

### From the President

Hi to all EnvA members and supporters,  
Welcome to the second edition of EnvA News!

There has been a lot happening on the climate scene across the world. Record flooding, severe storms and heatwaves have been the big ones for us here in Australia this year. It has been devastating for all those impacted by our warming climate, inducing more frequent 'un-natural' events.

"Concerted climate action was needed yesterday – but we can still take action to slow our emissions and slow this human-induced climate change."

Providing subsidies to the fossil fuel industry and letting them get away with low royalties and taxes is not the right direction. We, the taxpayers, face the costs of cleaning up after the floods and fires, losing tourism income when our iconic places are damaged, and we personally have to deal with sky rocketing insurance premiums.

We need to get our governments to take stronger action to secure our future and our environment.

In this EnvA News, you will hear of some of the positive outcomes that have been achieved when the community speaks out.

If you too want to speak out for climate action, we'd love to have you on board as an EnvA member.

If you know someone that might be interested, please send them this news.

Many voices can and will make a difference!

James York  
President



### A huge win for the environment and us!

#### The Queensland Land Court has recommended that Clive Palmer's Galilee thermal coal mine project be refused!

Youth Verdict and the Bimblebox Alliance successfully challenged the project with the assistance of the Environmental Defenders Office on the grounds it would destroy the Bimblebox Nature Refuge, would pose an unacceptable risk to the climate, and that human rights of First Nations People would be negatively impacted as a result.

Land Court President Fleur Kingham, in handing down her decision, made some persuasive statements which set some precedents for all new or expanding coal mines:

✦ As a matter of law, I have decided I can take the emissions into account in applying the principles of ecologically sustainable development and in considering whether the applications are in the public interest.

✦ This case is about Queensland coal, mined in Queensland, and exported from Queensland to be burnt in power stations to generate electricity. Wherever the coal is burnt the emissions will contribute to environmental harm, including in Queensland.

✦ The impact of subsistence from underground mining is uncertain, but it is likely the Bimblebox Nature Refuge will be lost and the ecological values seriously and possibly irreversibly damaged.

✦ Bimblebox owners would have their rights to property, privacy and home impacted, while associated climate change would limit Queenslanders' rights to life, property, privacy and home, and the rights of children and the cultural rights of First Nations peoples.

You can read the full judgement [here](#).



Photo credit: Malcolm Paterson

# Coal and climate in CQ

## Did you know?

- There are over 70 approved and operating coal mines in Central Queensland
- A further two coal projects (Fairhill and Wilton) have recently been approved and 12 more currently going through the assessment process.

EnvA will continue to advocate for no new coal mines in Central Queensland. The existing coal mines produce sufficient coal to meet our domestic and export needs for many years and every new or expanding project is contributing to the worsening of the climate crisis.

Here is an introduction to a couple of the projects open for public comment at the moment.

## Whitehaven's Winchester South coal project

Whitehaven was sent back to the drawing board to revise the Environmental Impact Statement for their Winchester South project address the hundreds of comments and concerns raised by government departments, scientific committees, and the community.



New coal projects, like Whitehaven's Winchester South coal mine in Qld, increase risks to the endangered greater glider's chances of survival across Australia.

Whitehaven have now committed to reducing their carbon emissions by encouraging employees to carpool or take a mini-bus to work, and maintaining their diesel engines - quite laughable really!

They are also looking at reducing their emissions by using carbon-neutral electricity. This means they will be using our cleaner, cheaper renewable energy towards creating over 580 million tonnes of CO2 emissions.

This also means that the cheaper energy will be unavailable to us regular Queenslanders – we will have to rely on the dirty and expensive fossil fuels and also pay for the recovery of climate induced disasters- so wrong!

[Submissions on the revised EIS](#) are due on 19 December 2022 if your keen!

## Vitrinite's Vulcan Coal

Vitrinite proposes additional infrastructure to be located adjacent to their current Vulcan Mine Complex. This will include a Coal Handling and Processing Plant, a rail loop and a new open cut pit called the 'Matilda pit'.

The proposal is now with the Federal Environment minister to decide whether this is a 'controlled action' and needs to be assessed at both State and federal levels.

Vitrinite considers that the project will need to be assessed under the federal environmental legislation (the EPBC Act) as threatened species and ecosystems, migratory species and water will be directly impacted. But the science tells us that climate change exacerbated by the fossil fuel industry impacts on many more matters of national environmental significance!

The referral is [open for public comment](#) until 8 December 2022.

## Living Wonders - a win!

As reported in the last newsletter, the Environment Council of Central Queensland (EcoCeQ), with the help of Environmental Justice Australia, submitted requests for the reconsideration of 19 coal and gas proposals on the basis that the climate risks to our living wonders is contrary to their protection and management required by law.

## The Federal Environment Minister, Tanya Plibersek agreed!

I know that lots of EnvA members made submissions on many or all the projects – thank you so much! Word has it that there were thousands of submissions which is a great indication that Australian's care about the impact of climate change on our special wildlife and their habitats.



**"We were so pleased that the Minister listened to the legal argument and took notice of the huge amount of evidence we provided her."**

**"Now we hope that she takes the next step and makes the proponents provide detail on how they will protect our Living Wonders."**

*Christine Carlisle, President of EcoCeQ*





# Coal versus Coral

The [UN Reef monitoring mission](#) report was finally released at the end of last month.

Not surprisingly, the report concludes that the Reef is in trouble with climate change, water quality and fishing as the big issues raised.

The UN acknowledged that climate change adaptation strategies (such as research into coral restoration) are well progressed, but Australia does not have clear climate change targets and implementation measures to keep global warming to a level to protect the Reef.

