

Mount Alexander Sustainability Group

Member Newsletter, April 15th 2010

Key Dates

- *Friday 30th April, 5.30-8pm Castlemaine Town Hall, Solar PV program celebration*
- *Sunday May 2nd, Castlemaine Railway station. 11 Am. 100% renewable energy campaign launch.*
- *Wednesday May 6th, Theatre Royal 6pm. Letter writing group*

MASG News and Events

Solar PV program celebration

Over 270 families have installed PV systems with MASG and they will be gathering at the Castlemaine Town Hall, April 30th starting at 5.30pm to celebrate the solarisation of Mt Alexander and learn some tips and pointers on operating their systems. We are asking people to bring along a plate to share.

Growing the Harvest Festival: 10th & 11th April.

"A wonderful growing the harvest celebration." "Real food! And great presenters!" "thrilling to learn all these back to basic food preparation skills!" These are just some of the comments we had from participants at the weekend of workshops, displays and celebration of the Harvest. So congratulations to everyone involved in organising the Growing the Harvest Festival.

The team who put this event together consisted of Katie Finlay, Debbie Taylor, Deanna Neville, Sally Kaptein, Helena Read, Peter Sansom and Heather Barrett.....and there were too many other volunteers on the day to mention everyone. However each and every volunteer minute, hour and day is hugely appreciated as everyone's help made the event successful. The bread making, yoghurt making, fermented foods and preserving fruit workshops were particularly well attended. The olive crushing, cider making and wheat grinding, all by bicycle power, held a captive audience. There were also lots of people interested in the displays and demonstrations. Rowan's soup served at the Harvest Café has become a total hit and we would like to thank **Sprout Bakery and Redbeard Bakery** for generously donating the bread for the Sunday Harvest Lunch. It was truly heart-warming to be part of the finale on the Sunday with young and old sharing lunch and singing harvest songs led by Thais Sansom. A weekend of workshops, displays and celebration of the Harvest.

And a note from Bronwen Machin, MASG's chair: special thanks to Heather for being the convener and heart of this event. Her dedicated and thorough behind-the-scenes work and generous heart created the stage for all the team who did an awe-inspiring job.

MASG Committee news & Report on the Members meeting and catch-up of 14 April

About 20 stalwart members of MASG gathered to hear Dean speak the National Climate summit in Canberra about a month ago. His report of what happened in Canberra can be found [here](#). Speakers strongly supported actions that local communities can take to promote the benefits of renewable energy, such as meeting local members of parliament and speaking with neighbours and friends. A national door knocking day is being planned, as well as a day of actions to promote renewable energy. This day will be May 2 and MASG members are invited to appear at the railway station at 11am to be photographed before a sign. Anyone interested in joining active advocacy groups should contact Dean at MASG.

Members put searching questions to Bronwen Machin, the interim chair of MASG. Their questions indicated the depth of their support for MASG staff, the need for the organisation to be as transparent as possible about why it is pursuing certain projects, and the need for clarity of decision making during this interim period. Members also indicated that they welcomed the proposed membership consultation and strongly suggested that it include consultation of staff, volunteers and other organisations.

Bron said that the Board had written a project brief in which they outlined three outcomes wanted from the review:

1. What the members think the focus of MASG should be.
2. How the organisation should be organised (policies, activities, skills, governance) to achieve this focus.
3. As part of the process of determining the above, the MASG Board would like membership engagement with a view to bringing wisdom, energy and enthusiasm into the organisation and its renewed focus

The Board is interviewing consultants next week and they will advise on the appropriate process. If any members has further questions please ring Bron on 0438 867 183.

100% renewable energy launch

MASG will be joining with over 50 other community groups from across Australia on Sunday 2nd of May to launch a community lead 100% renewable Australia campaign. We want you to come to the Castlemaine train station at 11am with a banner or notice that states your support for renewable energy. We will then be taking a photo of you all and your signs in front of the "CASTELEMAINE" sign on platform one....100% Renewables arriving soon in Mount Alexander !! These photos will then be part of a montage from across Australia as this campaign gets up and running.

