

## **2022 Annual Report**

### **Darebin Climate Action Now**

#### **Introduction**

2022 has been a particularly busy year for DCAN, packed with creative actions and events including working on two election campaigns!

#### **Working alongside First Nations People – Cultural Awareness Training**



In April this year DCAN and other local environmental groups were privileged to participate in an inspirational day of Cultural Awareness Training with Uncle Bill Nicholson from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The training was a positive step along our path to working alongside First Nations People towards a safe climate future.

The day began with a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony and ended with a walk along the Birrarung (Yarra) to Dight's Falls. Uncle Bill and the other speakers were incredibly generous and engaging in sharing their stories and knowledge. Uncle Bill reminded us of the importance of protecting country now and for future generations and we were inspired with ideas, insights and advice.

#### **Two elections in one year!**



It was a busy year for elections with the federal election held in May and the state election in November.

As is becoming our tradition, DCAN held candidate climate forums for each election: the federal seat of Cooper and the state seat of Northcote. Both forums were very well attended with a combined attendance of around 150 people. The

state forum was 'standing room only' reflecting the high degree of interest in climate action and the very marginal nature of the seat. Attendees at both forums said they found the information provided by the candidates to be very informative and engaging – and one of the candidates said 'this is always the best election forum I go to'. It was good to partner with the Darebin Climate Alliance in running these events.

As is our usual practice we also developed scorecards which rated the strength of the candidates' climate policies. We worked closely with other grass-roots climate groups, particularly in the development of score cards for the upper houses of parliament (the Senate and Legislative Council). For both elections, DCAN volunteers handed these out at railway stations and at pre-polling booths. DCAN supporters also delivered 20,000 scorecards to residents in the state seat of Northcote. We also distributed many house/fence signs ahead of the elections (see below).

A huge thank you to all our volunteers who worked so hard during both campaigns.

## **Metro Community Power Hub**

In 2021 DCAN joined forces with the Yarra Energy Foundation (YEF), nine other climate groups and eleven local councils to become the Metro Community Power Hub. The Hub was a one-stop shop for helping more people access practical renewable energy solutions.

The Hub helped many households to install solar panels and learn how to reduce their energy bills and carbon footprints through things like installing heat pumps, insulation and induction cooktops.



DCAN distributed thousands of fliers across Darebin about the services provided by the Hub, held information sessions and a [demonstration of induction cooking](#) with past Master Chef winner Emma Dean. Emma showed us how to cook delicious meals on an induction cooktop using half the amount of energy as a gas or electric stove.

We also took part in discussions with local neighbourhood houses to help make them more climate resilient. Our work with the Hub was a valuable way for DCAN to build relationships with other climate groups and to spread the word about

how to reduce emissions at a local level. Unfortunately funding for Community Power Hubs was not extended so the program ended in June 2022.

## Outreach

DCAN's outreach activities over the past year were both effective and fun.



The 'Letters to the Editor' team had a massive 150 letters published in papers around Australia, including The Australian, the Herald Sun, The Age, Sydney's Daily Telegraph, the Newcastle Herald and the West Australian.

We continued our weekly gatherings at various points along the St George's Rd bike path to chalk topical climate messages, pick up litter (which is logged on the Litter Watch app to help inform better legislation), weed and chat to passers-by about the climate. We have had wonderful feedback from many people about how grateful

they are for our efforts.



We have used our connections with XR Northside and others to get our 'Things To Do/Groups To Join' flyers into the hands of more people.

The kind folk at @DotSpace in Charles Street Westgarth have let us do three displays of climate messages and flyers in their shopfront window. The art space at 234 High Street has also continued to host our displays, including an 'Elephant in the Room' display which had flickering flames and was illuminated until 9:00 pm each night for several weeks. A third way of distributing our flyer has been the simple idea of pasting it inside books that might appeal to potential DCAN

members and placing them in Little (Street) Libraries.

We are in discussion with Darebin Libraries about putting on displays in their branches, and are hoping to have a display of photos, the DCAN banner and the 'Elephant in the room' display in Northcote Library in January. We hope this can be extended to other library branches later in 2023.

