



INQUIRY INTO TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE IN VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES

Presentation to Parliamentary Panel

Outline

- ▶ About Geelong Sustainability
- ▶ Our network & evolution
- ▶ Our activities: events, projects, campaigns
- ▶ Sustainable House Day
- ▶ War on Waste
- ▶ Community energy projects
- ▶ Our insights
- ▶ Our support suggestions

About Geelong Sustainability

- ❑ Established in 2007, GS is a not-for-profit, non partisan, incorporated community association
- ❑ In 2017 became a registered environmental organisation & charity
- ❑ We're run by passionate volunteers with strategic impact focus from our limited resources & capacity
- ❑ 3,350 email subscribers & reach 6000 via social media
- ❑ 180+ financial members, incl. 60 families & 36 business members
- ❑ Our revenue has grown from <\$10K in 2011 to >\$260,000 in 2019 - largely due to state government funded projects
- ❑ History of under promising & over delivering!

'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.' Margaret Mead



Our evolution

- ❑ Driven by mission to inform, inspire & connect, we focus on:
 - sharing quality information
 - building community resilience
 - advocating for the environment and
 - supporting effective action
- ❑ Growing supporter base & widening demographic
- ❑ Connecting with general public through large events
- ❑ Expanding our professional network, building partnerships & alliances
- ❑ We auspice other groups to extend our reach
- ❑ Building volunteer capacity & offering career pathway
- ❑ Enhancing our governance, accounting & administration



Our growing network

- ❑ Connecting with other regional/local sustainability groups
- ❑ Leading national campaigns locally
- ❑ Growing professional network
- ❑ Membership of advisory panels
 - ❑ G21 Enviro Pillar, Barwon Water
- ❑ Building our partnerships and alliances
 - ❑ VIC Community Solar Alliance, C4CE, VIC Climate Action Network
 - ❑ Aust Conservation Foundation, Environment Victoria
 - ❑ Boomerang Alliance, Plastic Free Victoria
 - ❑ Moolap Wetlands Action Network, Bellarine Catchment Network,
 - ❑ BSWWRRG, DELWP, ResourceSmart Schools
 - ❑ Business/Education/Research: ecoMaster, Deakin Uni, CSIRO



Our activities

- ❑ Sustainable House Day - biggest & most popular event
SHD2019 was our 11th year running event
- ❑ Sustainability Directory - our business card
Ed 2 - 500 entries, 16000 copies, free - almost gone
- ❑ Green Drinks - since 2013
Monthly supporter & networking event
- ❑ Life Learning classes - began in 2017
Cheap fun classes after work for curious people
- ❑ Clever Living seminars - since 2018
Held at L5 of Library attracting 250+ people
- ❑ Cycling Without Age Geelong chapter
Partnership with MACS & Cycling Geelong
- ❑ CORE task group & CE projects
- ❑ War on Waste Action Group
- ❑ Micro Village Planning Group



The Sustainability Directory



Waste – Recycle – Rethink – Reuse

Over the last 30 years, a staggering one-third of the planet's natural resources were consumed! Our consumerist society is undermining the planet's capacity to regenerate itself and exacerbating local and global inequalities. In this category we list options for wasting less and encourage you to rethink, repair, reuse, repurpose or recycle the 'stuff' you buy, where you buy it and how you dispose of it. Changing these behaviours will help to reduce landfill, lower our greenhouse gas emissions, ease the pressure on our natural environment as well as saving you money.

Advice on Reducing Waste

A-Z Waste Directory
How to dispose of all your unwanted stuff!
W www.geelongstrails.com.au/residents/waste/
directory.aspx

Deliver Your Home
Dispose of toxic household chemicals at no cost
See website for collection details
W www.sustainability.vic.gov.au

Get it Right on Bin Night
Priority recycling going to landfill. Know what can
just get it get it in your yellow recycling bin
W www.getitrightonbin.nic.gov.au
W www.therecycle.com.au

ReThink Your Rubbish
Sign up for emails with hints & discounts
W www.geelongstrails.com.au/residents/waste/
sign-up.aspx

Council Resource Recovery Centres

These centres are not rubbish tips. They are
collection points for a range of recyclable materials.
If you sort your load you will pay less and many
materials are free.

