going to be any different?

There are a few reasons that I want to share with you. Firstly, Flanagan's words niggled my conscience, because they said to me that if we all sit back and think that someone else will get on the soapbox and say it for us, then no-one will.

Secondly, I am a father and a grandfather, and I feel a deep responsibility to fight for the future of my family and all other young people, especially those too young to have a voice or to know what is happening to the world around them at present.

Thirdly, I have always been interested in politics, but I am not a politician (thank goodness!), so talking to politicians who consistently evade the issue that we have a climate emergency, is going to be one huge challenge.

We are all acutely disappointed that the electors have returned a government that promises very little in the fight to control climate change, so this disappointment must be re-programmed into a determination to change the political will of this country. That will require each and every one of us to get out of our "comfort zone". Become well informed of what can be done to combat climate change, be prepared to argue the issue with friends who are climate sceptics or who don't care, write letters to the paper, or ring up talk-back radio. Everything you do will touch a nerve somewhere, and so the tide will turn.

Be inspired to do whatever you can!

Peter Holmes

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

Why should we stop Adani?

Maybe you think the answer is obvious but it was asked of me by a friend who couldn't see what the fuss was about. So, here's the answer I gave:

The extraction and burning of fossil fuels is the major cause of a rise in CO₂ levels. (Land clearing is another big cause). CO₂ levels are increasing at an accelerating rate and have now exceeded 415 ppm.

That doesn't sound like much but CO₂ is a greenhouse gas, the same as H₂O water vapour. Greenhouse gases trap heat. On a cloudy night you know that heat is retained. This is the greenhouse effect. In fact as the planet warms up more water is evaporated and held in the atmosphere.

The surface temperature of the planet has risen about 1 degree C in a century and the last five years have been the warmest on record. The atmosphere forms a very thin layer around the globe, just kms thick compared to the 40,000 km circumference of the earth.

Most of the additional heat trapped by the greenhouse effect goes into the oceans. Cyclones form when the ocean temperature exceeds about 25 degrees C. Hotter oceans = more devastating cyclones. Water expands when heated. Half of the ocean rate of rising is caused by expansion, the other half by melting icecaps and glaciers. The rate of sea level rise is accelerating. Many of the worlds richest food basins and largest cities are only a metre or two above current sea level.

Climate change has already upset rainfall and weather patterns. Dependent on where you live the changes to the rainfall amount, the rainfall seasonality and temperatures will differ. We see this locally. We can wish for a return to a one metre average rainfall and the 'autumn break' of old by ANZAC Day but I'm afraid that's wishful thinking. Climate Change is real and it is upon us now. It's sad but true.

There has been a gradual awakening by the general populous and now a majority recognition in this country that it is time to act. In fact it was time to act many years ago but many world leaders and the fossil fuel lobby and the popular (Murdoch) press ignored the science and led the populous to think that it wasn't a problem, certainly nothing urgent. Some to this day continue to say that it's not a problem and life can go on as it always has.

So why 'Stop Adani'? The answer is that a line needs to be drawn in the sand. Do not cross this line. Do not open up one more coal field.

We should now drop our complacency and in fact be on a war footing. The British parliament has now recognised this and declared it a climate emergency. Currently annual emissions are increasing, not levelling off or decreasing. We must rapidly transition to renewable electricity fuels, travel less, stop being so high consuming and restore the land. Every country needs to play its part. Morally we cannot sit back and ignore the problem. We are one of the highest per capita countries for emissions in the world.

Adani is symbolic. If we can't 'Stop Adani' then the war is lost. Our generation will be the end of an era. It's our children and grandchildren who will bear the burden of our inaction.

On Saturday the 18th of May we voted. The choice for me was very clear. Any party that did not have a decent plan to address climate change went down in the ranking. Any party that supported the Adani mine and the opening up of the vast Galilee Basin went to the very bottom of the voting slip.

However, the election did not go as I hoped, nor as many expected.

Why? I think Tony Abbott summarised it up well when he said in his May 18th concession speech:

"Where climate change is a moral issue, we Liberals did it tough.