We have sold a number of our 'Elephant in the Room' T-shirts, which also featured at a national conference in Adelaide. We have also distributed our 'What is Climate Change?' posters at various venues and events. In April we publicly launched our Climate Emergency mural in Merri Pde and were delighted to be joined by a new Darebin resident, Professor Peter Singer, and Darebin councillor Tom Hannan.

### **Partnering with the Good Car Company for more affordable electric vehicles**



This year DCAN entered into a partnership with the Good Car Company, an innovative social enterprise founded by three environmental scientists to bring more affordable electric cars into Australia.

DCAN was awarded a small Council grant which enabled us to support a community facilitation officer, Kay Wennagel, to help coordinate and promote their Electric Vehicle program in Darebin and the northern Melbourne region. The program was launched at a very successful 'Show and Shine' event in November at Bundoora Secondary College.

Over 200 people attended to inspect the EV cars and vans on display, participate in an excellent Q&A information session and go for test drives. Darebin, Yarra and Merri-bek Councils also supported the program. At the time of writing the campaign is still in progress, but a number of EVs have already been sold. Many thanks to Kay for the thousands of hours she has put into this project!

### **Working with State & Federal Politicians**

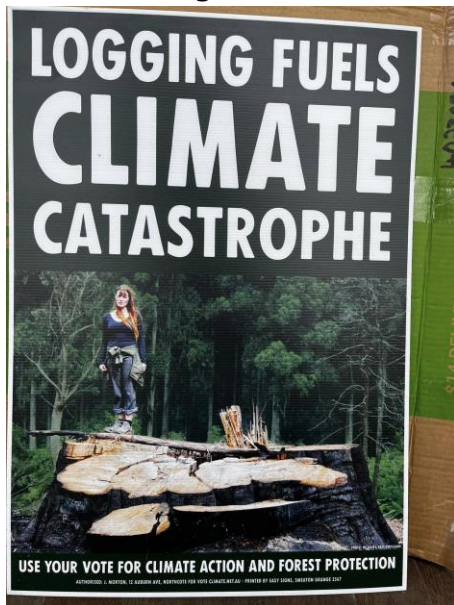
We continued to meet with local politicians. In several meetings with Kat Theophanous, MP for Northcote, we raised concerns about new gas exploration licenses, Government incentives for gas appliances and the logging of native forests. We welcomed Ms Theophanous' advocacy efforts aiming to remove the requirement for all new houses to be connected to gas. The Victorian government subsequently announced this requirement



would be dropped and pledged that all new social housing stock would be fully electric.

Ms Theophanous also arranged for DCAN to meet with the Victorian Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Ms Lily D'Ambrosio, to discuss our concerns with the Government's Gas Substitution Road Map. The Roadmap is an important document as it sets out the Government's plan on how we will transition to net zero emissions. While DCAN welcomed some of the very positive announcements in the Roadmap, we expressed our concern at the lack of specific targets and timeframes needed to rapidly cut carbon emissions. We also spoke of our alarm at the inclusion of expanded and new gas projects.

An issue of great concern to DCAN is the continued destruction of our native forests which play an important role in storing carbon and supporting the plants and animals that depend on them for their very existence. Recent court cases have found that Vic Forests, a state owned entity, has been carrying out illegal logging. Even though the State Government has promised to phase out logging by 2030, there has been no review of this target following the devastating bushfires. DCAN has joined the Forest Action Alliance in its call for the logging of native forests to end much sooner.



We were also horrified by the draconian laws introduced by the State Government which will criminalise peaceful protests in native forests and make the work currently conducted by citizen scientists illegal. DCAN wrote to all Victorian MPs expressing our concerns and took part in protests at Parliament House. We argue that, in the face of the climate emergency and species extinction, we need to protect what few natural ecosystems we have left, not punish those who are trying to prevent further loss and damage.