Apollo Bay Resource Recovery Centre
Arthur Ctl, Apollo Bay
T 5232 3400

Angelsea Transfer Station
Coastline Rd, Angelsea
T 5263 2378

Drysdale Resource Recovery Centre

Block Rd, Drysdale
T 5231 2295

Colac Otway Shire Office
Box St, Colac
T 5232 2400

Geelong Resource Recovery Centre
Douro St, North Geelong
T 5272 2613

Lorne Transfer Station
Crown Rd, Lorne
T 5261 0600

E-Waste

Electronic waste (e-waste) – televisions, computers,
printers and electronic goods – is growing three
times faster than other waste streams. The print
computers contain hazardous substances, metals
and materials that can be safely recovered, keeping
them out of landfill and the environment. Help
address the growing e-waste epidemic!

Electronic hardware
Free drop off at resource recovery centres for
e-waste including computers, printers, scanners,
televisions, DVD players, mobile phones plus their
batteries & accessories.

Mobile phones
– Pick up a sachet at Australia Post outlets and free
post net mobile to Mobile Muster.
– Place in the Mobile Muster collection bins at
phone dealers.

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Waste – Recycle – Rethink – Reuse

Printer cartridges

– Drop off cartridges at Australia Post outlets
– Return to OfficeWorks, 48 Mt Rd, Henry Norman,
Dick Smith and Good Guys when you buy a refill.

PCs For Kids

Recycled computers for children in need
400 Falkington St, Newbourn
W www.pcforkids.com.au

Non-recyclable Items

Electrical Appliances

Drop off small electrical appliances – such
as hair dryers, blenders, coffee machines,
fans, food mixers and toasters – at your local
resource recovery centre. Do not put them in
your red-lid bin.



Polystyrene

– Clean white polystyrene foam packaging can
be dropped off only at the Geelong Resource
Recovery Centre.
– Coloured polystyrene, coloured foam, meat trays,
foam bag handles and soft foam packaging material
cannot be recycled. Put them in your red-lid bin.

FREE disposal of household paint, batteries and compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)

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Sustainable House Day

- ▶ Community learning event - Learn from locals how to live well
Complex logistics, huge comms blitz & massive volunteer effort
- ▶ SHD2019 had 125 volunteers, 55 were subject matter experts:
architects, designers, builders, energy raters, garden gurus
- ▶ Over 2700 visits to 15 open houses - 355 visited the new Passiv Haus
- ▶ Post event visitor survey results:
 - 60% attending for first time, 20% for second year
 - 44% wanted advice on DIY retrofitting, 44% just curious
 - 98% liked seeing homes firsthand
 - 93% liked talking to homeowners
 - 58% more confident to seek advice after SHD
 - 92% more likely to include sustainable design, materials & products in their home

GEELONG & SURROUNDS
Sustainable House Day
13 October 2019



 **GEELONG SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainable House Day 2019 - Tour 15 Open Homes

Learn from Locals how to live well

Sustainable
House Day .



Large community events

- ▶ GS likes to take its messages to large public events
- ▶ Pako Festa attracts 100,000 culturally diverse people
- ▶ Mountain-Mouth extreme arts walk



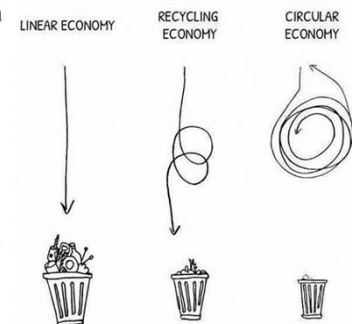
War on Waste

- ❑ ABC TV series reached 3.7m viewers
- ❑ Raised community awareness across spectrum
 - There is no away!
 - Rubbish collection is an essential service
 - Our oceans are drowning in plastic
 - Single use plastics must be eliminated
- ❑ We see current crisis as opportunity to reset social norms
- ❑ This issue resonates across all age groups especially millennials - we all create waste
- ❑ We can all be part of the solution!