More MASG work on renewable energy advocacy

This Saturday will kick off a regular renewable energy information table for MASG that will be outside of Stoneman's Bookroom on Saturday mornings. Drop by and thank Ian and the other volunteers for getting the word out, or even better, put yourself down to help out when you can.

Also the talented Letter writing group is up and writing, if you want to learn more and write letters please come along to the next gathering at the Theatre Royal on Wednesday May 5th at 6pm or ring Dean on 54 706978

IF you have a PV system please help the ATA

The ATA are assisting the Australian Photovoltaic Association (APVA) with a piece of research regarding feed-in tariff customers across Australia. They want people with PV to fill in a survey to collect data and information on your feed-in tariff arrangement with your electricity retailer. To enter the survey, please go to: www.surveymonkey.com/s/FiTsurvey

For more information contact Robert Passey from the APVA (r.passey@unsw.edu.au) or on 02 6688 4384. Otherwise, feel free to contact Damien Moyse at ATA (damien@ata.org.au) or on 03 9631 5417.

Events organised by other groups

Walk Against Want Sunday April 18th Castlemaine Botanic Gardens, set off between 11am and noon. You can walk or cycle 2 kames, 5 kames or 10 kames and donate money to support Oxfam Australia to alleviate poverty in Australia and overseas. Soup and bread will available after the walk/ride.

Castlemaine Landcare Group working bee

Cleaning up the plantings under the wooden footbridge opposite the Castle Motel, Start time will be 10am, with morning tea, courtesy of the Wesley Hill Bakehouse around 11.30am. For more information call Robin Haylett Castlemaine Landcare Group Projects Co-Ordinator 0408 706630 & 5470 6630

Heritage Houses in the 21st Century second session

Wednesday evening 7.15pm - 9.15pm on April 21 Phee Broadway Theatre in Castlemaine on **Caring for Heritage Houses**

Rod Quantock in Bendigo with new show "Bugger the Polar Bears"

Bendigo Sustainability Group have organised the show at the Bendigo Capital Theatre on Thurs April 29. For details see <http://www.bendigosustainability.org.au/>

The Future of the Grid: Integrating Energy Supply

Wednesday 21 April, 6.15–8.15pm, Carrillo Gantner Theatre, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, University of Melbourne. Speakers: Terry Jones (CSIRO), John Howarth (Australian Energy Market Operator), Simon Holmes à Court (Hepburn Wind), Dr Roger Dargaville (University of Melbourne), Panel expert: Matthew Wright (Beyond Zero Emissions), Chair: Robyn Williams (The Science Show, ABC)

Lot 19 Gallery April salon

Lots of great local artists, performances and "blow-ins" from April 17th to May 2nd, for the program see www.Lot19art.com

Latest science:

Carbon capture focus diverting Australia's energy potential

The pre-occupation with carbon capture and storage (CCS) by Australia's political and climate change leaders is forestalling the nation's potential transition from fossil fuels to optimal renewable energy, according to a visiting United Kingdom academic Professor Stefaan Simons, Professor of Chemical Engineering at University College London and Director of UCL's

Centre for CO₂Technology.

"One has to question whether carbon capture and storage from fossil-fuel fired power stations is the best way forward to achieving a low carbon economy," Professor Simons said. For more see

<http://news.envirocentre.com.au/co2/newsletter.php?issue=723#15236>

Interesting Information and Links

A Dirty Business

As part of the 4 Corners expose on coal mining called "A Dirty Business" a GP living in the Upper Hunter Valley of New South Wales said if health problems caused by pollution from open cut mining are ignored "it's the same as murder". Faced with a State Government that refuses to fund an independent study looking at the impact of coal mining and power station emissions on health, one local GP has decided he will do the work the Government won't fund. He's paying for the work himself. Nearly nine hundred school students are already part of his study. For more see

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/04/12/2869783.htm> or for a transcript of the 4 Corners show see <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/>

Quote

And if you wondered why we are so keen on taking action....its cause it makes us happy....oh yeah, it also saves the planet too....

"Action may not always bring happiness; but there is no happiness without action."

Benjamin Disraeli

MASG's E News was brought to you by Dean and 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 phone 5470 6978.

New Address. 37 Hargraves Street, Castlemaine, 3450.