**"It is time for government to slow the fossil fuel industry and really cut emissions if they are serious about saving the Reef"**

The report also notes the frequent mass bleachings and increased water acidity were providing a growing threat to the Reef, but not enough progress has been made to achieve targets set out in the [Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan](#).

This brings us to the issue of the contribution of coal mines to the water quality in the reef catchments.

When we experience high rainfall events, coal mines are authorised to release some of their mine water to local creeks which ends up heading to the Reef. There are considerations about the amount and quality of both the mine water and the receiving water on the basis that the 'dilution' of the pollution is acceptable.

In the last two weeks we have seen up to five mines releasing at the same time. With a high rainfall season expected this summer, we might see many mines releasing into the Fitzroy River catchment which will not help the water quality issues that the Reef is facing.

It is just another reason that new and expanding coal mines should not be approved – our Reef needs climate action and improvements to water quality.

You can follow the Fitzroy Basin mine water releases [here](#).

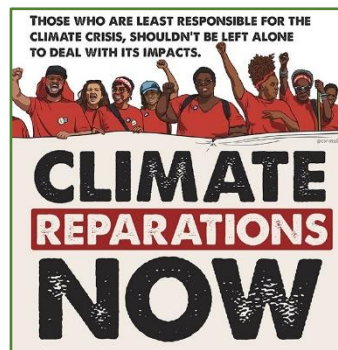
# The State of the Climate in Australia

## COP 27

The 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 27) meet in Egypt in November to progress climate action.

It was a little disappointing in not moving forward with a plan to keep the global temperature increase to 1.5°C and some countries wanting to wriggle out of previous commitments.

The biggest and most significant outcome was breakthrough agreement for the developing nations to provide "loss and damage" funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters.

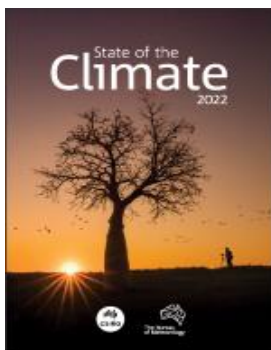


**"The COP outcomes are just another example that climate change impacts come at an economic and social cost.**

**"It doesn't matter where the coal comes from or where it is burnt, it significantly impacts on the innocent communities everywhere.**

**"It is time to transition away from fossil fuels before it is too late."**

## State of the Climate report



The [Bureau of Meteorology](#) and [CSIRO](#) work together to produce a report every two years on what is happening to Australia's climate.

The latest State of the Climate report came out last month. Some of the interesting findings:

- Australia has already warmed, on average, by about 1.45 °C since national records began in 1910
- The rate of CO<sub>2</sub> accumulation in the atmosphere has increased every decade since measurements began
- The amounts of atmospheric methane and nitrous oxides (nasty greenhouse gases) have grown rapidly in the last two years
- Sea surface temperatures around Australia have already warmed by over 1°C since 1900
- Global mean sea level has risen by around 12 cm since 1970

**In coming decades, Central Queensland is projected to experience:**

- Continued warming with more hot days and heatwaves
- Less winter rainfall
- Longer periods of drought
- A longer fire season and more dangerous fire weather days.

## Federal Labor's 'first climate statement'

Australia has recently legislated a 43% emission reduction target by 2030, but the emission projection report shows that we are on track to achieve 40% - a long way shy of the 74% emission reductions that scientists say is needed to keep global temperature rise to 1.5°C!

The Climate Change Authority has said that to achieve the 2030 and 2050 targets, we need to cut at least 17 million tonnes of carbon per year.

There is little chance of meeting the very low emission reduction targets, or the emission reductions we really need, if governments continue to approve new and expanding coal and gas projects.



## What's coming up soon?

### Qld Conservation Council's Environment Symposium

When: Thursday 8 December, 11am

Where: Online

What: An address from Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek in relation to the plans for environmental reform in Queensland.

### Capricorn Caves and Capricorn Conservation Council event

When: Saturday 10 December, 3pm

Where: Capricorn Caves

What: Tree planting, weeding, a swim in the pool and some presentations over a sausage or two (vegan too!)

### EnvA members chat session

When: Wednesday 14 December, 5.30-6.30pm

Where: Online or in Yeppoon

What: A chance for EnvA members to catch up, hear what is happening, find out about member's interests and how we can continue to grow our voice in Central Queensland. RSVP to [enva.cq@outlook.com](mailto:enva.cq@outlook.com) for more details.

## Summer festivities

Wishing everyone health and happiness over the summer festive season.

Enjoy whatever you have planned, and try your best to do something for our precious environment – there is no Planet B!

Take care of yourselves and others.



## Get involved

### Here is how you can help EnvA and the environment:

★ **Become a member:** It is free and numbers count! You'll also be included in all our member newsletters and get invitation to all our general meetings and events.

★ **Volunteer:** Whatever your skills, we would love to have you onboard!

**To join and/or volunteer, please complete the form below and return to EnvA's email address.**

★ **Like and follow us on social media:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/EnvACQ>

★ **Donate:** Any donations will really help keep EnvA alive and active. Donations can be made via direct deposit to EnvA's donation account:

Name: Environmental Advocacy in Central Qld

BSB: 814 282

Acct: 51497572

Ref: [your name]

## Make a difference

**EnvA - CQ**



Environmental advocacy  
in Central Queensland

## Membership and volunteer application

☐ New membership ☐ Volunteer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I/We agree to support Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland's constitution, policies and procedures.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please send you completed membership application to [enva.cq@outlook.com](mailto:enva.cq@outlook.com)