

# Darebin Climate Action Now - Annual Report 2024

## Introduction

DCAN is proud to present the following report outlining the considerable range of activities we have been involved in over the past year working, on hard on projects and campaigns at the local, state and national levels.

## Planning day 2024



DCAN kicked off the year with a highly successful planning day held at The Bridge, Preston. Twenty-five supporters came together to brainstorm key opportunities and develop creative ideas to step up the pressure on our politicians and increase community efforts to fight dangerous climate change.

A highlight of the day was a presentation from Leigh Ewbank from the Climate Solutions team at CANA (Climate Action Network Australia). Leigh outlined the critical issues we needed to be aware of in the year ahead and described how DCAN, as a strong grassroots community group, can be an effective contributor to key national campaigns such as:

- The Big Ask - Campaigning for a historic investment in climate solutions
- End Fossil Fuels - Campaigning for the govt to rule out new coal and gas projects
- Climate Targets - Campaigning for a strong, science-based Emissions Reduction Target for 2035.

Many thanks to our wonderful facilitator Belinda Haydon for keeping us on track.

## Working with Local Council

### Home electrification master class

In February DCAN teamed up with local business Energy Freedom Homes to provide a home electrification masterclass for 24 Darebin residents. The project was supported by a community grant awarded by Darebin City Council.

Each participant in the masterclass was able to discuss their specific needs and challenges in detail with a home electrification expert and receive advice tailored to their situation.



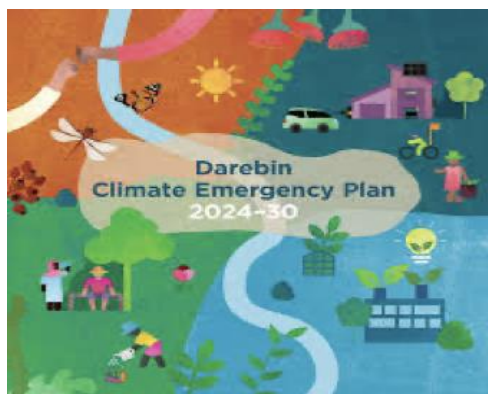
Topics covered included options for replacing gas heating and hot water systems, installing induction cooktops, upgrading solar systems, insulation and much more. Feedback from participants was very positive. A post-Masterclass survey found that 100% of attendees

rated the assessment process and event as "Good" or "Excellent", 76% completed at least one home upgrade with an average of 2 upgrades per home

The 36 upgrades that had been completed or commenced since the masterclass included 15 heat pumps for hot water, 10 induction cooktops, 5 split system heating/cooling units, 3 solar panel installations and one battery. The estimated cost savings in running costs from completed upgrades was \$36,206. The estimated reductions in carbon emissions (excluding solar and battery) was 950,739kg (based on Climate Council's calculator).

### New Climate Emergency Plan adopted

DCAN took a very active part in the community consultations on this plan and provided detailed feedback on draft versions. While we were disappointed that our request for stronger emission reduction targets was not agreed to, we were pleased to see some of the key points we advocated for included in the plan.



We are particularly excited about the proposal to set up a new 'concierge' service which will offer tailored household support to help residents find their way in switching from gas to electricity and renewable energy.

We were also very pleased to see the expansion of the Solar Savers Scheme and new community education programs on electrification and energy efficiency. DCAN will be closely monitoring the implementation of the plan and will continue to

advocate for adequate staffing levels to ensure the success of all proposed

initiatives. DCAN also continues to have a representative on the Council's Climate Emergency Advisory Committee.

## Council elections

The lead up to the Darebin Council elections was an intensely busy time for the DCAN team. For this election we focussed on testing candidates' commitments to both climate emergency action and stronger local democratic processes, which we see as two sides of the same coin.

We worked with other climate groups and [Vote Climate](#) to develop a questionnaire and [briefing note](#) on climate and deliberative democracy that went to every council candidate across the state. Councils are required by law to use deliberative democracy for key council decisions, but few are doing this well. In response to the questionnaire, all of the elected candidates recognised the importance of addressing the climate emergency and many made commitments to strong action on climate and democratic processes. Several also attended information sessions on citizens' assemblies and other ways of involving residents in deliberating on difficult-to-resolve issues.