## Climate Emergency Fence Signs



This year we expanded our suite of fence signs to include 'For the Kids I'm Voting Climate' and 'Logging Fuels Climate Catastrophe' (shown on previous page). The demand for all of our signs increased significantly in the lead-up to the elections, requiring further batches to be printed. In addition to advertising in DCAN's monthly Dispatch, successful distribution points were at local farmers markets, schools and shopping strips.

Very excitingly our 'Declare a Climate Emergency sign' was prominent in an episode of Gardening Australia which showcased a local Northcote garden.

## Communicating with our supporters

DCAN's monthly newsletter, the DCAN Dispatch, is our main way of communicating regularly with our 1,358 supporters. The Dispatch is packed with information about DCAN activities, climate information and opportunities to get involved in state and national campaigns.

The DCAN Website working group updated several web pages during the year and added an extensive list of links to other organisations and information on climate. We undertook two phone banking exercises which resulted in an increase in the number of supporters on our mailing list. We also created a new DCAN [YouTube](#) channel to host our webinars.

## Submissions

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

- Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator re APA Access Arrangement 2023-2027
- Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator - Distributors' Access Arrangements 2023-2028

- Submission to the Essential Services Commission Unaccounted for Gas Benchmarks Review 2022

## **Getting off gas**

As reported above, gas has been a big focus of our activities throughout 2022 and we expect this to continue into 2023 and beyond. DCAN is an active member of the Gas Free Vic network and supports the work of the Beyond Gas Network.

## **Working with local businesses**



In September we paid a visit to Moon Dog World in Preston as we are keen to work more closely with local Darebin businesses in their efforts to reduce their carbon footprints. The Snapshot report shows industrial and commercial electricity makes up 41% of Darebin's carbon emissions.

We had a fascinating tour of the brewing area with Karl van Buuren, one of the founders.

A repurposed Toyota factory, Moondog has put on 100kw of solar PV and has a retractable roof area.

Gas is used in the brewing process and Karl described how this was hard to replace with current technology. Moondog is currently working with consultants to achieve carbon-neutral certification which is due to happen soon.

## **Local, state and national climate action networks**

DCAN has continued to support the Darebin Climate Alliance which formed at the end of 2021. This year the Alliance has focused on election campaigning and input into the development of the new Council Climate Emergency Plan. While still in its early stages, the formation of the Alliance has led to a greater level of information exchange between local groups, particularly on events and campaigns.

We have continued to be an active participant in VCAN (Victorian Climate Action Network) and CANA (Climate Action Network Australia). All three

networks provide an invaluable opportunity for DCAN to share information, learn from other groups and coordinate our efforts.

## **Working with other climate groups**



It was wonderful to see so many DCAN supporters join in the United Climate Rally in July calling for urgent climate action at the Melbourne State Library.

While some DCAN supporters sang in the fabulous Melbourne Climate Choir welcoming people to the rally, others were seen tuning into the great speeches and mingling with forest protectors, XR rebels, and even human-size owls! The distressing sight

and sound of towering Blinky the Burning Koala reminded us all of what is at stake for our precious planet and the need for each of us to step up and demand urgent action on climate before it is too late.

DCAN supporters also participated in the Students Strike for Climate in May and were part of a series of actions with Extinction Rebellion local groups blockading petrol distribution hubs in Melbourne. The campaign aimed to draw attention to the climate emergency calling for 'No more coal. No more gas. No more oil. JUST STOP IT!'

## **Vale Philip Sutton**

DCAN was deeply saddened by the loss of Philip Sutton in June this year. Philip was a local Darebin resident, and a friend, mentor and guiding light to many in the climate movement. He leaves behind a remarkable legacy of thoughtful contributions on climate and environmental protection.

Philip's deep thinking and work on the Climate Emergency helped instigate the declaration of a climate emergency by Darebin Council, followed by 2118 other jurisdictions worldwide. Philip was co-author with David Spratt of the ground-breaking book 'Climate Code Red: the Case for Emergency Action', which was one of the first books to provide a stark warning of the need for more urgent and immediate action on global heating. DCAN is proud to be continuing Philip's legacy in fighting for a safe climate for all.



## 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 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.*