War on Waste activities

- ❑ We took our waste-wise messages & sample products to Pako Festa
- ❑ We developed a Recycle Right classification challenge
- ❑ We've run waste-wise Life Learning classes & Green Drinks events
- ❑ We've formed a War on Waste action group
- ❑ We're connecting with other groups in region/state & BSWRRG
- ❑ We've partnering with NCF, BCN, B-Alternative, Farmers' Place & Closed Loop to introduce waste-wise changes at the Celtic Festival & Queenscliff Musical Festival & other festivals
- ❑ GS advocating strongly at local/state/federal levels
- ❑ Use incentives to reward the desired behaviours
- ❑ Authorities must show environmental leadership - strong regulations & stronger enforcement - drive out sharks
- ❑ VIC must introduce a Container Deposit Scheme
- ❑ Support VIC Circular Economy policy, need FOGO rolled out



Geelong Micro Village Project

- ▶ VISION: To develop a new community-led affordable cluster housing model in Geelong that supports a socially, environmentally and financially sustainable community.
- ▶ Launched during Melbourne Design Week, #MDW2019
Diverse stakeholder taskforce: designers, builders, potential residents/investors
- ▶ Aussies build the biggest, most leaky houses - must change
- ▶ Current Geelong stock:
 - ▶ 87% standalone detached houses
 - ▶ Average 2 star energy efficiency
- ▶ Live Small ~ Live Eco has many benefits:
 - ▶ Lower carbon footprint, less waste, more affordable
 - ▶ More connected - overcomes loneliness
- ▶ Challenge planning regulations
- ▶ Collaboration with Deakin HOME

Geelong Micro Village Project
A Community Initiative by  **GEELONG SUSTAINABILITY**



Major focus: Community energy



Community Solar
Donation Model



Community Solar
Investment Model



Community Solar and
Battery Bulk-buy



Future Projects



Donation project South Geelong Primary School

- ▶ \$13,000 raised incl. \$5,000 grant from Geelong Connected Communities!
- ▶ 9.25kW Solar System installed in May 2016
- ▶ Prominent location - Yarra & Kilgour St
- ▶ School agreed to 20 years of sustainability education programs:
 - ▶ Kitchen Garden Program
 - ▶ Bike shelter etc
- ▶ Donation model - hard work!
- ▶ We'd like to pursue CORE model on state schools permitted by Gov't



Community solar investment model Behind-the-meter solar 30-100kW

- ❑ Community owned solar installations on NFP or business
- ❑ Solar feasibility of over 40 sites assessed
- ❑ Made possible by NEJF grants:
 - Rd 1: \$48K - Scoping Study - also did full business case
 - Rd 2: \$140K - Implement & validate business model
- ❑ Win-Win-Win outcomes:
 - Community investors / Local organisations / Environment
- ❑ Collaborative partnership with MACS



Project Partners



CORE Geelong One Project Outcomes



- ▶ Victorian first community solar project
- ▶ MACS - excellent host site/partner
- ▶ \$150,000 was raised from community in 7 days
- ▶ 20 community investors each invested \$7,500 each - now getting good ROI
- ▶ Investor returns underpinned by fixed community solar lease
- ▶ Positive environmental impact
- ▶ Supporting community sustainability fund
- ▶ Local economic benefits



Community solar & battery bulk-buy

- Key project goal: to boost uptake of clean energy in our region by tackling roadblocks
 - Confusion: About the product choices and technology
 - Trust: Not knowing how to find a trustworthy solar installer
 - Cost: Good value & payment options (upfront or loans)
- After due diligence, GS chose to partner with Shinehub: Good admin process, quality Tier 1 hardware, extra warranty, and local installers - GS wants to build local green economy
- Over 800 people attended 16 free info sessions
- Over 220 systems sold
- Customer survey results:
 - 87% attended info session
 - >80% expectations met, 84% thought good value
 - 97% said installer were professional
 - 90% have changed energy use patterns
 - 40% interested in adding batteries, 25% want more panels



