

Report on My Election Campaign in Gippsland East 2014

The Campaign

1. Was run for 3 months from 1 September
2. Expended approx \$3000.
3. 50 or more trees will be planted next spring to offset this expenditure and make the campaign carbon neutral.
4. Received \$1126.60 in donations. Many thanks.
5. Printed and distributed 500 pamphlets, 2000 How to Vote Cards and 30 posters on post consumer recycled paper.
6. Had 80 30 second adverts on REGFM read by local identity Barry Heard. Thanks.
7. Had 30 small adverts 2cm X 2 columns in East Gippsland Newspapers
8. Had 4 small ads the same size in Gippsland Times
9. Had 3 ads each in community newspapers –Tubbut Tattler, Omeo News, Heyfield and District News, Stratford Town Crier, Tambo Rambler and Mallacoota Mouth
10. Was assisted by a small band of helpers who letterboxed pamphlets, placed posters at polling booths and occasionally relieved my vigil at the Early Polling Booth where approximately a quarter of the electorate voted. Many thanks.
11. Travelled over 900Ks to meetings, speaking occasions etc.
12. Spoke on 6 occasions to approximately 450 people including 10 politicians
13. Issued 13 press releases and one candidate statement. Every PR had some response and these were liberally used by East Gippsland Newspapers – sometimes printing the PRs in total. There were 4 radio interviews (though the local ABC was notable in its absence) and at least 18 news items printed as well as sundry other reports on the internet and probably a few others I am not aware of. In terms of publicity the campaign should be considered a success.
14. In terms of votes received the campaign was a failure. After 4 campaigns in East Gippsland I appear to have gained little traction in this regard.
15. The last fortnight of the campaign was concentrated on handing out How to Vote Cards at the Early Polling Booth in Bairnsdale. These featured the ‘Vote Climate Vote Solar’ slogan. My vote here was 2.76% compared with my average of 2%.
16. On the week leading up to the campaign my website received 475 visits from 376 users.
17. On polling day posters were placed at Maffra, Stratford, Newlands Arm, Paynesville, Swifts Creek, the 5 Bairnsdale Booths, 2 at Lakes Entrance and Toorloo Arm. These appear to have had no effect.
18. My best booth outside local ones was 6.6% at Meerlieu a No CSG area.

Advertisement



Quarter page horizontal

(Advertisement)

Vote 1 Peter Gardner

Independent Candidate for Gippsland East

I have lived and worked in the Ensay and Swifts Creek districts for 40 years and am now resident in Bairnsdale. I have been concerned for some time that the threat of climate change is real and may be far worse than either the media or the politicians tell us. Consequently I have been standing for office on a 'Vote Climate Vote Solar' ticket at all levels of government. I have devoted my time and funds to this process since 2008. I have policies to provide employment, improved emergency services and public transport and the changeover to renewable sustainable energy sources.

In particular I strongly support community energy projects and microgrids. See www.petergardner.info Please spread the word. I will not be allocating preferences.

'Vote Climate Vote Solar'

Vote 1 Gardner in Gippsland East

Authorised by H. Reddish Mt Markey Winery Cassilis 3896

(Advertisement)

Vote 1 Peter Gardner in Gippsland East

I have policies to reduce carbon pollution and adapt to the changes in extreme weather that threaten us. Some concern employment, the 'renewable revolution', mining and CSG, emergency services and public transport. See www.petergardner.info/outline-of-political-issues Whilst the Federal government contemplates a reduction in the renewable energy target (RET) and Victoria's RET is gone, Victoria should aim for 100% renewable energy by 2030. A massive "Snowy Mountains Scheme" is needed to move from dirty coal to clean and limitless power from the sun. Pollution free energy will boost employment and business, provide more income for locals and will increase energy reliability and security.

Vote Climate Vote Solar Vote 1 Peter Gardner

Authorised by H.Reddish Mt Markey Winery Cassilis 3898

VOTE CLIMATE VOTE SOLAR

in Gippsland East

VOTE 1 GARDNER, Peter

Climate change is our greatest threat.

Everyone has already experienced our altered weather patterns with warmer winters, earlier fire seasons, increased intensity and number of heatwaves, and prolonged droughts. Victoria is now a drier and hotter place, more vulnerable to bushfires and heatwaves. And it's getting worse. Liberal politician Malcolm Turnbull said: ***"Climate change is a global problem. The planet is warming because of the growing level of greenhouse gas emissions from human activity. If this trend continues, truly catastrophic consequences are likely to ensue from rising sea levels, to reduced water availability, to more heat waves and fires"***

The science is clear. Fortunately, the ways of tackling climate change are also clear. We need to reach for the economic, health and environmental opportunities of clean electricity, water and clean air: a low emissions economy with jobs and knowledge in emerging industries that can prosper now and long into the future.

