

From: Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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The Centre for Climate Safety is a Geelong-based community group that is spearheading and supporting a wide range of actions that are helping to focus the attention of government and the community on the now highly dangerous climate crisis that we and the rest of the world are facing.

Time is rapidly running out, with Victoria's '1.5° degree' carbon budget now virtually expended, and with less than 15 years of its 2°C-degree budget left – and even then, with only two chances in three of not exceeding 2°C degrees rise (Meinshausen, 2019) – and then only if the world acts together and now. "July has rewritten climate history, with dozens of new temperature records at local, national and global levels," World Meteorological Organization Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a statement a few days ago: - that July was the hottest month ever recorded on Earth.

Extreme heat is causing rapid glacial loss in Greenland and the Himalayan glaciers that feed the key river systems in India, China and South East Asia. Massive sea-ice melting is now an annual summer event in the Arctic sea. None of the 300 weather stations in Alaska have recorded a temperature below freezing since the end of June. Wildfires are burning their way through much of Siberia and now also throughout the Amazon rain forest – the lungs of the Earth.

These reports provide a clear warning that the human population everywhere must reverse its present course – and immediately, as it would if we were being invaded.

As Dr Kate Marvel commented recently in Scientific American, "The scariest thing about climate change is what it will make us do to each other."

The Centre for Climate Safety has:

- joined a number of high-profile individuals and organisations as an early member of the Climate Emergency movement, and it runs the now world-famous website www.climateemergencydeclaration.org

- made direct representations to the City of Greater Geelong through questions to Councillors at Council Meetings, and through two local Council petitions to declare a climate emergency
 - held discussions with individual Geelong councillors - a very recent outcome being a web-based request from a group of councillors for community feedback about a climate emergency declaration, which is generating a wide and almost unanimously positive response
 - continued to help educate the community by presenting climate experts and celebrities on its long-standing weekly radio program on 94.7 The Pulse FM – ‘The Sustainable Hour’
 - been influential in the rise to prominence of Sweden’s young activist Greta Thunberg during 2018
 - continued to promote and support the many hundreds of striking school children in the Geelong area and beyond, who are intent on bringing Greta’s fervent plea to the attention of the world
 - collaborated with Geelong Sustainability by helping with public lectures and other events
 - collaborated with the Stop Adani campaign in Geelong and in Melbourne
 - collaborated with the Extinction Rebellion movement in Geelong and in Melbourne
 - facilitated the Frack Free Geelong campaign in Geelong and the Surf Coast
 - continued to support local activists in the Surf Coast Shire and the Borough of Queenscliffe
- The Centre for Climate Safety recently submitted a comprehensive response to the Victorian Government’s call for comment on its draft emissions targets for 2025 and 2030, as interim milestones to its ‘zero emissions by 2050’ legislated target.

The Centre for Climate Safety has a reach and range of skills that belie the small number of its direct volunteers – only five. However, in common with many similar community groups, the centre has a substantial reach: 200 subscribers on its mailing list, and 1,000-2,000 visitors per day just on its two main websites. In addition, its weekly radio program, 'The Sustainable Hour', reaches hundreds, if not thousands, of listeners to the radio and to its web-based podcasts.

There is an impressive and diverse number of climate-focused community and advocacy/activist groups in Geelong

Australian Parents for Climate Action, AP4CA
 Extinction Rebellion Geelong & Surf Coast
 Thrive for Future
 Persistent Presence
 Stop Adani Geelong
 CACE Geelong (Community Action in the Climate Emergency Geelong)
 Transition Streets Geelong (20 groups)
 Transition East Geelong
 Transition South Barwon
 The School Strikers
 Rotary
 Geelong Repair Cafes (there are many)
 Geelong Environment Council
 Geelong Sustainability
 CORE - Community Owned Renewable Energy
 Surf Coast Energy Group
 Interfaith Forum
 St Mary's Laudato Si' Circle
 The Farm Next Door
 The Sustainable Hour
 GetUp
 AYCC Geelong - Australian Youth Climate Coalition Geelong
 BreakFree Geelong (Greenpeace)
 Norlane Community Initiatives
 Bioregional Geelong - One Planet Living
 Towards Zero Waste Geelong
 Bicycle Users Geelong

Cycling Geelong
Good Cycles Geelong
Friends of the Barwon
Geelong Field Naturalists Club
Permaculture Geelong
Tiny Homes Geelong
Doctors for the Environment Geelong
Deakin University Sustainability Group
Futureproofing Geelong (Council-based alliance)
Save Anglesea
Humans in Geelong
Committee for Bellarine
The Greens – Geelong and Bellarine Branches
Animal Justice Party

There are also a number of Surf coast and Bellarine-based enviro groups which are actively pursuing similar objectives – with widespread community support.

In addition, Barwon Water is continuing to implement a number of outstanding investment and publicity initiatives – an excellent example of public sector leadership.

What can Victoria's parliament do to help these groups?

The time for incremental action - kicking the can down the road - has well and truly passed. Governments everywhere must now exercise the leadership they were elected to provide their constituents.

Community groups are not looking for government money or compliments -they are demanding an immediate acknowledgement of the crisis and a rapidly implemented and broad plan of action.

The over-riding priority for the parliament is to immediately move to a multi-party declaration of a climate emergency for the State of Victoria, and to engage all local governments in Victoria which have not yet acted to do the same.

The next step is to engage the other State and Territory governments to follow Victoria's lead.

The third step is to pressure the Commonwealth Government to join the revolution - through COAG, through other ministerial meetings, and through a program of public awareness and action.

Finally, the Victorian parliament must now engage in the comprehensive emergency planning and urgent incentive and regulatory action.

These actions MUST:

Rapidly reduce coal, gas and oil-based electricity generation and bring forward solar, wind, pumped hydro and battery storage projects to take up the demand

Shift private and public transport to renewable energy-based electricity

Switch gas space and hot water heating to heat pumps supplied with renewables-based electricity

Mount a massive program of reforestation in Victoria, especially in low soil productivity areas

The message is clear - either we move decisively now, or we hand our children and grandchildren an unliveable planet. There are now no other choices available.

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