Where climate change is an economic issue, as the result tonight shows, we do very, very well."

In his own seat of Warringah morality won out over economics but not in Queensland. In the rest of the country Labour failed to achieve a majority because their policies around social fairness failed against a strongly orchestrated LNP scare campaign. Bill Shorten's personal unpopularity didn't help.

We can expect the LNP caucus to remain divided over climate change policy and the LNP cabinet to be firmly in favour of coal mining, gas extraction and fossil fuel electricity generation. The ministerial positions have been shuffled around a little but the foxes are still in charge of the hen house. They will lean heavily on the Queensland state government who have elections pending in 18 months time. The future for meaningful climate action in this country looks grim.

The only hope that I can see now for this country is for individuals, communities and state governments to act in spite of the federal government - as they have for the past six years. In the eyes of the global community we will be viewed as a pariah country but we'll have to live with that.

The Bob Brown 'Stop Adani' Convoy

Kevin Smith and I spent two weeks on the Stop Adani Convoy, departing on Good Friday to join the convoy at Albury.

Each day we joined up with other participants to leave in convoy and head for the next town on the list. We arranged our own accommodation along the way. Only at the final destination, the Clermont Showgrounds, was the whole convoy camped together - for two nights.

We were welcomed there in traditional manner by Adrian Burragubba and his family and on the showgrounds next day had a moving 'Karmoo Dreaming' event. This was marred mid-afternoon by a horse rider entering the arena, recklessly riding around young children playing and finally knocking down a woman as he rode out.

Bob Brown addressed the rallies along the way and he hasn't lost his oratory skills. Other invited speakers gave equally impassioned speeches. The school children were most memorable, and a young brave school teacher heading up [Frontline Action on Coal](#).

It wasn't a holiday. In fact it was stressful and mentally draining. The best part of the trip was coming together with other like-minded people to try and get the message across. In Brisbane we camped in Penny & Charles Jones' driveway and in Mullumbimby likewise with my own family. Photos on the next page.

Since the convoy and the elections some journalists have written that this convoy was a negative move; that we shouldn't have gone into central Queensland. I refute that. I believe that this convoy helped raise the Climate Change issue in late May and early June, so much so that it was said to be the Number One issue for voters. Unfortunately in the last week this was forgotten and people, less concerned with the urgency, voted with their hip pocket.

Will the mine go ahead? Will we have to do it all again? Only time will tell. The current ministerial response to our rising emissions clearly displays the government's message - coal is good for the economy.

Ian Herbert



With friends at the Brisbane Rally



Kevin and Ian and the campervan in Mullumbimby

Ian holding his grandchild Arlo (age 2) and with his granddaughter Athena (age 25) standing beside him. We did it not for ourselves but for future generations who will have to live through the inevitable consequences of global warming and rising oceans.

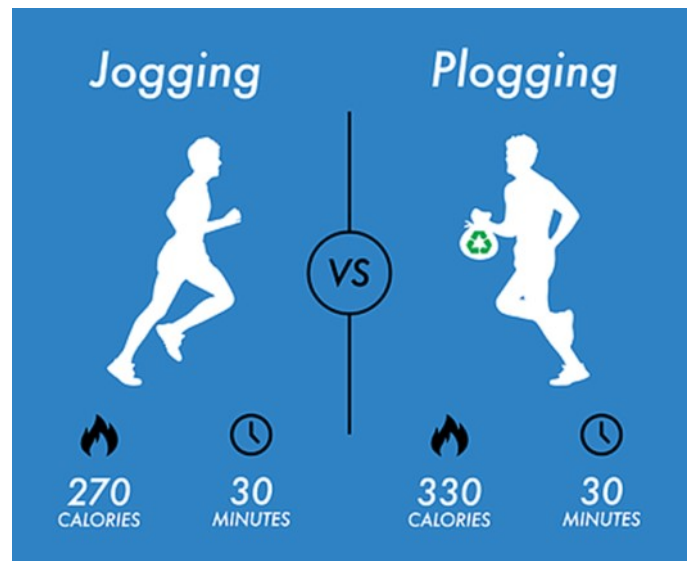
Plogging

Have you heard of plogging?

