

## **SUBMISSION RE ‘TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE IN VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES’**

Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group is a small community group concerned about the current environment, climate change and how Latrobe Valley can make a smooth transition to a non-fossil fuel-based economy. It is the responsibility of everyone to do what they can to ensure a liveable planet for current and future generations.

The group was formed in 2007 and has 170 members on email list but only a few active members. Being an environmentalist in Latrobe Valley is not easy but we try to raise issues of climate change and transition whenever the opportunity arises. We interact with other local environmental groups and city based organisations such as Environment Victoria and BZE.

### **REPRESENTATION**

LVSG is represented at Gippsland Climate Change Network, and many community consultations such as Latrobe Valley Authority, Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Strategy, AGL Community Dialogue Group, Engie Rehabilitation and Australian Paper energy to waste. We also interact with various renewable energy proposals such as Star of the South, Delburn Wind, Frasers Lane Solar Farm and LO3 LV microgrid.

### **INFORMATION**

Monthly meetings are held at which we generally invite a guest speaker to present information of a topical nature, such as hydrogen production, waste management and energy efficient housing.

### **ACTIONS**

- We have held rallies in support of action on climate change, the last one being on Friday 23 Sept to oppose development of the Adani coal mine and the consequent increase of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- We have participated in several large city-based climate marches and support the School Strike for Climate days.
- We have attended markets to have the opportunity to speak to shoppers.
- We recently held a screening of the movie 2040 which was attended by 170 people.
- We have spoken to Latrobe City Council about environmental issues.
- We attempted to save a stand of threatened Strzelecki Gums at the most easterly edge of their habitat. Road widening was ultimately considered more important than an alternative design which would save the gums and the important habitat provided for many species along the Latrobe River.
- We have participated in Keep Australia Beautiful cleanup and Tree Day plantings.

## **ADVOCACY**

- Letters to the editor are a major means of advocacy for local issues.
- A number of submissions to Parliamentary Inquiries have been made eg EPA review of power station licences.
- We also support Environment Justice Australia in their efforts to reduce air pollution from coal fired power stations.
- Interaction with traditional and social media

## **HOW CAN THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT LVSG?**

There are many things which would support LVSG in our desire for a future liveable climate. Many of these are covered by the Climate Change Act 2017. I would highlight the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and development of renewable energy. Energy efficient buildings and appliances are an obvious way to reduce energy demand.

- In the local context, having renewable energy projects in Latrobe Valley/Gippsland area would demonstrate to the general population that energy alternatives are viable and the local economy can diversify and still retain employment.
- A transition plan is essential to the smooth, organised phase-out of coal fired power stations, and to a lesser extent, gas facilities.
- Latrobe Valley Authority should be funded to continue until all power stations are closed as the need for worker transition and retraining continues until final closure.
- Reforestation and sustainable/regenerative agriculture can assist in carbon absorption and water management. Composting and food waste/green waste handling reduces methane emissions and can produce fertilisers for agriculture.
- Government incentives for Electric Vehicle purchase will encourage adoption of cleaner transport. In rural areas public transport is not a viable option and a charging network must be available even though many people will charge at home.

Thank you for receiving our submission and showing that Australia can act to reduce the global climate threat.

Lorraine Bull, President Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]