We can start the urgent action required at this election.

Climate Change is a health hazard and affecting us all now.

If elected my main priority will be dealing with climate change, then as an Independent serving the needs of all Gippslanders. In any issues not connected with climate I will either vote with the National Party or not at all.

I am happy to speak to any group on the problem of global warming.

VOTE CLIMATE VOTE SOLAR

VOTE 1 GARDNER for Gippsland East

**VOTE CLIMATE VOTE SOLAR
VOTE 1 GARDNER, Peter for Gippsland East**

Climate Change Policies

- Support for community renewable energy projects including wind, solar, micro-grids and pyrolysis generators.
- Oppose ALL Coal Seam Gas and other fossil fuel developments
- 1 for 1 feed in tariff for all small scale solar installations
- Eliminate state fossil fuel subsidies
- Replace all current coal fired electricity generators within 10 years with a mix of renewable energy principally solar and wind.
- Convert state buildings to solar power and LED lighting.
- Employ CFA and SES Emergency Officers in small towns.
- Upgrade health & emergency services for extreme weather events
- Revitalise public transport with increased services and maintenance
- Support the coalition's 'green army' to start planting and nurturing trees across the region, as well as being involved in practical programs of adaptation such as the fire protection of towns.
- Finance all projects by rearranging budgetary priorities.

For further information contact Peter at pdgardner2012@gmail.com or follow him on twitter at twitter.com/peterdgardner or facebook at facebook.com/peter.gardner.9250 More policy details or how you can help can be found on his website at www.petergardner.info

Candidate's Statement

I have been concerned for some time that the threat of climate change is real and may be far worse than either the media or the politicians tell us. Consequently I have been standing for office on a 'Vote Climate Vote Solar' ticket at all levels of government. I have devoted my time and funds to this process since 2008. My policies provide for more employment, improved emergency services and public transport and the changeover to renewable sustainable energy sources. In particular I also oppose any unconventional gas or coal projects and all mining projects should be carbon neutral including transport of ore concentrates. As this is a low budget campaign please spread the word. On a personal note I have lived and worked in East Gippsland for 40 years and served on educational, sporting and cultural committees. I am currently a Friend of the East Gippsland Shire Library, and a member of Bairnsdale U3A, the East Gippsland Historical Society, Ensay CFA and the Swifts Creek/Ensay Landcare Group. As a regional historian I have written extensively on a number of aspects of Gippsland history.

Some Policies of Peter Gardner Climate Emergency Independent in Gippsland East

1. No Coal Seam Gas or coal developments of any kind. The current ban on CSG to be made permanent and extended to coal. Farming to have priority over mining. Other mining projects should be carbon neutral and this must include the CO2 produced by trucking ore concentrates to shipping facilities.
2. Employment
 - a. Renewable energy revolution (see below)
 - b. Emergency services (see below)
 - c. Decentralization of government departments
 - d. Support for the Federal Coalition's Green Army doing proper climate work
3. Renewable Energy Revolution
 - a. Solar rooftop feed in tariff restored to 1 for 1
 - b. Solar rooftops and LED lighting progressively to all state buildings
 - c. Community power projects including micro-grids, wind farms, pyrolysis generators, bioenergy and other options where appropriate
 - d. Adopting energy efficiency measures
 - e. These measures (and those below) combined should boost local employment substantially
4. Emergency Services
 - a. All SES / CFA country stations to have a fully employed officer and apprentice to work on the fire protection of towns and farms and vital communications routes
 - b. General support for upgrade of emergency services to prepare for the consequences of extreme weather events
 - c. CFA liaison with communities for roadside management , fire protection and carbon sequestration
5. Transport
 - a. Upgrading and increasing the services of the Bairnsdale to Sale railway and feeder services.
 - b. Extending current Traralgon services to Sale.
 - c. Replacement of the Stratford Bridge
 - d. General upgrade of care and maintenance of public transport
6. Finance provided by a reallocation of funds within the existing budget. The East West Tunnel in Melbourne can be cancelled and the \$18 billion used for upgrading public transport and programs like the Vote Climate Vote Solar in rural Victoria.

