

Mount Alexander Sustainability Group

Member Newsletter update, Nov 11th, 2009.

MASG News and Events.

Office Move Update. Some mighty good news!

The MA Shire has kindly offered MASG the use of the old police station at 37 Hargraves St Castlemaine! (Formerly the Parks Vic. Office). We will be sharing the space with the 'Connecting Country' folk, and hope to know soon when the building will be ready for occupancy. Watch this space.

Solar PV program making good progress:

The current MASG solar PV program is progressing well with more than 50 systems installed out of 110 participants in the first installation group. Initially there were a few minor problems including the equipment being slower to arrive than expected and a few delays due to rain but Steve Breheny and his team are now powering along and getting quicker all the time. With the current rate of progress, the first installation group is due to be completed by mid December and the equipment for the second installation group has now been ordered with installation expected to commence as soon as it arrives.

Maines power final report and update

The Maines Power project saw MASG work with the CSIRO and our Shire's four main employers to investigate ways to reduce their greenhouse footprints by 30% by 2010 whilst increasing energy security for the area. Although the project is now completed MASG continues to monitor its impact. To date Castlemaine Health (ex Mt Alexander Hospital) is on target to meet the 30% target and has reduced their energy usage by 7 % last year and a further 12% this year and is getting 15% of its electricity from renewable energy (Green Power). Don KRC is implementing some onsite energy generation (Co Generation) and combined with some energy efficiency initiatives should see them exceed the target and reduce their emissions by over 50% per kg of product produced.

A summary of the project and final report is available on our website http://masg.org.au/?page_id=140 or by contacting Dean on dc@masg.org.au

MASG members finding value in free home sustainability assessments:

The free home sustainability assessments being offered by MASG as part of the federal government's Greenloan program have proven to be useful to members that have registered their interest so far. For some

it has allowed them to make an extra donation to MASG, for others, it has been a valuable source of information and for others, accessing the interest free loan will enable them to fund capital investments in various energy efficiency products and services.

If the idea of a free home energy assessment appeals for any of these reasons, please ring MASG on 5470 6978 or book your assessment through the central Greenloan booking service on 1800 895076.

Advocacy Update

Walk against warming

12pm Saturday 12 December State Library, Swanston Street
Walk Against Warming is Australia's biggest day of community action on climate change. The Melbourne event will begin at 12pm, Saturday 12 December at the State Library, Swanston Street. As World Leaders are gathering to discuss what action they are prepared to take on climate change, we'll be walking down Swanston Street to Princes Bridge, where we'll form a giant human sign to send them a message that Australians want a safe climate future. Details at www.waw.org.au

NSW gets a gross solar feed in tariff....at a cost of \$2 per household per year! In stark contrast to Mr Bachelor's complicated nett solar feed in tariff, the Labor government in NSW has announced a Gross solar feed in tariff for households. One of the main reasons cited by the NSW government included its ability to increase employment in regional areas (estimated extra 22,000 jobs) and the modest cost increase (on average an extra \$2 per year on electricity bills). The NSW tariff should allow householders to pay off their panels in around 8 years.

With the number of solar installations being ordered stalling in Victoria after the axing of the federal rebate scheme and the suspension of the solar in Schools program, it is a good time to write to our member Mr Bob Cameron and the energy minister Mr Bachelor and ask them why Victoria doesn't have a similar gross feed in tariff scheme.

For more information see <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/rees-takes-a-shine-to-solar-panel-incentive-20091109-i5gt.html>

Good news yes, but those phantom credits keep sneaking up on us....some thoughts on this from Dr. Mark Diesendorf
"This news is a real step forward for residential solar electricity. But it is a backward step for large-scale wind power, because, under the federal government's Solar Credits Scheme, each residential solar electricity system installed is initially counted as 5 systems in its contribution to the expanded 20% Renewable Energy Target (RET): one real system and 4 'phantom' systems. This leaves less 'space' for other larger renewable power to gain a subsidy from the RET."

Write to our federal member Mr. Steve Gibbons asking him to amend the RET legislation so as to not count the phantom RECS towards the Renewable Energy Target and let Dean know what he says.

Port Phillip Rising - Sea Level Rise Walk - November 21 - 27 2009

People are invited to walk to highlight the impact of sea level rise on our communities and around the world. The organisers are walking to demand real action on climate change and climate justice.

We are walking the eastern side of Port Phillip Bay leaving Sorrento on the Mornington Peninsula and heading north along the coast, marking the potential sea level rise where we can with a simple marker (a stick with piece of blue ribbon). We will walk between 15 and 20 kilometres a day.

For more information see <http://www.portphilliprising.org/join>

Climate polluting industries get serious and spend up big.....not on reducing emissions, but on employing lobbyists to get them exemptions.

A fascinating story by the Sydney Morning Herald has revealed the enormous number of people being employed by some of Australia's dirtiest industries as lobbyists....and the incredible backgrounds and influence they have. The SMH has compiled a climate change lobby register, which totals up to 98 pages, and lists Australia's biggest companies employing ex Ministers, Advisors, and Spouse's of acting advisors or ministers and others of State and Federal governments across Australia. For a copy of the "who's who" in polluting Australia see http://www.smh.com.au/pdf/climatechange_lobbyingregister.pdf

While the people get active....

