



# CROW Newsletter

September, 2018

## Local news

A lot has been happening locally on the renewable energy front. Some examples:

- Election of a renewable energy advocate. A good result for all concerned with making climate change mitigation a strong political issue. Renew Economy's article on Joe McGirr is reproduced in the next section.
- Council Trivia Night. This was a great night organised by Samantha Parsell from Wagga Wagga City Council. It took the format of short presentations followed by questions based on each presentation. CROW presented one section on domestic energy use along with presentations from Erin Earth, the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and Ben Holt who is developing a series of short videos, featuring local people (including our new state member) discussing climate change issues. The videos are already being used in local schools You can catch up with Ben's videos at his website <https://aussieclimate.wixsite.com/simpleclimateaction>
- The proposed Bomen Solar Farm is a 120 megawatt (MW) solar farm project near the Bomen industrial hub, approximately 7km northeast of the Wagga Wagga Central Business District. The project is being developed by Renew Estate Pty Ltd, an Australian renewable energy company. The company ran an information night last At a community consultation forum on Tuesday 11 the proposal ran into some tough opposition from local landholders and others.

## [Joe McGirr wins Wagga](#) (from RenewEconomy)

"The blue ribbon Riverina electorate of Wagga Wagga has been won by an independent candidate called Joe McGirr – a medical doctor who puts climate change firmly at the top of his political agenda.

Dr Joe, [according to an article](#) published late last week in *The Australian*, is not for turning on this stance, and has gone as far as to have "written articles" about the dangers of the global warming and supported organisations like the Climate Council.

Indeed, [according to his profile page](#), the Associate Professor at the University of Notre Dame, was a co-author of a 2014 paper published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health, titled "Preparing rural general practitioners and health services for climate change and extreme weather."

And he even supports renewables!

"I have said I think renewable energy is important and I have said that in a public forum," McGirr told the paper.

"I accept that is not what conservative people want but that's my view of the situation. I have got to stick to my guns

## Who really gets government subsidies?

This concerns a report from 2015 but is the latest information I could find on subsidies for fossil fuels vs renewables. (And there seemed to be something spookily predictive about the first six words.)

As Malcolm Turnbull heads to Turkey to attend this weekend's G20 Summit in Antalya, a new international report has revealed that **Australia is still subsidising fossil fuel production to the tune of a massive \$A5.6 billion a year.**

The report, 'Empty promises: G20 subsidies to oil, gas and coal production', also highlights how Australian companies have received billions of dollars from other G20 governments to develop liquefied natural gas sites.

Subsidies for renewable energy in Australia, a relatively new development, are often criticised by opponents of renewables. However, the wealthy and very well-established fossil fuel sector in Australia is still also ensconced on the subsidy gravy train. According to the report, Australia's oil, gas and coal producers enjoyed around \$A5.6 billion in subsidies in 2014.

That would buy a lot of [solar power systems](#).

There are 777 deaths attributed to air pollution in Australia each year and the report estimates the health and other costs to our nation from the impacts of fossil fuels to run into many billions of dollars.

As to the cost of adverse health impacts from coal fired power generation in Australia specifically, another report we [mentioned a couple of weeks ago](#) estimated it A\$2.6 billion annually (2014).

## Facts 1 The Renewable Energy Index

In May 2018 there were 19 000 (3000 in NSW) construction jobs in renewable energy in Australia. There were 6000 (1500) jobs in solar panel installation.

The ten year savings expected from the renewable energy installed in May alone will be \$320 million.

How do I know? Go check out the [Renewable Energy Index](#).

