



BALLARAT LEADERS CALL FOR ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Apolitical Ballarat leaders are calling on the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to agree to immediate bipartisan action on climate change.

Leaders of BREAZE (Ballarat Renewable Energy and Zero Emissions), Committee for Ballarat, the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, Sovereign Hill, Alstom, Ballarat Uniting Church and the Indigenous community have signed an open letter to the government and opposition.

"We the undersigned call on the Morrison Coalition government to endorse the Declaration of Climate Emergency and to take action to cut greenhouse gases immediately, to meet our Paris COP21 commitments, and to set a pathway of future interim targets leading to zero emissions by 2050," the letter states.

"Australia is the world's 14th highest emitter of greenhouse gases and third biggest exporter of coal. We also have highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions in the OECD.

"We cannot expect other countries to reduce emissions if we are not doing so ourselves. Climate change is with us now, and as a responsible member of the international community we must act immediately, before it is too late."

BREAZE president Mary Debrett told The Courier bipartisanship on climate change was considered normal in many other countries and this approach was a 'no brainer'. While we are all struggling to cope with the pandemic, we really need to multi task and keep working on what we need to do to address climate change. "It is a public interest matter. Divisions and ideologies really shouldn't come into play. We should all be doing what it takes."

Ms Debrett said Ballarat was well placed to be a leader in taking steps to address climate change, as Ballarat Council endorsed the declaration of a climate emergency in 2018, solar uptake had been strong and the city was surrounded by wind farms. "We are wanting to shift the context in which climate change is discussed so people see it as a life issue and not as a political issue," she said.

To the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Scott Morrison, the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Anthony Albanese and Honorable members of the House and Senate:

The bushfire season of 2019/20 has given Australians a taste of what climate change has in store for us — a devastated landscape and massive asset and species loss as well as lives and livelihoods. This is the new bushfire reality: forest fires so extreme that they are uncontrollable, producing their own weather system; pyrocumulonimbus clouds and dry lightning that ignites further fires; what climate scientists have been warning for three decades.

In Ballarat our City Council endorsed the Declaration of Climate Emergency in 2018 and in 2019 unanimously endorsed a Carbon Neutrality Action Plan for zero emissions by 2025.

It is now time for our nation's leaders to similarly acknowledge anthropogenic climate change as an existential threat that requires immediate bipartisan action.

We the undersigned call on the Morrison Coalition government to endorse the Declaration of Climate Emergency and to take action to cut greenhouse gases immediately, to meet our Paris COP21 commitments, and to set a pathway of future interim targets leading to zero emissions by 2050.

We accept the evidence of climate science that current greenhouse emissions are leading us on a trajectory towards global warming of 3-5° by the end of the century. This scenario would bequeath a hostile environment for our children and grandchildren and a dire future for humanity.

Australia is the world's 14th highest emitter of greenhouse gases and third biggest exporter of coal. We also have the highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions in the OECD.

We cannot expect other countries to reduce emissions if we are not doing so ourselves. Climate change is with us now, and as a responsible member of the international community we must act immediately — before it is too late.

Signatories

Michael Poulton, CEO Committee for Ballarat

Bishop Paul Bird, Catholic Diocese of Ballarat

Sara Quon, CEO Sovereign Hill

Mattieu Chevalier, Ballarat Site Director, Alstom

Rev Lauleti Tu'inauvai, Minister, Ballarat Central Uniting Church

Ted Lovett, OAM, Gunditjmara senior elder

Mary Debrett, President BREAZE (Ballarat Renewable Energy and Zero Emissions)

"COVID-19 has kind of eclipsed discussion of climate change at the moment. We at BREAZE understand that, it is a life and death matter. But in many ways climate change is also life and death. If we can cut emissions significantly there will be a considerable health benefit immediately as well as an environmental benefit."

Ms Debrett referred to recent reports of modelling by Australian scientists that estimated we could reach seven degrees of global warming by the end of the century. "Three degrees makes an unlivable planet, so the situation is very dire," she said. "While we are all struggling to cope with the pandemic, we really need to multi task and keep working on what we need to do to address climate change."

"We can't put it on the back-burner and do it when the pandemic is over. We really need to be doing both things at the same time. That is another reason why bipartisanship is very important, because it is all about how public money is spent."