GEELONG COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM

REPLACING BIG ENERGY WITH COMMUNITY SOLAR



Climate Safe Rooms Project

- ▶ VIC grant funded project - offering free home energy upgrades for low-income households where at least one resident receives home care support services for an existing chronic health condition that puts them at risk from heatwaves and extreme cold.
- ▶ Progress to date:
 - 16 households recruited
 - 16 Scorecard assessments & First Rate assessments completed
 - Currently working through retro-fit plans, quotes and budgeting
 - 8 SSH sensor systems installed



**Climate
Safe Rooms**

Building resilience to extreme weather



What's next for CORE Geelong

- ▶ Replicate CORE Geelong One asap
- ▶ Awaiting tender re. Energy Savvy Upgrades
- ▶ Pathways to community owned solar garden/wind farm
- ▶ Barwon Region Alliance for Community Energy
- ▶ Collaboration with Deakin on community microgrid?
- ▶ Community Power Hub?



GS new social enterprise

- ▶ Established in June 2019, and we've just appointed first EO
- ▶ Big step for GS that will consume most of our equity
- ▶ Objective to become more sustainable as an organisation
- ▶ Profits will support our mission and other activities
- ▶ Will offer home energy ratings and other services, not currently available in our region
- ▶ PLUS look for new opportunities

greenlight



Where next for Community Energy in VIC?

- ▶ GS supports C4CE plan to grow the CE sector
- ▶ GS believes in people power & energy democracy
- ▶ All Victorians should have access to renewable energy
- ▶ VIC is national leader in community energy: 50/105 groups
- ▶ Gov't should set a Community Energy Target
- ▶ Scale up regional Community Power Hub Pilot
- ▶ Set up 6 Power Hubs in each DELWP region incl. Barwon
- ▶ Support knowledge sharing amongst CE groups to grow capacity
- ▶ Fund a solar garden pilot - solar benefit stays with person as they move & pilot communities zero-net emissions plans

embark trading as **C4CE ENERGY** COALITION FOR COMMUNITY



GS insights & capacity lessons

- ▶ GS membership income doesn't cover operating costs: web hosting, mail client, PL, Volunteer Accident Insurance & Prof Indemnity
- ▶ Time spent applying for & acquitting grants is often excessive
- ▶ Volunteer burnout is a major risk - lost committee members
Some committee members are 'working' full-time - unsustainable
- ▶ Volunteer skills development & mentoring is very time consuming
- ▶ Some roles are beyond what can be expected of volunteers
Event Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Webmaster, Comms



GS insights & lessons learnt

- ▶ GS has no physical premises, committee members work from home offices & our resources are stored in an ad hoc fashion
- ▶ We were amazed how much we achieved with our first PT paid project officer under NEJF projects
- ▶ Building pro bono advisory group of specialist technical, financial and legal experts
- ▶ Through VIC grants, we've improved our governance & policies and enhanced our website, social media presence and communications BUT there's always more to do
- ▶ Local Councils aren't able to offer much support or assistance
- ▶ There is a real lack of skilled people who can retrofit houses



How can Gov't support climate action?

- ▶ Not For Profits, (NFP's) like Geelong Sustainability can deliver on-ground climate action programs cost effectively
- ▶ NFP's need recurrent funding to support their activities and programs - like LandCare - a PT paid facilitator could enable them to plan properly & deliver various community engagement activities
- ▶ As community members NFP's can inform, inspire, nudge & challenge their peers more readily than council/gov't officers
- ▶ Gov't needs to provide vision pathways - inspire confidence in public that we can address the climate emergency effectively
- ▶ Employment and training must support framework so skilled people are ready to do work eg. Retrofitting & energy efficiency upgrades



Thank you!
Questions?

