



PENINSULA VOICE
Learning • Conversation • Engagement

Media Release

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Climate change – our home, our future

Taking action now to reduce the impacts of climate change is good for us and good for the planet.

This was the key message delivered at the climate change event hosted by Peninsula Voice on Thursday February 29 in Mornington. While this advice may sound simplistic, there's a lot of evidence behind it and to help set the scene, the beautiful voice of local musician, Brigit Alan filled the Peninsula Theatre as hundreds gathered to hear from international experts and local speakers.

Spectacular images brought home the full force of nature when local photographer and filmmaker Yanni showed his video of storm images across the Mornington Peninsula before David Karoly, honorary Professor Emeritus at the University of Melbourne and a councillor on the Climate Council presented some of the cold, hard facts about global warming. This included an overview of the current and predicted scenario related to increased surface temperatures, noting that since 1850, we've seen a rate of warming that has been unprecedented in the past 2,000 years.

In quoting the UN Secretary General, he noted that while the planet will survive climate change, many species may not. 'We've reached a Code Red for humanity' he added.

The good news is that a lot can be done, and much of it is already underway. We can switch to more efficient use of energy and increase use of low carbon energy sources such as solar and wind. We can also improve places to store carbon through better forest management and tree planting and employ lifestyle and behavioural changes.

With so much of the impacts of climate change being linked to our health, Assoc. Professor Angie Bone, from Monash University's Sustainable Development Institute, noted that impacts are most especially felt by those who are marginalised, whether its extreme heat causing heat attacks, other severe weather events leading to injuries and displacement, air pollution triggering asthma attacks or widespread illness relating to poor water or food quality. However we're all negatively impacted by climate change.

'This may all sound rather gloomy' she said, 'but the good news is that there are steps we can all take to protect ourselves, and what we do to reduce emissions is not only good for us, it's good for the environment.' Examples included managing heat health, protecting against bushfire smoke and preventing bites from disease-carrying mosquitoes.

'We can also reduce the impacts of climate change on our mental health by learning more, staying connected and getting involved in using and driving sustainable practices' she added.

The message about reducing our climate anxiety through action was again brought home by local man Sam Lundberg. As an activist volunteering with Zero Positive, Sam is working with Peninsula Grammar to reduce their emissions and hopes to support all local schools. They've introduced a metering system to show electricity use around the school and just having that knowledge, has allowed them to reduce energy consumption equivalent to taking 60 cars off the road each year.

Addressing 'eco anxiety' in youth is the focus of the 'A2A' (Anxiety to agency) movement, where knowledge about how climate change can be addressed is helping them move from fear to action. Sam's advice is simple – 'go out and get your hands dirty'.

And that's already happening on the Mornington Peninsula.

Repower is a local group helping individuals and businesses reduce their carbon footprint. They offer tips and resources to locals wanting to transition to cleaner energy.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council is also striding ahead with their 2020 climate emergency response plan, with 90 per cent of the 172 actions either underway or completed. The plan aims to ensure the Mornington Peninsula has net zero-emissions by

2040. As well as looking at better management of council land, they're offering support to residents with information about energy efficiency, solar panels on roofs, community batteries and grants to support local innovation, while also continuing important lobbying to state and federal government.

Many other groups were represented at the event, demonstrating everything from plant regeneration and bird conservation to coastal management.

Peninsula Voice convenor Peter Orton said, 'It was an information-packed night so anyone who missed it will be able to access the presentations and all the links to further information on our website – www.peninsulavoice.org.au'

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RELEASE ENDS

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