Press Release No.1

1.9.14

Vote Climate Vote Solar Campaign On Again

Peter Gardner who campaigned recently as a "climate emergency" Independent in last year's Federal election has announced he will be standing in Gippsland East. Gardner stated:

"I have lived and worked in the Ensay and Swifts Creek districts for 40 years and am now resident in Bairnsdale. I have been concerned for some time that the threat of climate change is real and may be far worse than either the media or the politicians tell us." In particular Gardner

refers to the extreme weather events closely related to climate change – more severe droughts, floods, heatwaves and related bushfires.

“Consequently I have been standing for office on a ‘Vote Climate Vote Solar’ ticket at all levels of government. I have devoted my time and funds to this process since 2008. I will be standing again in Gippsland East in November and have a range of policies to provide employment, improved emergency services and public transport and in particular the rapid changeover to renewable sustainable energy sources.”

Gardner is firmly opposed to any further coal or CSG projects in Gippsland on climate grounds alone but noted that “There are a large number of related problems with these proposed developments including loss of viable farm land, a valuable water resource, polluting the air, water tables and the Gippsland lakes and subsidence along the Gippsland coast.

He is promoting community energy projects, upgraded and better maintained rail and connecting services, and a massive expansion of emergency services in rural communities including permanent full time fire officers with an apprentice fire officer in each CFA station. This will help cope with the increasing number of extreme weather emergencies we are facing. All these projects will generate local employment.

These proposals and many other rural developments can be financed by abandoning the East West road tunnel in Melbourne and working on cheaper solutions to Melbourne’s transport problems.

More details can be found on Gardner’s website petergardner.info

If elected he has committed himself to voting with the Liberal Coalition in Government or the Nationals in opposition on all matters not concerned with climate change except in matters of conscience where he would not vote at all. In the event of a tied parliament he would support a Liberal National government.

Press Release No. 2
Date 12.9.14

RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGET AND THE RENEWABLE REVOLUTION

Climate Emergency Independent candidate for Gippsland East Peter Gardner has released some details of his policies on his website. They are designed either to reduce carbon pollution or adapt to the changes in heat and extreme weather that threaten us from climate change.

They also counter the accusation that he is a single issue candidate. Some of his policies concern employment, what he calls the ‘renewable energy revolution’, coal seam gas and mining, emergency services and public transport. They can be viewed on his website.

Whilst the Federal government is contemplating a reduction in, or abolition of, the renewable energy target (RET) and Victoria’s RET is long gone, Gardner is arguing that the target be doubled by 2020 and to aim for 100% renewable energy by 2030.

“Whilst this is a mammoth task it is possible and may need a war-time style organisation of society. Something like a massive “Snowy Mountains Scheme” will be

needed to quickly achieve the transformation from dirty coal to clean and limitless power from the sun.”

“Beyond Zero Emissions and Melbourne University have provided a detailed study of how this transformation can be achieved in as little as ten years. This program has many advantages including boosting employment and business generally – especially in regional areas.”

“Many of the disadvantages of coal can be partially or totally avoided including excessive water consumption, air and water pollution, and the possible subsidence of land in the valley and along the coast. These problems affect Gippslanders now.

“Decentralisation of power sources means a more secure and robust energy system. It means more income for farmers, businesses and households if they are paid a fair price for the energy they produce, instead of profits being sent overseas. The establishment of micro-grids and the encouragement of renewable energy - especially solar - is the way to go.”

“There are a large number of ways this can be achieved but the easiest to initiate is to reinvigorate the business and household rooftop solar program by offering a fair price for any excess power produced by these systems. Gardner suggests that the price should be the same as a household pays for each incoming unit of power.

PRESS RELEASE No.4 (29.9.14)

Opposition to Coal Mining and Coal Seam Gas

Climate activist Peter Gardner is completely opposed to any development of coal seam gas (CSG), tight gas, shale gas or any new coal mines in Victoria. He is standing in the seat of Gippsland East in the forthcoming State election as an independent.

Gardner stated that: “All these projects are putting more greenhouse gases in the air when we should be working to avoid them completely. To avoid worst case climate scenarios such as low level runaway global warming we first need to stabilise these emissions and then to quickly reduce them.”

“We have to wean ourselves off dirty coal and any other developments that increase our greenhouse gas output. Escaping methane from gas wells is a far more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide and CSG as an energy source may be no better than dirty coal.”