We also held a very successful candidates' forum (with 20 candidates and five breakout rooms based on wards). The feedback from the forum was very positive. Participants reported to us that they felt they "really got to know their candidates" and "it will help me make up my mind on how to vote".

In developing scorecards for each of the nine wards, we assessed the candidates against three key criteria: climate emergency leadership, support for strong council climate action and support for accountability and democratic processes.

The information we used in our assessment included the candidates' official statements, survey responses, responses at the forum and information on their websites. We letterboxed two wards (South East and West wards) where we thought we could have the greatest impact and advertised our scorecard through our website and social media. Thank you to all our many supporters who helped with election activities.

## Local EV Hub Initiative



A small but very active working group formed to support local innovator Craig Bishop who is pioneering the way forward by retrofitting electric motors into petrol based cars. Craig's business was threatened earlier in the year when Council announced changes to the leasing arrangements for the Melbourne Innovation Centre in Alphington, which is Council owned. Over 1,300 signatures



were gathered to support Craig to continue his work and extend his business to create an EV hub. Letters were also sent to local MPs and meetings held to garner support for Craig's work. A decision on the successful applicants for the new leasing arrangements is still to be announced.

## **Good Car Company EOFY sale**



DCAN was pleased to support our former project partners, the Good Car Company, in an end of financial year sale for second hand electric vehicles (EVs). The sale went exceptionally well with almost all cars and vans sold. Good Car Co has decided to refocus its work on education and advocacy as there are now more opportunities for people to buy affordable second hand EVs - in stark contrast to when the company first started operating.

DCAN teamed up with the company for a highly successful community EV bulk-buy in 2022 which was made possible by a Darebin Council community grant.

## **Outreach**

### **Five years of Chalking, Talking and Picking Up Litter**



For five years, weather permitting, at 10.00 am on Thursdays, a small group of DCANers have been meeting on the St Georges Road Bike Path somewhere between Miller Street and Merri Parade. Members of the group chat to passers-by about the ongoing climate emergency and its increasing threat to our lives and planet.

The group receives lots of positive responses and support from the public before adjourning for a chat and a coffee at a local cafe. Over the years many different folk have joined the group for one-off or regular outings and all newcomers are welcome.

### **Darebin Volunteer Expo**



The Outreach group were also involved in running stalls at the Darebin Volunteer Expo and the Hot Planet matchmaking event (see below) and will be hosting a stall at the upcoming event in Coburg "Voices from the Frontline of the Climate Crisis – an

urgent call to action from the NT” on November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## Letters to the Editor

The 'Letters to the Editor' team that DCAN is a member of has continued to have an impressive number of letters published. Like other climate groups this one benefits from individuals with useful skill sets helping and inspiring beginners. It is also a good way to support activists in communities large and small all over Australia.

## Hoddle Street Climate Mural

DCAN was very happy to put our colleagues at Yarra Climate Action Now in touch with a group of climate activists to create this spectacular mural, painted by John Lawry, on the corner of Hoddle and Perry Streets, Collingwood, just south of Johnston Street.



The activist group have become experts in applying for council grants and working with numerous artists, including John Lawry

who has painted many other stunning murals around town.

Twenty-two grade 5/6 students from Collingwood College helped created an abstracted flock of white “cockatoos” on adjacent black fences to frame the mural. The passing public is most enthusiastic about the beautification of their neighbourhood. A “launch” will take place soon. DCAN members will continue to monitor the murals and remove any graffiti.

## Working with local Federal and State MPs

DCAN continued its regular meetings with local Federal and State MPs during the year.

### Meetings with Federal Member for Cooper Ged Kearney

While we were very pleased to see a water trigger included in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act (EPBC) towards the end of last year, it became very apparent this year that we need Ged to continue to press Minister Plibersek to use these new powers to address the consequences on water use in mining projects like the Beetaloo basin.



