

The NSW Quit Coal + Clean Energy Community Action Kit

A resource to assist community members and groups in their efforts to tackle climate change and help NSW quit coal and develop clean energy, investment and jobs

GREENPEACE

Dangerous Climate Change: The most serious threat facing our state, and planet

The problem

The scientific consensus is in: climate change is real and it is the most serious threat facing our state, and planet. As NSW Premier Morris Iemma has said, "*The greatest threat to our environment and way of life comes from global climate change*". It is no longer possible to talk of some future time when the heating of the planet will begin to have adverse effects. That time is now - climate change is already happening.

Climate change is caused by an accumulation of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. The most abundant greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide (CO₂). CO₂ emissions come from the burning of fossil fuels like oil, coal and natural gas. Australia has the world's highest per capita emissions of the greenhouse pollution that causes climate change, mainly because of our coal and aluminium sectors. Greenhouse-polluting coal is used to generate almost 90% of our power.

NSW is on the frontline of climate change

Scientists warn of potentially severe impacts in Sydney and NSW from climate change in the coming years. Among them are:

- *More droughts:* NSW could see a 70% increase in drought frequency by 2030;
- *More very hot days:* Sydney currently gets 3 days a year over 35C. This could reach 18 by 2070. The number of days over 40C could reach 4. The Australian Medical Association has warned that by 2100 up to 15,000 Australians could die every year from heat related illnesses due to warmer temperatures caused by climate change if no action is taken;
- *More bushfires:* Bushfires will become more intense and more frequent;
- *Tourism industry damaged:* The CSIRO projects that the NSW snowfields may decrease in size by between 18% and 66% by 2030, which would dramatically limit the opportunities for tourism, skiing and snowboarding;
- *Less water for Sydney:* Sydney is likely to experience increased reductions in its already stressed water supply systems. This is particularly likely as key rivers that feed into Sydney's water storage facilities are expected to experience a significant decline in stream flow;
- *Loss of coastline:* Research carried out by Sydney University scientists suggests that as much as 150 metres of the Sydney coastline could be lost by 2100 as a result of sea-level rise. Bondi Beach would disappear. Collaroy and Narrabeen beaches could retreat by 22 metres, and when combined with a 50-year storm surge by over 110 metres.

NSW is fuelling climate change - its greatest future threat

The NSW Hunter Valley is one of the great coal producing areas of the world, and the city of Newcastle is the world's largest coal export port. Every year about 80 million tonnes of climate-changing coal leave Newcastle. In the next 5 years, more massive coal mines are planned to open and more coal infrastructure will be built. Ultimately, Newcastle's exports will increase by up to 50 million tonnes a year. This compares to Australia's total coal consumption of 67 million tonnes and NSW's consumption of 30 million tonnes. If this expansion occurs, it will accelerate the onset of dangerous climate change and see NSW actively fuelling its greatest threat.

Saving Anvil Hill – the first step in avoiding climate chaos

We have to start somewhere, and that place is Anvil Hill. Anvil Hill is one of the biggest of the new open-cut coal mines seeking approval in the Hunter Valley. It is also a key driver of the expansion of the Valley's coal infrastructure like the huge new coal loader at Newcastle which is being partly financed by Anvil Hill's owner, Centennial Coal. Anvil Hill is also an area of great environmental significance. It is the largest intact stand of remnant vegetation on the Central Hunter Valley floor and is home to endangered animals and plants, as well as being a major catchment of Wybong Creek, which flows into the Goulburn and Hunter Rivers.

Saving Anvil Hill is the first step towards stopping more coal mines that devastate the Hunter Valley and fuel climate change, and kick-starting a clean energy future for NSW. Go to www.anvilhill.org.au for more information.

Renewable energy is in decline

At the same time, the renewable energy industry in NSW is on its last legs. Next year the Federal Government's mandatory renewable energy target (MRET) will expire. Unless other measures to promote investment are introduced, growth in the renewable energy industry will stall. If the NSW government legislated a state renewable energy target of 15% by 2012, and 25% by 2020, it would spur up to \$3 billion in investment in clean energy projects and 2,000 new jobs in NSW. Not only would this provide us with clean energy, but we could start exporting clean energy instead of climate-changing coal.

10 easy ways to take action on climate change

1. Visit or contact your local state member of parliament

Face to face visits to your local member are very powerful as they demonstrate how you, the constituent, feel about this issue. It's always a good idea to go with at least one other person so you can compare notes afterwards, and for confidence. If you can't find the time for a visit, ring the office and ask to speak to your member, write them a letter or send an email or fax.

Remember, you don't need to be an expert on the issue to have an opinion that your representatives should listen to. Try doing a *google* search to see if your member of parliament has said anything about climate change. If they are on record acknowledging that it is a problem, then this is a good starting point for your discussion. Tell them you want them to help achieve the following:

- stop the proposed Anvil Hill coal mine as a first step towards stopping the expansion of the Hunter Valley coal industry;
- introduce a moratorium on new coal-fired power stations in NSW;
- introduce a legislated state renewable energy target; 15% by 2012 and 25% by 2020;
- ensure that the existing NSW Demand Management Fund is expanded and continues beyond 2010;
- legislate cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in NSW of at least 20% by 2020 and at least 60% by 2050.

You can find out which electorate you are in from the State Electoral Office website: <http://www.seo.nsw.gov.au> or call the Australian Electoral Commission on 12 23 26. Then go to the NSW Parliament website to find out who your member of parliament is (formally called a Member of the Legislative Assembly) and how to contact them: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au>.

Follow-up tips: follow-up is extremely important. If a politician hears from you once, they'll think they've solved the problem. If they keep hearing from you they'll know they still need to do more. And if you get family, friends and workmates to contact them also, they will really start to pay attention.

