

Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle

President's Annual Report 2018-19



Overview

Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle, now in its fourteenth year, has worked mainly in two areas: continuing to engage with our committed – and new – supporters to provide information about the climate crisis and reactions to it; and bringing our views to the attention of politicians and government, by formal meetings as well as by rallies and demonstrations. The work of nationally-based organisations such as StopAdani, 350.org and the SchoolStrike4Climate has become an increasing aspect of our campaigning.

This year, Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle was recognised with the **Most Outstanding Member Group** award from the Nature Conservation Council.

Campaigns and Activities

Outreach activities

We've held over 20 "outreach" activities through the year.

We began in July with two pilots of the **One Million Conversations** project in Five Dock, trying out both doorknocking and shopping centre conversations. We also took the conversations out in Balmain, Five Dock again, and Rhodes, twice, before the weather got too hot.

We participated as usual in the **Footprints Eco-festival** in Whites Creek Park again in August. On this occasion we collected signatures on our "Get on to Gladys" and "Let Luke know" letters (asking for clear climate policies for the 2019 state election), which were subsequently posted in many small batches to the respective leaders; and we circulated through the crowd with our Climate Conversations.

In September a few CCBR supporters attended **Rise Up for Climate** rallies at Cronulla and Ryde, as well as the spectacular tallship sailing in Sydney Harbour dressed with 350.org's Rise Up for Climate message hoisted over its mainsail.

Over the year we have been happy to support a couple of CCBR and StopAdani Sydney members in establishing a new group **Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay**, covering much of the area between ourselves and Parramatta Climate Action Network (ParraCAN).

CCBR members were out in support of the first **#SchoolStrike4Climate** in December, and promoted the second strike in March with a photoshoot in Rozelle, and flyer handouts to parents outside local primary schools.

In February we joined a group protesting outside a meeting of the Minerals Council attended by Adani's Australian chief, Lucas Dow.

We doorknocked along Darling St on 3 occasions, encouraging businesses and residents to get **Stop Adani** signs up, and went to Orange Grove on 3 more occasions to get them out in the community.

As the March state election approached, we researched and printed **candidate comparison flyers**, which we handed out at computer stops across the electorate. And we joined with other local organisations (Balmain Institute, Balmain Association and Friends of Callan Park) in organising and hosting the **Candidate Forum** at Balmain Town Hall. At many of these events, we had our **Postcards to Pollies** ready to send with personalised messages.

For the **Federal election** we supported the School Strikers once more in their rally at Anthony Albanese's electorate office in Marrickville. Apart from this though, we recognised that Grayndler is a very safe Labor seat, so focused on the more marginal Reid electorate. As well as joining Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay at Strathfield Festival and for doorknocks in Croydon, we held our own conversation sessions at Wareemba in the Abbotsford area. Then we adopted Drummoyne for a doorknock, blitz of commuter stops, and a final push at voting booths to do our best to Make 2019 the Climate Election. Comparison flyers this time were a joint effort between ourselves and Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay.

Our election campaign steered a fine line. CCBR is strictly non-partisan, so our advice to voters was to examine the policies and make their choice for the strongest climate action. Both elections had disappointing results: although in the state election the sitting Greens member for Balmain Jamie Parker increased his majority.

Our "active crew" is constantly changing, but over the year we've had almost 40 individuals putting their hands up to get out and talk to people – or to back up with their particular skills, including photography, catering and film-making.

Contact with politicians

We followed up our campaign of letters to Anthony Albanese with a meeting at his office to discuss a range of issues, including the Adani mine.

We also met with State Greens member for Balmain Jamie Parker, and with State Labor candidate for Balmain Ellie Howse (together with Adam Searle, shadow minister for climate change) to go through a list of points that CCBR had developed at a Climate Meetup. At Inner West Council we spoke in support of their declaration of a Climate Emergency (which was passed).

Meetings

Climate in the Pub

As our flagship event has become more established we have been able to attract several significant speakers, who have discussed climate issues from a range of perspectives: technological, political and practical. Over the year we have covered:

- 14 August 2018: **Save Money, Save Energy, Save Emissions**: Emma Daniel (Green Living Centre) and Anna Moltchanski (Our Energy Future)
- 9 October 2018: **Super at Risk - your Money and Climate Change**: Tim Buckley (IEEFA) and Kirstin Hunter (Future Super)
- 11 December 2018: **100% Renewables - how can NSW quit coal?** George Woods (Lock The Gate), Peter Sheldon (UNSW) and Nicky Ison (Community Power Agency)
- 12 February 2019: **Getting to Green - Transport Solutions for Climate Change** : Greg Bourne (Climate Council)
- 9 April 2019: **Paris in a Canter: Really?** Mark Diesendorf (UNSW)
- 11 June 2019: **Where to now?:** Brad Smith (NCC) and Nic Clyde (Lock The Gate)

Our **Environmental Grant** from Inner West Council covered the remainder of 2018, but otherwise the meetings are costing a little more than the money collected on the night. We are finding ways to reduce our expenses as well as to encourage donations.