We also expressed our shock and disappointment at the Government’s Future Gas Strategy which states that Australia will continue to explore for, and open up, new gas projects. This flies in the face of the International Energy Agency’s 2021 Roadmap to Net Zero by 2050, which specifically states that there should be no new fossil fuel projects anywhere. It

also undermines the Government's own plans to develop clean industries based on renewable power.

We also put forward strong evidence to Ged to show that Japan does not need Australian gas for energy security, as there is evidence to show they have a surplus of gas and are busy exporting our gas to neighbouring countries. DCAN is pleased to see that national organisations like Climate Action Network Australia (CANA) are also now taking this issue up with Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen.

### **Meeting with Minister Bowen**

DCAN appreciated the opportunity to attend a presentation by Minister Bowen organised by Ged Kearney. DCAN supporters questioned the Minister about Australian gas exports to Japan and the timing of stage 3 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation reforms, the need for a national marketing campaign to attract workers to renewable industries, Labor's position on the Duty of Care bill and measuring methane via a National Emissions Monitoring Framework.

### **Meetings with Kat Theophanous MP for Northcote**

In our meetings with Kat Theophanous, getting off gas was the key issue. We provided a detailed analysis of the updated Gas Substitution Roadmap and how Victoria could strengthen its actions with national support. We also called on her to support Victoria's Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio on standing up to the gas lobby, which has been emboldened after the release of the Federal Government's Future Gas Strategy and has been highly critical of the Minister's banning of gas connections for new residential homes. We also advocated for speeding up of the energy transition, as Victoria's continued use of gas helps to legitimise the methane-belching gas export industry.

## **Campaigns**

### **Rapid Response to new coal and gas announcements**



DCAN supporters rallied outside local MP Ged Kearney's office on four occasions over the year. The actions were part of a wave of snap rallies across Melbourne outside Labor MPs offices, which are also occurring in other



states. The actions were in response to the following announcements: drilling for gas in the NT's Beetaloo Basin, the approval of a project in Queensland that will involve the construction of 151 coal seam gas wells, the approval of three new coal mines. We also called for an end to fossil fuel subsidies and for the enactment of strong nature laws.

Disappointingly, we expect the need for these rapid actions will continue in 2025 in response new coal and gas project announcements. It is deeply alarming that the Government continues to approve new climate-wrecking projects in the middle of a climate crisis. The community deserves and expects the Government to put the health and safety of its citizens and the planet above the short term profits of multinational fossil fuel companies.

## **Renew Australia for All campaign**

DCAN is part of an alliance of more than 50 organisations fighting for a shift to a clean economy. The Renew Australia campaign was launched in September. The campaign is calling on the Government to urgently invest \$5 billion to support home energy upgrades and improve access to rooftop solar and batteries.



This is part of a \$50 billion minimum investment that the alliance is calling for

over 10 years to repower Australian homes and communities with renewable energy. A 70-strong delegation unveiled the plan to 40 Parliamentarians in Canberra in September.

## **Voices from the Frontline of the NT climate crisis**



DCAN is proud to be supporting this important event which is happening in November. We know there is no room for new fossil fuel projects if we want a safe and liveable planet.

We have teamed up with the Environment Centre NT,

Beyond Gas Network, Australian Conservation Foundation and other local climate groups to support a group of Territorians coming to town to tell us what these dangerous gas projects mean for their communities - and how we can stand in solidarity with them here in Victoria. Much of the NT is predicted to be unliveable before the end of the century due to climate impacts, yet the Federal Government

is considering a \$1.9 billion gas hub in Darwin, while failing to stop fracking in the Beetaloo Basin.

