

Darebin Climate Action Now Annual Report 2021



DCAN supporters with mural artist Mythra Sage

Introduction

The past year has been another challenging year in adapting our campaigning work to Covid restrictions. DCAN is deeply grateful for the continuing support and hard work of our long standing members of the Planning Group and our supporters in these difficult times. We are also thrilled to welcome new members to the Planning Group and look forward to continuing to grow our supporter base with renewed energy, effective campaigning and creative projects in the year ahead. Earlier this year the Planning Group came together to update our goals for the year and confirm the working groups and tasks we needed to support these goals. For a full list of the goals and the working groups please see the attachment at the end of this report. We are very pleased to present this report to DCAN's Annual General Meeting on the past 12 months of our work.

Metro Community Power Hub

DCAN recently joined forces with the Yarra Energy Foundation (YEF) and nine other climate groups to become a Metro Community Power Hub. The hub is a one-stop shop for helping more people access practical renewable energy solutions. YEF has been awarded funding for the hub by Sustainability Victoria on behalf of the Victorian Government. DCAN will be helping to provide information sessions to Darebin residents on renewable energy, all electric homes, community batteries, climate conversations and energy literacy. We will also be working with local groups to identify projects which could benefit the Darebin community and reduce our carbon footprint.

Proposal for a Darebin Climate Network

The Networking working group has been busy canvassing local groups as to their interest in forming a Darebin Climate Network (name still to be decided). To date 25 groups have expressed interest in joining the network with the first meeting scheduled for mid October. It is hoped that the network will provide a valuable opportunity for the exchange of information, the amplification of each others' activities, the development of strategies for the next federal election and work on joint projects.

Working with Council

2021 has also been a busy time for the Working with Council working group due to Council embarking on the development of a 20 year Community Vision and a new Four Year Plan and Budget earlier this year. DCAN participated in consultations, put questions to Council meetings and also held meetings with the Mayor and Councillors to ensure that action on the climate emergency remained a priority. We became alarmed when draft documentation appeared to sharply differ from the previous Council's outstanding leadership on the climate emergency. We also expressed concerns about the complete lack of information provided to the community panel working on the 2040 Vision about the climate emergency. This was rectified eventually with an impressive presentation provided to the panel by several young climate activists from School Strike 4 Climate. DCAN's submissions on the plan and budget, along with community pressure resulted in significant improvements to the planning documents. Continued action on the climate emergency was included as one of the top 10 Big Actions in the Plan. DCAN looks forward to working with Council in the development of a new Climate Emergency plan.

DCAN has also met with Council managers and staff on several occasions to discuss the redevelopment of the Northcote Aquatic & Recreation Centre redevelopment. We successfully put forward the position that electric heat pump technology should be used

in conjunction with renewable energy to ensure that the centre maximises energy efficiency and makes the centre completely gas free. We will continue to monitor the project to ensure that this occurs.

Outreach

The Outreach working group has produced some excellent resources over the past year thanks to the help of some very talented local artists. We now have an eye catching poster which explains climate change in simple language and pictures with the title "What is Climate Change". We have received some very positive feedback from teachers and aim to distribute the poster to local schools once travel restrictions are raised. We also have a stunning mural on a very long fence in Merri Parade, Northcote which is viewed by thousands of passing motorists every day. The mural carries the words "Climate Emergency – Doing nothing risks everything". The third and most recent addition is a T-Shirt designed as a conversation starter to encourage people to ask questions about climate change. The T-Shirt features a picture of an elephant with the words "The Climate Emergency - it's the elephant in every room. Want to chat? "



Weekly weeding, chalking and talking working bees have also been held where possible between lockdowns along St Georges Road bike path.

These have provided lots of wonderful opportunities for chats about climate action with people using the path. The working bees were done in conjunction with volunteers from Extinction Rebellion and the Protect St George's Road Landscape Group led by the late Louise Tinney.