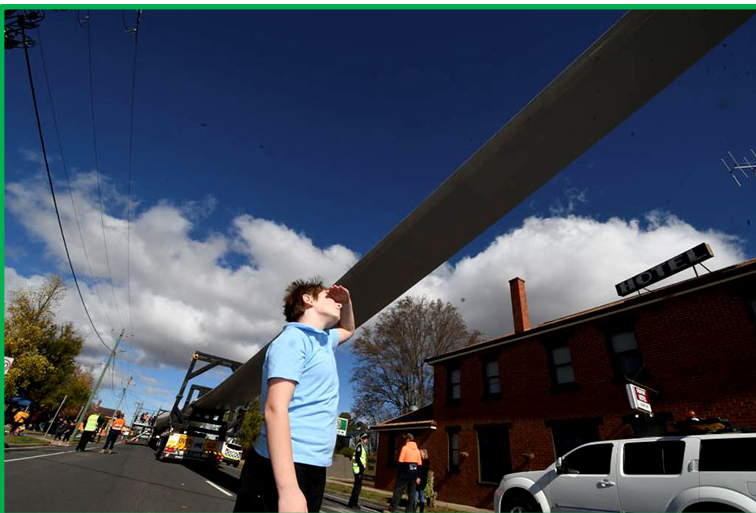
Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Rochelle Kirkham

GRAMPIANS NEW ENERGY TASKFORCE RELEASES ROADMAP TO ZERO REPORT

A plan to revolutionise the economy and save the planet has finally been released after months of work. The Grampians New Energy Taskforce's Roadmap to Zero Emissions document states that reducing and balancing carbon emissions can be achieved before 2050, if collaborative action is taken now.

From local actions individual councils and businesses can take in the short term, to structural changes requiring input from state and federal governments, the report explains how measures like transitioning to electric vehicle fleets or investing in renewable energy and batteries will bring the Grampians to a net zero emissions target.

Stakeholders in GNeT include councils from Moorabool to the border, the state government's Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning, and Regional Development Victoria, the federal Regional Development Australia, and local bodies like the Committee for Ballarat and Wimmera Progress Association.



The report was developed with Beyond Zero Emissions and is the first to target a specific region instead of a country or state. GNeT Chair Stuart Benjamin said analysis of the data revealed agriculture, as well as being an incredibly valuable industry for the region, was both the highest emitter of carbon, but also the "hero of the story".

"Not only can (agriculture) get to the point where it is zero emissions, it can actually become a negative emitter and help other sectors of the economy that may not be able to get to zero by 2050," he said. "As optimistic as we are about transport, about that becoming electrified or the possibility hydrogen

becoming a viable transport fuel, we still don't think that transport will get to zero by 2050, which means it is going to need the contribution of other sectors to do that."

The report suggests mosaic farming - given predicted weather changes, GNeT is advocating farmers consider following CSIRO advice and "a more selective and responsive use of the land, in all its variety". This includes planting more trees and shrubs on otherwise unproductive land, which could act as carbon sinks while providing other benefits.

"Mosaic farming is really interesting because it's really no different to the way good farmers have been operating for the past 50 or 60 years, they're rotating crops, they're looking at new opportunities," Mr Benjamin said. "If you speak to any farmer, they'll tell you they're not farming the same way they were five years ago, let alone twenty years ago, they're constantly reinventing their business model. Where mosaic takes it to the next level is saying we need to do

that on a regional basis, and we need farmers and neighbours working together to take advantage of those opportunities - it needs to be collaborative and at a larger scale. Victoria produces forty per cent of the agricultural wealth of Australia and there's absolutely no reason why in the foreseeable future we couldn't maintain that but potentially increase that value-add. The most exciting part of the Roadmap is its prediction that the region could be carbon neutral by 2044", Mr Benjamin added.

"The reality is, I can't really tell you what a lot of businesses will look like in five years time, let alone in 2050, but I can tell you that the sectors are largely going to remain the same, because agriculture is still going to exist, transport is still going to exist," he said. "So if we say we know what those sectors are emitting now, and we need to get them to zero, then here are some of the ways we can do it. If we work collaboratively, we can get to zero not by 2050, but by 2044, potentially sooner, and that's pretty exciting, and it's a tremendous opportunity for the Grampians."

Councils are already looking at how to "bake in" the roadmap for their forward plans and Mr Benjamin said businesses should be considering it as well, particularly during the coronavirus pandemic. "There's not a business in Australia, or the world - though let's talk Grampians - that isn't thinking 'what is my new business model moving forward, what does my business look like in five or ten years time?'" he said.

"We'd like to think that as part of that, people are thinking what's the environmental impact, and we've produced a document saying here are the things you need to think about and the changes you need to be making. Some of those changes could be in twenty years, but that doesn't mean you need to wait to do it - it may not be economically feasible at this point to change your trucks to electric vehicles, but in your forward capital program, in five years time when you're replacing your current fleet, that's something you need to be thinking about, and that's quite an exciting situation to be in."

The full report is available online [here](#).

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Alex Ford and photo by Lachlan Bence.

Looking ahead: Renewable energy in western Victoria has a huge role to play, according to GNeT's Roadmap to Zero Emissions plan - pictured, Trawalla Primary School student James checks out a wind turbine component in Beaufort last year.