It was started in Sweden in 2016 and has become very popular across the world. Plogging is a combination of picking up litter and walking/jogging. Ploggers usually wear gloves whilst they are out and a bag for the litter. Once full the litter is either recycled or disposed of correctly.

To be a plogger:

1. Find Pair of tough gloves e.g. garden gloves
2. Reusable tote bag
3. Combine your daily exercise with cleaning up the environment
4. Don't plog alone- make a plog party out of it! Invite friends or family on a weekly plog!



Plogging also adds strength and flexibility into your exercise regime!

Source: <https://www.goplogging.org/>

RiverConnect and Greater Shepparton City Council started running 'plogging in the park' in 2018.



Convoy about to leave Brisbane

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

Climate Change Epiphany

Recently I was watching a video talk with George Monbiot and George Marshall on the Guardian sponsored [Climate Change with George Monbiot and George Marshall | Guardian Live](#). The talk was about the topic of George Marshall's book "Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change".

What is it that allows us to understand something is true, but act as if it is not? How is it possible to separate what we know from what we care about and what we do?

In this conversation which involved interaction with the audience Epiphany was mentioned as one way in which people come to change their minds about anthropogenic climate change. Epiphany is a moment of sudden insight or understanding. This can lead to acceptance of something previously strongly resisted.

Since putting out a request for articles for this newsletter a number of our members have sent links to articles they thought would be suitable for the newsletter. One article in particular indicates the author came to a realisation, an epiphany perhaps, which led to a new perspective on climate change and our need to deal with it. The article was from the Guardian, [Conservatives should change how they think about global warming. I did](#), by Jerry Taylor, president and co-founder of the Niskanen Center, a public policy think-tank in Washington DC.

Quoting from the article, "Like many in the climate arena, I got caught up in this debate, and the uncertainties surrounding climate change allowed me plenty of fodder to argue my case. But I finally came to the realisation that the debate about what's most likely to happen will not take us very far.

That's because humanity's response to climate change is an exercise in risk management – and risk management is not about discerning the optimal response to the most likely outcome, it is about determining the optimal response to the full distribution of possible outcomes".

"It took time for me to come to the realisation that uncertainty is an argument for - not against - decarbonizing the economy as quickly as possible".

"Never before have we run an experiment where greenhouse gases were loaded into the atmosphere at today's rates. While we don't know precisely what will follow, we understand basic physics well enough to know that 'warming is coming'. How much, and how dangerous it will be, is an open question, but we have no backup planet if the answer is a bad one".

We often talk about wasting our time preaching to the converted. We suspect many people do not accept climate change. And there are many who may accept climate change but think it is something which can be dealt with in the future.

So we have to keep providing information on climate change (and other environmental issues), encouraging moments of epiphany when people come to the realisation that climate change is happening and then take steps to reduce emissions which may involve advocating for climate change policy and making personal behaviour changes.

I have posted other links I received from members about other interesting articles separately in the newsletter.

Peter Maddock

System Change v's Individual Change

"Yes we need a system change rather than individual change, but you can't have one without the other".

I recently noticed on twitter a short version of a speech given by Greta Thunberg [at a Brilliant Minds conference](#).

This is the text from part of her speech:

"If we are to stay below the 1.5 degrees of warming limits, which is still possible within the laws of physics we need to change almost everything.

We need to start living within the planetary boundaries. This will be a drastic change for many but not for most. Because most of the world's population is already living within the planetary boundaries. The richest 10% of the world's population emits about half of our greenhouse gases. And this is not about glorifying poverty, this is about the laws of physics and the remaining amount of greenhouse gases we can still emit into the atmosphere to be in line with the Paris Agreement.