DCAN would like to acknowledge the incredible contribution made by Louise to the local community through her tireless planting and pruning activities in and around Northcote and for her advocacy to

Council and State Government departments to protect landscapes such as the St Georges Road boulevard. We extend our deepest sympathy to Louise's family.

State & Federal politicians

DCAN was disappointed to lose Mark Butler as Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy as we had found him very accessible and met with him on numerous occasions. We were pleased, however, to have the opportunity to meet with his replacement Chris Bowen shortly after the announcement, which was organised by Ged Kearney, local MP for Cooper. DCAN put forward to Mr Bowen our concerns about Labor's policy on new gas developments and carbon capture for gas. We also participated in a forum with Lily D'Ambrosio, State Minister for Energy Environment and Climate Change, organised by Kat Theophanous, MP for Northcote. We also met separately with Ms Theophanous for a wide ranging discussion in her electorate office. While praising the many positive actions of the Victorian Government we raised our serious concerns at the Victorian Government's approval of several gas exploration licenses.

DCAN representatives recently with Samantha Ratnam, Member of the Legislative Council for the Northern Metro Province and Leader of the Victorian Greens. Topics discussed included gas drilling near the 12 Apostles, subsidies provided to the Yallourn power station. Ms Ratnam also advised that the Greens were seeking to set up a Victorian inquiry into extinctions.

Community Webinars

DCAN continued to run online webinars with just one in person event made possible at the Preston Town Hall in May. We held five events on a range of topics with the first one for the year included in the Sustainable Living Festival. Over 215 people either attended the events or received recordings. The topics covered the following:



- How can we keep our cool?
- Why the climate emergency is also a health emergency
- How to talk with children & teens about the climate crisis (in person)
- Local Councils powering up to tackle the climate challenge
- Why is flying a climate emergency issue?

Darebin Youth Forum

DCAN supported the very successful Youth Forum hosted by Reservoir Secondary School in April which was attended by a range of local primary and secondary students. The Darebin Mayor, Councillors, CEO and senior staff attended the final session of the Forum to receive a report from the students on their priority issues of concern and ideas for action. Concern about climate was one of the top priorities for the students.

Climate Emergency Fence Signs

We have developed a new “Climate Emergency Act Now!” sign and set up a distribution system so that there are more pick up points for people wanting signs. This is proving to be a very successful strategy as signs are popping up all over the neighbourhood.

The “Declare a climate emergency” fence sign was updated to include a quote from



UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, calling on all nations to declare a climate emergency. This ensures that our sign remains relevant in council areas that have already declared a climate emergency. It also celebrates the fact that a campaign started here in Darebin has now been embraced at the international level.

Communicating with our supporters

DCAN’s monthly newsletter, the *DCAN Dispatch*, is our main way of communicating regularly with our 1,083 supporters. The Dispatch is packed with information about DCAN activities, climate information and opportunities to get involved in state and national campaigns.

A newly formed Website working group has started the process of reviewing the website with the aim of making it more informative and attractive to a wider audience. Keeping our supporter data base up to date has continued to be one of our core tasks.

Submissions & letter writing

DCAN regularly provides submissions to inquiries. Over the past year these have included:

- Federal Parliament 'Inquiry into the Climate Change bill 2020' (House Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy)
- Victorian State Government: Help Build Victoria's Gas Substitution Roadmap Consultation Paper.
- Submission to the Australian Senate Enquiry Concerning Industry Research and Development (Beetaloo Cooperative Drilling Program)
- Energy Security Board - Post 2025 Options Paper Submission - Closing Coal Power by 2030
- Submission to NSW Major projects concerning the Hunter Valley Gas project.
- Submission to the Victorian Government's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Western Outer Ring Main Gas Pipeline Project Inquiry.

Our star performer on the letter writing front, Lesley has continued to shine with her letters to the editor appearing in national and regional papers across the nation.