## Say NO to the Wollert incinerator

DCAN is supporting the ongoing campaign to stop Cleanaway from building a



massive, toxic, waste to energy incinerator in Wollert. DCAN has made a submission, and attended public consultations and protests about the issue. Waste to energy technology is not a sustainable technology. By burning plastic, which is made from petroleum, this incinerator is effectively burning oil for energy and creating more greenhouse gases and pollution from toxins that can cause cancer and birth defects. Tributaries of the Merri Creek in close proximity to the proposed site will also be

at risk. Burning waste undermines critically important prevention, reduction, reuse, repair, and recycling initiatives.

## Submissions

### Climate Resilience Inquiry Submission Making Party



During the year we teamed up with the Darebin Neighbourhood House Network to host a submission-making party for the state government's Climate Resilience Inquiry into how ready communities are to handle climate related disasters.

The Inquiry is looking at the impact of climate change on buildings and natural areas, including homes, schools, parks and beaches, as well as how we use these places.

### DCAN calls for higher emission targets

DCAN put in a submission to the Climate Change Authority's Issues Paper on



emissions targets for 2035. We believe the Authority's recommended target in the range of 65%-75% below 2005 levels is well below that needed for a safe climate.

The DCAN submission called for a steep increase in the emission targets, noting that a number of eminent researchers and research institutes have advocated for net zero emissions by 2035, with a 75% reduction by 2030 (based on 2005 levels). We also pointed out that



these need to be real targets, with real emissions reductions, that the use of offsets should be minimised and that we should not be wasting time, money and resources on expensive and unproven technologies like Carbon Capture and Storage.

## Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator

In our latest submission to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) we argued that the South West Queensland Pipeline (SWQP), which is privately owned by APA, should be classified as a scheme pipeline so that customer tariffs and investments will in future be approved by AER under an access arrangement. In our submission we also took the opportunity to call for urgent action on reducing gas demand including a timeline for the orderly wind-down of the whole gas system with clear targets for reduction in overall consumption and the public release of data on the biggest domestic energy consumers.

## Communicating with our supporters

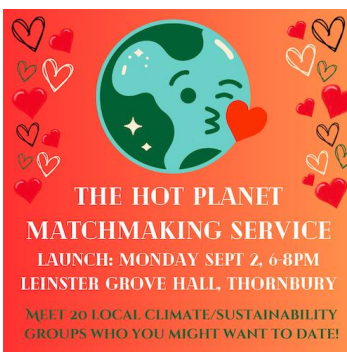
DCAN's monthly newsletter, the DCAN Dispatch, is our main way of communicating regularly with our 1280 supporters. The Dispatch is packed with information about DCAN activities, climate information and opportunities to get involved in climate campaigns. We also communicate through our Facebook Page and Facebook Group. We are keen to explore other social media opportunities in 2025. The DCAN website continues to provide information on how to take action and free resources.

## Working with other networks groups

We have continued to be an active participant in the Climate Action Network Australia Awesome Grassroots group comprised of climate groups from around Australia. DCAN is also a member of the Beyond Gas Network, Victorian Climate Action Network and Darebin Climate Alliance. These networks provide an invaluable opportunity for DCAN to share information, learn from other groups and coordinate our efforts.

We also continue to collaborate with many groups at the local, state and federal levels. Our thanks go to all for their continued support and sharing of resources and information.

## The Hot Planet Matchmaking Service



DCAN was one of twenty local climate and sustainability groups that took part in a fun and creative project run by **Neighbours United for Climate Action**.

The Hot Planet Matchmaking service matches interested residents with the local climate, sustainability or biodiversity group that best suits them. The service was

launched in September and is available from NUCA's website.

### **Taking action in print**



DCAN is called on to sign open letters on a range of issues at the national and sometimes, international level.

We were proud to be amongst the more than 100 groups signing onto an open letter organised by The Australia Institute which was published in national newspapers, calling on Environment Minister Plibersek to ensure Australia's environment laws stop new fossil fuel projects & protect our environment, climate, and biodiversity. The letter was in response to the devastating announcement that the Albanese Government appears

to be backing away from its promises to reform environmental laws.

### **Thank You!**

Thank you to all members of the DCAN Planning Group, our volunteers and supporters. We look forward to continuing our work with you in 2025 and campaigning 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.*