It is not people in countries like Mozambique, Bangladesh, or Columbia who are the most responsible for this crisis. It is mostly down to people like you here in the audience. Entrepreneurs, celebrities, politicians, business leaders. People who have a lot of power.

People who consume enormous amounts of stuff, who often fly around the world sometimes in private jets. Your individual footprints are sometimes the equivalent of whole villages. But I think the worst part is that you are normalising this extreme lifestyle because people look up to you. You are the role models, you are setting the standards. People aspire to be like you. About 100 companies emit about 71% of our total emissions of CO₂.

"And yes I know we need a system change rather than individual change, but you can't have one without the other."

Full video of her speech is here:

<https://t.co/rMPOZ50xfO>

A global per capita carbon footprint of 1.5 T CO₂ is required to limit the planet to a 1.5°C increase in global temperature by 2050. On a per person basis Australians rank tenth highest globally on the [Edgar per capita emissions table](#) at about 17 T CO₂ annually.

About 25-30% of our carbon emissions are created at home such as on electricity and gas, the balance is due to other personal consumption expenditure such as on food, household goods, entertainment and transport.

Peter Maddock



Swanpool Environmental Film Festival

The Swanpool Environmental Film Festival which took place on Saturday 15th June was a great success. We were fortunate to have three guest speakers of international repute who excelled at delivering their knowledge to the audience. Over 200 attended and we had to put up the 'full house' sign.

The three subjects covered were the three major problems confronting the world today - nuclear weapons, climate change and how to feed a growing populace. Thanks to Dr Tilman Ruff, Prof Samantha Hepburn and Prof Tim Reeves respectively for coming to Swanpool.

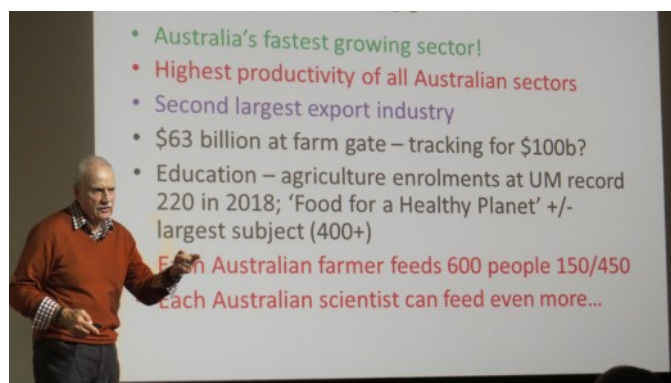


Tilman Ruff, Ian Herbert, Tim Reeves and Samantha Hepburn at the conclusion of the event.



Congratulations were extended to Tilman for being recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours the week before the SEFF. Tilman already had an AM (Member of Australia) and now has the higher honour of an AO (Member of the Order of Australia) for service to the promotion of peace and to public health.

Since 2012, he has been Co-President of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) – an organisation that won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985. He was founding Australian and International Chair of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) – awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017. He brought the medal with him for those who wanted to view it. Tilman and his wife Charlotte are landholders in the Lima East valley near Swanpool.



Prof Tim Reeves delivering his talk which was titled 'Food and Nutritional Security - a Grand Challenge for Humankind'. Tim is Professor in Residence at Dookie agricultural campus and was a pioneer of no-till and sustainable agriculture at the Rutherglen Research Institute. He too has worked with many international institutions.



Prof Samantha Hepburn's talk addressed many of the Australian legal issues around climate change and the Adani mine going ahead.

This year we changed the format a little and had a short film session mid-afternoon. As well as selected short films it included news reels and a series of slides telling the story of preserving Strathbogie Forest this past year. That's a good news story because the designated logging coupes in the most precious part of the forest, around Mt Strathbogie and Golden Mount, have now been withdrawn from the Timber Release Plan. The TRP lists the designated coupes which VicForests can log. The next step is to have permanent protection for the forest, preferably by declaring it a Conservation Park giving it the same status as Mt Samaria Park.