Gardner’s opposition to coal and CSG is primarily motivated by climate change but he recognises that there are many other objections to this form of mining including the process of fracking, the threat to groundwater, air and water pollution, and the loss of good farming land and Gippsland’s image as clean food producer.

Whilst Gardner’s opposition to CSG and coal mining is obvious his objection to other mining projects is also based on climate change. He states: “All mining projects should be subsidy free and carbon neutral. In particular the large number of vehicles trucking ore concentrates from Benambra to Geelong or from Nowa Nowa to Eden should be taken into account before these operations are allowed to proceed. This includes the proposed mineral sands projects at Mossiface and Glenaladale.” He noted that these projects have many of the same faults as CSG and coal mining

“I have an unnegotiable position of complete opposition to all CSG, unconventional gas and coal projects. The electors of East Gippsland can send a strong message to Spring St. (and also to Canberra) by giving me your vote before casting your second preference to the party of your choice.”

Gardner is offering a range of policies that he hopes will reinvigorate small country towns as well as starting to reduce emissions and adapt to the warming that is already ‘in the pipeline’.

PRESS RELEASE No.5

6.10.14

Candidate Criticises Radical Views on Climate Change: calls for a return to Bipartisan Approach

Independent Candidate in Gippsland East Peter Gardner lashed out at what he called “science denying radicals” running the conservative parties across the country.

He stated that: “The conservative parties in Australia and North America seem captured by science denying radicals. Where are the moderates of the Liberal and National parties on this matter? Where are the moderates of the Menzies and Hamer eras?”

Malcolm Turnbull, when leader of the federal opposition, said: “Climate change is a global problem. The planet is warming because of the growing level of greenhouse gas emissions from human activity. If this trend continues, truly catastrophic consequences are likely to ensue from rising sea levels, to reduced water availability, to more heat waves and fires”. In the meantime both the state of politics and the effects of climate change are getting worse.

“Coalition voters are rightly concerned when they hear things like the Shepparton farmer who bulldozed his 10,000 peach trees because weather patterns are now no longer right for growing peaches. This is in an area no longer suitable for peach growing, where there are now too many hot spells and frosts and damaging summer rains for peaches.*

“Coalition voters are also rightly concerned when their farming land is threatened by Coal and Coal Seam Gas developments. By projects that threaten to industrialise the countryside from the Latrobe Valley to Orbost. Farmers have the most to gain from effective policies against climate change and the most to lose in the long term if these policies are ineffectual.

“Many sensible policies like the Renewable Energy Target, Energy Efficiency programs and the Feed in Tariff for rooftop solar are all under attack both state and federally. In Victoria the Napthine government has brought the wind industry to a standstill. Why is there not also a 2 kilometre exclusion zone for the far more harmful coal and coal seam gas projects proposed across Gippsland? The answer is that none of these projects would proceed under such restrictions.

“The Napthine government has also twice slashed the feed-in-tariff for solar energy from household rooftops to 8 cents, continued to subsidise and promote brown coal, dumped their emissions reduction target, scrapped solar hot water rebates and instructed public servants not to use the words ‘climate change’.

“Why is this problem based on sound science and so recently accepted by the Liberals and Nationals in a bipartisan fashion now so divisive? Is it because the anti-science faction owes the big multinational (and mostly foreign owned) electricity generators, coal and CSG companies a favor?”

“Climate change affects us all. For many voters there now seems nowhere to go as the coalition has been taken over by radicals who are reversing most climate action and are intent on major fossil fuel developments. It is time for the major parties and all politicians at all levels of government to return to a bipartisan approach and to treat the problem with the seriousness it deserves.

“You can help send a direct message to Spring St and the major parties by firstly voting independent or minor party before casting your preference for the party of your choice.

PRESS RELEASE No.6

13.10.14

Heatwaves and Man-made Climate Change

Climate Emergency Independent candidate in the seat of Gippsland East Peter Gardner has emphasized that extreme weather events - droughts, heatwaves and bushfires - are heavily influenced by climate change. These events are happening on a regular basis and are predicted to get worse. Recent studies have confirmed this

2013 was Australia’s hottest year since records began. Five recent studies on the heatwave in January 2013 have calculated the effects of man-made climate change on this event. One study in particular compared the influence of greenhouse gases added by humans to the atmosphere by running two computer models many thousands of times. The model without the added greenhouse gases from human activity found that a heatwave of the January 2013 dimensions would occur once every 12,000 years. When the greenhouse gases from burning coal and fossil fuels are added then the heatwave is predicted to occur every 6 years. The conclusion is that human induced climate change has made this event 2000 times more likely to occur.*

One of the Authors of this study Dr. Sophie Lewis of Australian National University stated: “Instead of focusing on blame, it is more useful to understand the contributing factors to an event, such as natural variability and greenhouse warming. In the case of Australia’s record hot year, anthropogenic influences were a big contributor, to the point that the temperatures we experienced would have been virtually impossible without [the additional man-made] greenhouse gases.”

