

# climate change

## OUR GOALS:

1. Increase community awareness about Climate Change and strengthen community's capacity to respond.
2. Demonstrate an annual improvement in reduced carbon footprint of Council's operations.
3. For Council to be recognised as a carbon responsible organisation.

Council has reduced energy use in the Civic Administration Building (CAB) by 35% (from 2009-2013). The CAB is the 3rd biggest energy-user of all of Council's buildings and facilities, accounting for 11% of total energy use.

Council has reduced waste generated in the CAB by 70% (from 2011-2013).

These initiatives reduce our carbon emissions and each year save Council about \$35K. Council continues to focus on reducing the energy and waste 'footprints' of its buildings, facilities and general operations.

## ARMIDALE IS PART OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CONVERSATION

In October 2013 UNE hosted a Global Climate Conversation with Al Gore, a live global event covering every region in the world. The event, called 24 Hours of Reality was for people around the world to discuss shared challenges and the future. The aim was to make climate change a personal priority for people everywhere and to make 'audiences become activists'.

## CLIMATE RALLY IN CENTRAL PARK

In November 2013 over 300 people attended a Climate Rally in Central Park in Armidale. The event aligned with the National Day of Climate Action and the Global Peoples' Climate March. On that day Armidale joined people around the world to focus on Climate Change and what it means for the future.

## 'CLIMATE' A NEW GROUP FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING ARMIDALE (SLA)

In April 2014, following the National Day of Climate Action, Colin Hargreaves formed a new action group in the SLA called simply "Climate" in line with the names of other action groups.

Colin Hargreaves attended the CANA (Climate Action Network of Australia) public event entitled "Australia's Forecast: Beyond drought and flooding rains" held in Parliament House in Sydney as well as the ensuing CANA conference also in Sydney, entitled "Generating groundswell: Harnessing our knowledge and unleashing our energy".

Colin reported to SLA's Climate group on the conference reaction to the latest IPCC report: Impacts Adaptation and Vulnerability" which was released in Japan on 31 March and facilitated discussion on the implications for Armidale and Australia and what the SLA group can do.

*Colin Hargreaves*

## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

On Saturday 18 October 2014, a national day of action to address climate change was organised by 350.org Australia and Market Forces. In Armidale, this event was coordinated by local resident Mr Tom Livanos.

Divestment Day is a campaign which empowers bank depositors to take responsibility for mitigating climate change and move the economy to one which is powered by renewable forms of energy.

Those with deposits in Australia's 'Big Four' banks - ANZ Bank, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, National Australia Bank and Westpac Bank - were invited to withdraw their deposits and write in to the respective bank explaining why the withdrawal is taking place. The latter is that, since 2008, these banks have financed tens of billions of dollars to fossil fuel companies. At the same time, international accounting firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers has stated that 80% of known fossil fuel reserves must remain in the ground to prevent high impact climate change.

Local organiser Mr Livanos, with past education and experience in banking and financial services, understands that Australia (and the wider world) operate under a Fractional Reserve banking system. This means that for every dollar withdrawn, multiple dollars are denied to a bank to loan out in the economy.

The day was a success and included awareness raising in the local media as well as interest and actual withdrawals within the Armidale community. Further Divestment Days, of an international magnitude are planned for 2015 and beyond.

*Tom Livanos*

## GREEN THUMBS AT ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Green Thumbs have continued to implement the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program at school. We have a healthy kitchen garden that we use to cook with once a month. We have a garden lesson once each

week. The children are enjoying the fresh produce and learning about things that they can do to help the environment.

The Green Thumbs continue to be involved with the local Landcare activities and celebrated schools Tree Day with activities at Black Gully with lots of other school kids from Armidale.

The children are enthusiastic and committed to our programs at school and are sharing their knowledge with other children at school and their families. Go Green Thumbs! Check out the video by students at St Mary's on the Lifestyle 2350 YouTube Channel.

*Katie Biddle, Teacher at St Mary's*

## NEW ENGLAND WIND

New England Wind organised a 4-day Windfarm Tour in November 2013 in which 21 people travelled by coach from Armidale to Canberra. Councillors, teachers and students, farmers and environmental activists were on the bus to Canberra.

"There is nothing better than first hand experience to see, hear and learn about the workings of modern windfarms," according to Project Director, Adam Blakester.

"In the last few years there has been questions raised about wind power, such as negative noise and health impacts. The Tour provided an opportunity to sort out the facts from the myths."

"The Windfarms Tour included Woodlawn and Capital Windfarms, as well as two private landholders with wind turbines on their properties," added Blakester.

"The Tour had a strong educational focus about the benefits and impacts of wind power as well as implications for farming operations."

The New England High Country has several approved windfarms awaiting construction and several more in planning, including New England Wind's project to develop the first community-owned windfarm in NSW. The region is an identified Renewable Energy Precinct due to its high quality wind resources.

The major sponsor of the Tour was the NSW Government Office of Environment & Heritage, with sponsorship from The Earth Welfare Foundation, AGL Energy Limited Australia's largest private owner and operator of renewable energy assets and New England Mutual.

## NSW GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR RENEWABLES

In July 2013 Farming the Sun and New England Wind received grant funding of \$35,000 from the NSW government to develop projects for solar and windfarms. New England Wind received \$50,000 for site negotiations, feasibility modelling and a comprehensive community engagement and education program.

Member for Tamworth, Kevin Anderson, announced the State Government funding packages totalling \$85,000 on behalf of Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Robyn Parker, at a New Energy Forum held in Tamworth. Around 70 people were in attendance at the Forum.

Mr Anderson reiterated the NSW Government's commitment to achieving 20% renewable energy for electricity by 2020 and said: "There is an opportunity for NSW to lead on community renewable energy."