Other organisations

In May we had a very successful joint meeting with the **Balmain Institute**, addressed by Will Steffen of the Climate Change Institute of ANU, on the subject of Rising Risks, Growing Challenges.

Through the year we have worked together on campaigns and activities with local **Stop Adani** groups: in fact CCBR acts as the Stop Adani group in Balmain-Rozelle area. Leadership and organisation from the small team at **Tipping Point** has been invaluable.

We continue as a member group of **Nature Conservation Council**, and participate in its Climate & Energy Working Group through regular online Zoom meetings. We are also members of **Climate Action Network Australia** (CANA) which also has regular Zoom meetings for its grassroots groups.

Climate Meetups

We started a new and more informal series of meeting in the months between Climate in the Pub, to involve supporters in developing ideas and plans for the group in a wider forum than just the committee. We also subscribed to the online Meetup platform, gaining more than 50 followers during the initial 6-month period. However, few of these seemed to translate into people actually at meetings, so we discontinued the subscription. The actual meetups, however, have proved a useful way of discussing issues for the group.

Committee

Our committee has met every month, and grapples with an increasingly busy agenda. We have spent some time streamlining the procedural necessities of running an incorporated association, but it has become clear that we need to engage more of our supporters in planning and assisting with activities. So in the coming year we will increase the open Meetups to every month, and reduce formal committee meetings to bi-monthly, to deal more briefly with internally-focussed administration.

Communications

Newsletters and email

Our **e-Newsletter** subscriber base continues to grow slightly, and is currently at 1,060, with a very low churn rate. We have circulated a full newsletter most months, with calendar items, reports, some analysis of current issues and links to news items, together with a similar number of reminders about individual events.

Mailchimp reports about a 28-29% open rate for our newsletters (good for the sector), but only 53% subscribers are "not engaged" – so we are reaching 47% with at least some of our emails.

Most new subscribers are entered via signups at our events – but 16 subscribed via our website while 25 people have joined our email list via the StopAdani website which directs interested people to their local group via postcodes. It's possible to identify the source of signups on the database, giving us the opportunity to promote particular events to particular segments of our followers, and this may be followed up more in the coming year.

Social Media

Our **Facebook Group** is open to all members to post. FB analytics show that 140 followers are active (posting comments or 'likes') though only about half a dozen people apart from the moderators ever post messages to it. We maintain an open policy: one member's posts for example, while recognising the climate crisis, are pro-nuclear, though most members of the group are firmly opposed. We feel this encourages thought and discussion by presenting a wider range of views within the range of climate policies. Views that clearly challenge the existence of a climate crisis however, would be deleted.

The 28-strong **ccbr-core** email group continues as before, but we would like to see more of our supporters actively posting on all our social media pages, including **Twitter**.

We have not yet overhauled our **website** as we had hoped to last year. While committee members have the relevant skills between them, we would make more progress with a dedicated, experienced web designer. However, the most-used pages are kept relevant and up-to-date. The site gets between 80 and 200 page views per week: the home page and Climate in the Pub are far and away the most visited.

Submissions

As usual we have continued with short snappy letters to the press (with regular success), and more detailed submissions to government inquiries, including:-

- Federal Government's "National Energy Guarantee Draft Detailed Design for Consultation, Commonwealth Elements,"
- Sen. Waters' Bill to ban mining Galilee coal
- A proposed extension to the Glendell coalmine
- Senate Inquiry into Fair Dinkum Power

The year ahead

In the wake of state and federal elections and inadequate actions by governments – but more so because of regular news of increasing climate chaos around the world - the topic of climate change has certainly moved up the public agenda. Surveys repeatedly show that the majority of the population want stronger government action to reduce emissions. The challenge for CCBR is to convert more of our impressively large list of newsletter readers into regular supporters, helpers and organisers; to work effectively with the growing number of other climate organisations; and so to continue to play a leading role in the climate movement in the inner west.

Acknowledgements

Our committee has an enviable range of experience and abilities, all of which have added strength to the group.

As Secretary, Rob Garnsey has brought order to our records as well as providing technical support at our pub meetings – ably backed up by Michael Johnson, who also brings clarity of thinking to our strategic discussions. Derek Bolton has provided much technical ability in writing submissions as well as looking after our finances as Treasurer. Meg Wallace has maintained an excellent relationship with our hosts at the Three Weeds. Jemima Garrett has brought her invaluable journalist's insights to our discussions with politicians.

No summary can do justice to the amount that Angela Michaelis, as Vice President has done over the year: most particularly in organising so many events, developing and maintaining our network of helpers and introducing our meetups but also in liaising with organisers through the movement.

We must also acknowledge the contributions of Alison Smith and Marie Stockdale, who joined the committee but were unable to continue through the year. And all those helpers with specific roles, occasional or ongoing, such as Patrick Harte who provides our PA system and support at the pub meetings, and Henry Dangar and Belinda Mason who have recorded and edited short videos for the group.

Dominic Case
President 2018-2019