Mind you while the polluters are spending up big the grass roots action groups like MASG are doing big actions. This month's climate action calendar for Victoria runs to 19 pages and includes over 70 events. If you want to subscribe to the calendar or post an event contact Monique Decortis decortis@bigpond.net.au and write "subscribe CAC" as the subject.

Events organised by other groups

Central Victoria Solar City

Launch of Central Victoria Solar City project and opening of Solar Parks

Help celebrate the opening of the Solar Parks and launch of the Central Victoria Solar City Project at the *Plug into Solar* Community event.

Plug into Solar is a vibrant community event where you can take guided Solar Park tours, get information on how to sign up for the Parks and other Central Victoria Solar City packages, pick up free

energy tips and tricks from experts in the field and enjoy great local food and entertainment *plus* be in the running to receive giveaways.

About the Solar Park Tours:

Take a guided tour of the Solar Park including information on:

- How the PV panels operate
- How the Solar Park works
- How renewable energy can be used to help meet your energy needs

Mark your diary

This combination of free guided Solar Park tours, a first look at the project's Local Energy Solution Packages and access to energy efficiency tips, tricks and product information will only be available on Saturday November 21st at Bendigo Solar Park and Saturday November 28th at Ballarat Solar Park from 12.30- 3pm.

When	<i>Bendigo</i> Saturday November 21 st 12.30-3.00pm	<i>Ballarat</i> Saturday November 28 th 12.30-3.00pm
Where	Cnr Wallanjoe Rd and Adelaide Hills Rd, Huntly VIC 3551 VicRoads Map 600 B10 (next to the livestock exchange)	Off Airport Rd Ballarat Airport Ballarat VIC 3350 VicRoads Map 561 M9

For more information visit www.centralvictoriasolarcity.com.au or call 03 5479 1900.

Mount Alexander Friends of Lolotoe Timor Leste Inc. invite you to a fundraiser

Exclusive screening of "Balibo" at theatre Royal on 22nd November 11am for BBQ , auction and stalls. Film at 1pm.

Rural Women's Gathering

All women in Mount Alexander Shire who are interested in growing and eating food we can produce locally in this time of great change are invited to share ideas, stories, skills, song, laughter and delicious locally produced food with other women in our wonderful community The Rural Women's Gathering is on **Tuesday 17th November 10.00am – 2.30pm at Bell's Retreat** (Cheryl Dingle's amazing church out of Maldon). A tour of Cheryl's abundant Permaculture food garden is available to anyone who is interested at 9.00am (bookings essential!) Contact Phillipa on 5471 1744 or p.calwell@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

Urban Donkey – bicycle exhibition.

Pedalling machines brought to life for merriment and pleasure.
Synergy gallery, 253 high st. Northcote. Nov 17 to 29th.

Interesting Information and Links

A great leap forward on E- waste. (Environment Victoria campaign news item)

Great news from today's meeting of environment ministers in Perth. The federal government has announced that they will introduce a national recycling scheme for televisions and computers.

This is a fantastic win, and you helped make it happen.

By email and by postcard, Peter Garrett got the message loud and clear that Australian's want e-waste to be recycled.

It goes to show what people power is capable of.

We've posted Garrett's press release, with what details we have, here:

<http://rebornewaste.wordpress.com/>

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So, what's next?

Once the scheme is in place there'll be no excuse for not recycling TVs and computers.

So we think that state governments should ban this material from going to landfill.

South Australia is leading the way on this issue and has already got regulations in train.

If you want the Victorian Government to do their bit, email the Victorian Environment Minister Gavin Jennings

<<http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/content/tell-minister-gavin-jennings-ban-disposal-tvs-and-computers-landfill>> .

Connecting Country - Your photographs, your stories ...

MASG member Deanna Neville is helping a local program called *Connecting Country* with a photo project for people with woodlands on their properties and neighbouring land. The photos and stories will be collated into a small booklet to show the extraordinary trees and landscapes in our Shire. All contributions will be included so please forward this to others you know who will be interested. For more contact Deanna deanna@focusoncommunity.org or call M 0428 751 090.

And more on photographs

The National Museum of Australia recently launched Changing Places, an online project aiming to generate discussion about the cultural dimensions of climate change. Changing Places invites people to upload contemporary or historic photos that show how anthropogenic climate change is changing places they know and love.

Have a look at the site:

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/changingplaces/>.

Changing Places offers a rare opportunity to discuss the cultural and emotional dimensions of global climate change, at the local and national level.

For more information contact Greg Main, Curator of the National Museum of Australia via g.main@nma.gov.au



MASG would like to thank the Strategem Financial Group for their ongoing financial support. Strategem provide our annual financial audit at a reduced rate. They provide a full range of financial services to cater for all your accounting, taxation and wealth creation needs. You can contact them on 03 5445 4777 or info@strategem.com.au for professional financial assistance.

***MASG's E News** was brought to you by Dean and Mike, with volunteer assistance. If you would like to advertise an event or comment on any items, please send to: e-news@masg.org.au or PH: 5470 6978. Address. Anglican Church Hall, South of Church at Agitation Hill, No 8. Mostyn St.*