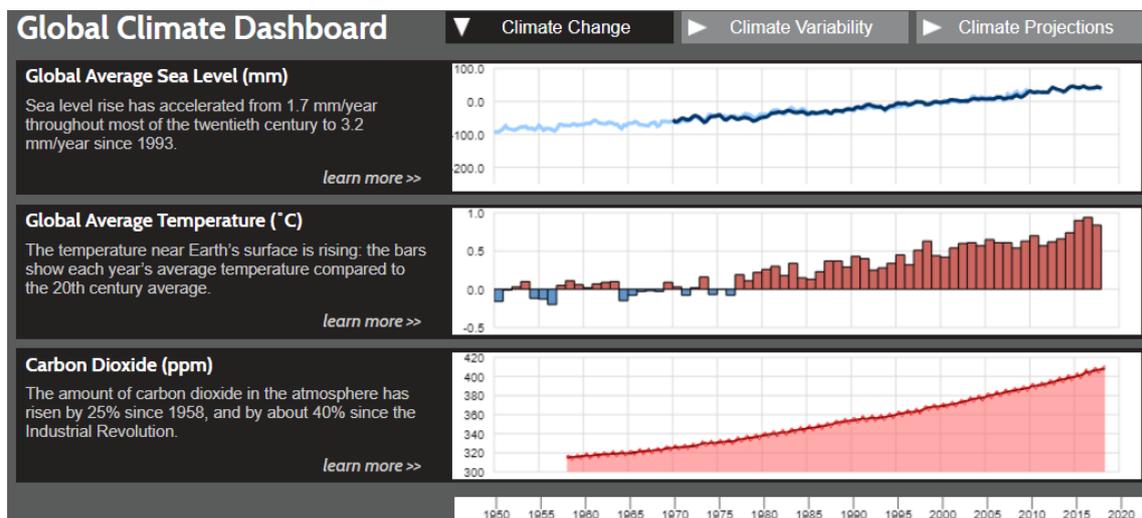
The Renewable Energy Index tracks the amount of renewable energy in Australia, the jobs it's creating, the power bill savings it is delivering for Australian households, and the environmental benefits of the rising use of clean power.

## Facts 2 The NASA Global Dashboard

If you are interested in climate data, a good place to start is with the NASA Global Dashboard which you can find here. <https://www.climate.gov/#slideshow-0>

It graphs historical information on temperatures, sea levels, carbon dioxide and much more including major causes of weather variations such as El Nino.

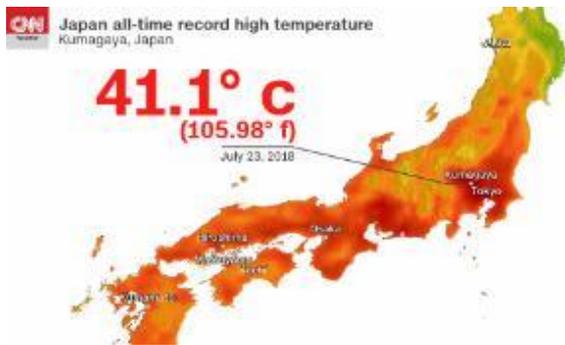
It is an interactive site so you can play around with time scales and comparisons. Handy in teaching or in talking to the fact-challenged about climate change.



## It has been a crazy summer in the Northern Hemisphere

In August Japan [recorded a temperature never before reached](#) on the island nation since reliable records began in the 1800s.

Kumagaya, a city only 40 miles from Tokyo, hit 41.1 degrees Celsius (106 degrees Fahrenheit) in the midst of a multiweek heat wave that has killed at least 44 people.



The extreme temperatures are also affecting other countries in East Asia: South and North Korea have set heat records with temperatures climbing near 40 C (104 F).

Temperatures above 32 C extended to the [northern reaches of Scandinavia](#), setting records in Sweden, Finland and Norway for stations above the Arctic Circle.

The result has been a string of unprecedented wildfires in Sweden that have prompted the country to request assistance from other nations such as Italy, with more resources to fight wildfires.

The United Kingdom is [off to its driest start to a summer](#), according to the Met Office, and it has been one of the hottest on record, coming in just 0.1 C behind the average temperature during the hottest summer on record in the UK, which averaged 21 C in 1976

This month, a brutal heat wave also struck Canada, which saw temperatures peak in Montreal on July 2 with a record of 36.6 C (98 F). There were at least 70 heat-related deaths across the province of Quebec; CNN's news partner CBC reported that the [number of deaths overwhelmed Montreal's morgue](#).

In the United States, July heat waves have stretched from the highly populated Northeast to the desert Southwest.

## Major changes in our ecosystems in next 100 years

**If the world continues on a "business-as-usual" trajectory on climate change, global ecosystems including Australia's will undergo a "major transformation" over the next century.**

That's the warning from researchers who have analysed hundreds of pollen and fossil records from the Earth's last period of significant global warming, which followed the last glacial maximum around 14,000 years ago.

The study, published today in the journal [Science](#), found that ecosystems that underwent low levels of change were "concentrated in regions where the temperature anomaly was relatively small".