Getting off gas

DCAN has continued our strong focus on gas. We have joined the Beyond Gas Network. We provided input into the development of a leaflet "Make the switch to cleaner, cheaper energy" produced by the Climate and Environment Reference Group hosted by Ged Kearney. DCAN supporters have helped letter box 40,000 copies of the leaflet throughout the Cooper electorate which will be completed once Covid restrictions are lifted.

Recently DCAN wrote to all members of the national parliament expressing strong opposition to gas exploration in the Beetaloo Basin. We have also written to State Ministers and MLC members for the Northern Metro Province about the proposed drilling for gas under the Port Campbell National Park and near the 12 Apostles.

DCAN supporters were among approximately 30 people who rallied outside Kat Theophanous' Office for a National Day of Action on Gas.

National and state climate action networks

DCAN is an active member of VCAN - Victorian Climate Action Network and CANA - Climate Action Network Australia. Both networks provide an invaluable opportunity for

DCAN to share information, learn from other groups and provide input into campaign development. Jane Morton, DCAN's Deputy Convenor, provided a presentation at a CANA webinar in which she appeared in a panel alongside Rebecca Huntley to talk about effective strategies in climate emergency messaging. Jane is the author of the booklet "Don't mention the emergency?" and Rebecca is the author of "How to talk about climate change in a way that makes a difference".

Working with other groups

DCAN supporters continued their active participation in the too numerous to mention campaigns run by our friends at Extinction Rebellion, Market Forces, Friends of the Earth, Environment Victoria, 350.org, the Australia Conservation Foundation. There was also some beautiful singing by DCANers in the Melbourne Climate Choir at the School Strike4Climate day of action and in support of Stop Adani actions outside company head offices in the CBD.



Thank you to all members of the DCAN Planning Group, our volunteers and supporters. We look forward to continuing our work with you to achieve a safe climate future.

DCAN acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of this land, and that their sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. DCAN commits to working alongside First Nations People as we chart a shared path toward a sustainable future.

DCAN Goals, Working Groups & Tasks 2021 (updated Sept 2021)

1. Build understanding of the interconnections between the Climate Emergency and other crises.
2. Grow community support for Climate Emergency action
3. Grow number of Climate Emergency leaders/champions
4. Influence Darebin Council, State & Federal Governments to act on the Climate Emergency
5. Campaign effectively in the Federal election.
6. Build an active & diverse DCAN membership as part of an integrated, active Darebin Climate Emergency movement.

Goal	Working Group/Task	Convenor	Members
4,6	Council	Karen	Karen, Ann, Katia, Linda B, Warwick.
4,5,6	State & Federal politicians (incl. elections)	Ann	Ann, Amaryll, Jane M
1,2,3,6	Outreach	Lesley	Lesley, Linda B, Katia, Ann, Karen, Linda M, Marion.
1,2,6	Community webinars	Karen	Karen, Ann
2,3,4,5,6	Network & movement building	Ann	Ann, Anne, Jane, Karen, Katia, Linda B, Campbell, Lesley, Katherine.
1,2	Letter writing	Lesley	Lesley, Erin.
1,2,6	DCAN Dispatch	Campbell	Campbell, Sonia.
1,2,6	DCAN Facebook Page	Karen	Karen, Campbell.
1,2,6	DCAN Facebook Group	Karen	Karen, Linda B, Warwick, extra contributors are welcome!
6	Nation Builder database	Robert	Robert, Karen, Campbell.
2,6	DCAN Website	Karen	Jeremy, Karen, Robert, Campbell, Tim.
2,4,5,6	Fence Signs	Linda B Jane	Linda B, Jane, Jeremy, Robert, Carol, Sonia, Katia, Ann, Warwick, Linda M, Campbell, Shelley, Katherine.
2,5	Get off gas	Amaryll	Amaryll, Linda B, Jane, Martine.
2,5	Metro Community Power Hub	Ann	Ann, Warwick, Linda B, Katia, Jeremy, Karen, Erin.
1,2,4,5,6	Resources	Nominate as needed	Some resources are linked to working groups
6	Group self-care	Carol	