So follow up your visit or phone call to your local MP with a letter reiterating your concerns and what you want them to do. And make sure you respond to any letter they send to you if you don't feel they've adequately addressed your concerns. Beyond the first contact, think about contacting your MP whenever you see a new story about climate change and its impacts in the media, drawing their attention to it and reiterating the need for real action on climate change now.

2. Write a letter to the editor

Keep letters short, sharp and witty and they'll have a much better chance of getting published. Local newspapers can be really influential so don't forget to write to your local paper. Why not tell them what you're doing to reduce your greenhouse pollution and challenge your local political representatives to do more?

The Sydney Morning Herald
letters@smh.com.au

Fax: 9282 3492

The Daily Telegraph
letters@dailytelegraph.com.au

Fax: 9288 2300

The Wentworth Courier
alondon@fpccourier.com.au

The Southern Courier
Wfitzgibbon@spcourier.com.au

3. Call talk-back radio

Talk-back radio reaches a huge audience so it's a good opportunity to spread the word about why NSW should quit coal and get serious about making the shift to clean renewable sources of energy. Political parties also monitor talkback radio to get a feel for what issues are topical in the community. Remember, again, you don't have to be an expert to have an opinion.

2GB: 131 873 **2UE:** 131 332 **ABC702:** 1300 222 702

4. Pass a resolution

Pass a resolution against Anvil Hill and new coal mines and in support of clean energy in your union, political party branch, school committee, professional association or other type of club **and then send it to the Premier, Planning Minister and your local member**. For example, are you a doctor? Then get other doctors to join you in helping to highlight the health impacts of climate change by making material available in your waiting rooms, and get those doctors (and their patients) to get active lobbying their MPs to demand action.

A sample resolution:

"The x committee urges the NSW Government and all NSW political parties to take the strongest possible action on climate change. As a first step, the proposed Anvil Hill mine in the Hunter Valley must be stopped. Instead, new industries should be identified and promoted to provide sustainable jobs and wealth for Hunter communities. The State Government must also introduce a legislated state renewable energy target of 15% by 2012 and 25% by 2020 to drive clean energy in NSW.

5. Establish a resident action group on climate change

Do a media launch of the group in your backyard and get the local paper to come. For help with this, email ben.pearson@au.greenpeace.org or ring 0407 008 917. And have a

look at what a recently established resident action group in Balmain is doing for some ideas: <http://www.climatechangebr.org>. Organise some community events: you might want to hold regular stalls to raise awareness about climate change, organise community lobbying delegations to your local MP, or hold a house party where you get together with some friends, watch the Anvil Hill Alliance's video on climate change and Anvil Hill and then work out what you're going to do to make sure it doesn't happen.

6. Join Climate Action Now

Climate Action Now grew out of the December 2005 Walk Against Warming that saw 3,000 people in Sydney and thousands more around the world hit the streets demanding real action on climate change. Climate Action Now provides a forum for people to be involved in climate campaigning. It meets fortnightly in the evening and plans more activities around climate change, including another Walk Against Warming in November 2006. If you want to be involved in Climate Action Now, contact: mcook@nccnsw.org.au.

7. Cancel your ANZ account and/or sell your ANZ shares

ANZ is the largest bank financier of coal in Australia and funds coal transports and coal-fired power stations overseas. ANZ also helped organise the financing for Anvil Hill (see page 24 of the Anvil Hill lobbying document at www.anvilhill.org.au for more details). If you have an ANZ account then your money is involved. Contact ANZ Bank and tell them you are cancelling your accounts and/or selling your ANZ shares until they commit to moving away from coal.

Contact ANZ's Customer Response Centre:

Phone: 1800 805 154

Email: Send a complaint online from www.anz.com.au.

Write: Customer Response Centre, Locked Bag 10, Collins St West PO Melbourne 8007

Fax: (03) 9683 926

8. Advertise your support

Put an *"I love clean energy and I vote"* or *"Stop Anvil Hill; Stop Climate Change"* sign in your front yard or window to help raise awareness. Make your own or email ben.pearson@au.greenpeace.org to ask for one.

9. Talk to your friends, colleagues and family

If you activate five people on climate change, who in turn each activate another five, then very soon we've got a movement. The most effective way of getting information and ideas out to a community is by people using their own networks. These "viral" networks are essential if we are going to win. Think about your own networks and groups that you belong to - the P&C, the local footie team, the surf-lifesaving club – and how you can inform them about climate change and get them active.

10. Keep us informed

It would be really helpful if you could drop us an email and let us know of any progress

you're having, any interesting conversations you've had with your state member or other politician, or any questions you've got, or great ideas you had about how to campaign! Write to ben.pearson@au.greenpeace.org. We are also available to provide speakers for any event you may organise.

Sample letter to politicians and election candidates

Dear

Climate change is the biggest threat to NSW's future. Yet NSW is fuelling dangerous climate change through the massive expansion of the Hunter Valley coal industry. In the next few years, more huge coal mines will open, more coal infrastructure will be built and more coal will be exported, making dangerous climate change even more likely. At the same time, renewable energy in NSW will stall as the Federal renewable subsidy expires.

I urge you to help stop dangerous climate change by:

- Rejecting the proposed coal mine at Anvil Hill as a first step towards stopping the expansion of the Hunter Valley coal industry;
- Introducing a moratorium on new coal-fired power stations in NSW;
- Legislating a state renewable energy target of 15% by 2012 and 25% by 2020;
- Ensuring that the existing NSW Demand Management Fund is expanded and continues beyond 2010, and that BASIX is protected;
- Legislating cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in NSW of at least 20% by 2020 and at least 60% by 2050.

Yours sincerely,

YOU!