The researchers used their data to predict the amount of future ecological upheaval that would occur under warming scenarios of 1.5 degrees, 2.4 degrees, 3 to 4 degrees and 5 degrees, by the end of the century.

They found that under a warming scenario of 1.5 degrees — the target set under the Paris Climate Agreement — the chance of "large" structural change to an ecosystem was generally less than 30 per cent, but rose significantly as temperatures increased.

## Will the \$444 million cash splash save the Great Barrier Reef?

**At the end of April a [\\$500 million package to help the Great Barrier Reef](#) was announced by the Federal Government.**

It didn't take long for [questions to be raised about the decision to give \\$444 million in funding to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation](#), a small charity with a revenue of only \$8 million in 2016.

The funding will be split between improving water quality, supporting reef restoration science, increasing crown-of-thorns starfish control, community engagement and reef monitoring.

But there is no acknowledgement of what scientists argue is the biggest threat facing the reef: climate change.

Without climate action, can this package actually do anything to help the reef?

The answer is no, according to many involved in reef research, management and conservation, including University of Queensland coral biologist Sophie Dove.

"Unless we mitigate the CO2, a lot of the other solutions such as cleaning the water and removing crown of thorns are somewhat immaterial," Dr Dove said.

"All of those things can assist in helping any coral reefs that remain to survive and prosper in the future — but without climate mitigation, I think that's an issue."

## Are you interested in EVs

If you are interested in following the development of electric vehicles in Australia, you should bookmark this website:

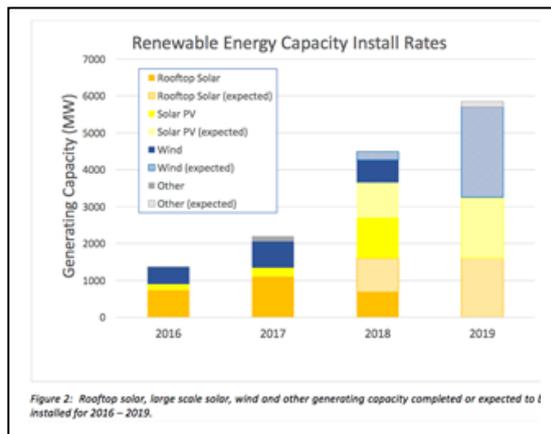
<https://thedriven.io/>



## We could have 100% renewable energy by 2035

Australia could reach the equivalent of 100 per cent renewables for its electricity needs by the early 2030s by doing nothing more than maintaining the current pace of wind and solar development, a new research report has found.

[The report](#) – published by a heavy-hitting team of Australian National University researchers, including solar PV and pumped hydro expert Andrew Blakers – says keeping up the current rate of renewable energy deployment would also meet Australia's entire emissions reduction task "for the whole economy" by 2025.



## More Australians want renewables - survey

A growing number of Australians are concerned about the impact of climate change, and more than half of a survey of 1,756 voters believe the Morrison government needs to stay in the Paris agreement, despite Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the US.

A study tracking voter sentiment for more than a decade, funded first by the Climate Institute and now by the Australia Institute, finds 73% (up from 66% in 2017) of respondents concerned about climate change, and a clear majority, 68%, believes the government should set domestic targets to comply with our Paris commitments.

An increased 67% want coal-fired power to be phased out within 20 years, up from 61% in 2017.

The findings suggest the Morrison government is politically vulnerable on climate change at the next federal election. The prime minister has declared Australia will not pull out of Paris but [also abandoned the national energy guarantee](#) that imposed an emissions reduction target on the electricity sector.

## SA Holden site gets recycled as a battery factory

German battery storage giant Sonnen has announced plans to manufacture up to 10,000 battery storage units a year at the old Holden car manufacturing site in Adelaide, confirming that there is a future for manufacturing in a state with high renewables.

The announcement by Sonnen came [just a day after the South Australia Liberal government unveiled the details of its \\$100 million Home Battery Scheme](#), a subsidy of up to \$6,000 per household that will be supported by a further \$100 million in finance from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

Sonnen founder and CEO Christoph Ostermann told RenewEconomy in an interview on Sunday that the production facility should be up and running with two months, given the preparations that have been made since [Sonnen first proposed an Adelaide manufacturing base earlier this year with the previous Labor government](#).