The film '2040' which concluded the evening was very well received. It looks into the future asking the question how could the planet be if we do the right thing. When talking about sustainable agriculture it gave good coverage of the works of Colin Seiss who was referred to by Tim Reeves in his talk and who has worked closely with the Gecko CLaN and landholders in this region for many years.

Many thanks to all who volunteered to make this day a success, particularly Peter Maddock for all his work getting all the video together. The SEFF is run by the Swanpool Landcare group in partnership with Benalla Sustainable Future group and with support from the Gecko CLaN, GBCMA, Granite Creeks and Benalla Permaculture. We are particularly thankful for the catering provided by the Swanpool Catering Team who excelled themselves once again.

Ian Herbert

Member Submitted Article Links

There were a few links to interesting articles submitted by members for the June Newsletter.

I have mentioned one in detail elsewhere in the newsletter and include here other articles which you may also find interesting.

1. Eureka Street, [Can we share our way out of climate mess?](#) From this article you can download a substantial pdf book titled Sharing Cities, Activating the Urban Commons. The book contains 11 chapters with some good ideas about things to consider doing locally. From the organisation Shareable the book argues that against 'the backdrop of worsening income inequality, climate change, and fiscal challenges, the growth of self-organised, democratic, and inclusive means for city dwellers to meet their own needs by sharing resources couldn't be more relevant'.
2. [The climate crisis is our third world war. It needs a bold response.](#) From Joseph Stiglitz in The Guardian, 4 June 2019.
3. [Climate action: 6 reasons you should feel inspired, not defeated.](#) From the Climate Council.
4. [Communities around Australia are taking clean energy into their own hands, the Indi win built on that.](#) The Guardian on the back to back Indi win by Helen Haines, Saturday 1 June 2019.
5. [Australia makes moves to become a major battery technology exporter.](#) From Create, Engineering ideas into reality, April 11 2019.
6. Benalla in Cities Power Partnership, <https://citiespowerpartnership.org.au/partners/benalla/>. The Cities Power Partnership is a free, national program that brings together Australian towns and cities making the switch to clean energy.
7. ABC Four Corners Investigation. Will we make it? Are Australia's efforts to curb global warming enough to meet our Paris target? 1 April 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-01/is-australia-on-track-to-meet-its-paris-emissions-targets/10920500>.

Note that on almost a daily basis I post articles from a range of sources on the BSFG Facebook and twitter accounts:

<https://www.facebook.com/Benalla-Sustainable-Future-Group-661236013914384/>

<http://www.twitter.com/BenallaSFG>

Peter Maddock



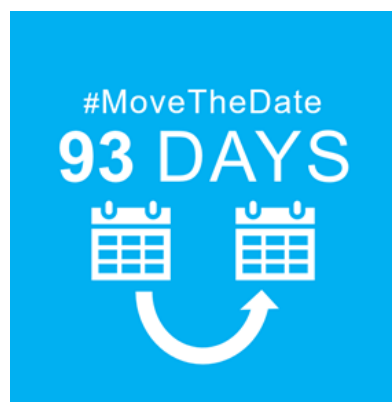
Jonno and Colin provided music at the SEFF

Earth Overshoot Day is July 29 in 2019

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources (fish and forests, for instance) and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. We maintain this deficit by liquidating stocks of resources and accumulating waste, primarily carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, <https://www.overshootday.org/>.

This year Earth Overshoot Day is July 29. However overshoot days for each country vary according to its Ecological Footprint. If everyone lived like Qatar overshoot day would be February 11, the United States March 15, Australia March 31, UK May 14, China June 14, Cuba December 1, and Indonesia December 18, <https://www.overshootday.org/newsroom/country-overshoot-days/>.

The carbon Footprint makes up 60% of humanity's Ecological Footprint, <https://www.overshootday.org/solutions/energy/>. Reducing the carbon component of humanity's Ecological Footprint by 50% would move Earth Overshoot Day by 93 days, or more than three months.



Earth Overshoot Day is Hosted and calculated by the Global Footprint Network, <https://www.overshootday.org/about/>.

Peter Maddock

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**Benalla
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