Gardner stated that: “The Bureau of Meteorology has calculated that heatwaves are five times more likely to occur this century than last. To this we can add droughts and associated bushfires. Gippsland has already seen a marked increase in severe bushfires this century compared with last. The strain these emergency events are putting on human resources, emergency services and finances is substantial and is predicted to get worse.”

“If man made the Jan 2013 heatwave 2000 times more likely then climate change was probably also a major contributor to the heatwave in early 2009 which, with the Black

Saturday bushfires, killed 500 people. So too it must have influenced the vast bushfires of the Alpine region in 2003 and 2006/7 and the more recent fires in Gippsland this year including the Hazelwood Mine fire.

“This should be the news dominating our newspaper headlines, the airwaves and the television screens – not a cruel conflict in the Middle East or the fate of a football coach. We are in a climate emergency where the survival of mankind is at stake. It is time to put aside the divisions of politics and work together to combat these threats to us now.”

“You can start by voting 1 for Gardner in the forthcoming state election and then casting your preference to the party of your choice. This will send a message to all the major parties that it is time to put aside their differences and get serious about climate change.”

PRESS RELEASE No.7
20.10.14

Are the Bats of Bairnsdale a Warning of Climate Change?

The increasing numbers of grey headed flying foxes along the Mitchell River may be a sign of climate change claims Independent candidate in Gippsland East Peter Gardner.

Gardner noted that this year may have been the first time that the bats have wintered over and that they are very sensitive to climate, food sources and loss of habitat. He noted with climate change that: “Flying foxes have shifted hundreds of kilometres south in their habitat range” and that studies have indicated: “that climate change is forcing the locations of species towards the cooler poles by an average of 6 km per decade”.

“Whilst visits of flying foxes in parts of Gippsland have been recorded more than 100 years ago man-made climate change has also been happening very gradually as long as accurate records have been kept.”

Professor Lesley Hughes of Macquarie University an expert on the impact climate change has on plants and animals noted: “Despite temperatures having warmed by less than a degree [over the last century], the impact of that on [many] species has been surprising...It’s a window on the future I suppose...The bottom line is that every species will be influenced by climate change, either directly or indirectly.”*

This prediction by Professor Hughes was clearly illustrated by events in Queensland during a heatwave early this year. On the 6 January the Sydney Morning Herald under the headline “Heatwave Decimates Flying Fox Colony” stated: “Dead flying foxes have been falling from the sky in droves because of the heatwave sweeping south-east Queensland. Hundreds of thousands of the large bats may have died as temperatures soared to 43 degrees over the weekend...In Ipswich, south-west of Brisbane, more than 1000 dead flying foxes had to be cleared from a single park on Saturday.”

Gardner notes: “It is a sad fact, little recognized by the media, that heatwaves also have a similar effect on human beings, their pets and other domestic animals. Morbidity statistics indicate that the heatwave of 2009 caused more than 370 extra fatalities – mostly amongst the sick and elderly. Figures for the January 2014 heatwave in Victoria indicate 167 extra fatalities, a 97% increase in calls for cardiac issues and a ‘significant

increase in the demand for emergency care'. Heatwaves are now occurring five times more frequently this century than last and that the 2013 heatwave could not possibly have occurred without man made climate change.”

“Are the Bats of Bairnsdale the ‘canary in the coal mine’”? Gardner asks. “Are they a warning sign telling us that to forget the false or trivial messages of mainstream media and look what is happening before our eyes? If so it is time to commence serious action now by adopting a range of policies on climate change including changing over from coal to sustainable energy sources – in particular solar – as quickly as possible.”

PRESS RELEASE No.8
27.10.14

Hazelwood Mine Fire, Brown Coal and Climate Change

Climate emergency Independent in Gippsland East Peter Gardner has criticised the shallowness of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Royal Commission. He has pointed out that climate change was not dealt with in the commission’s terms of reference. Yet climate change was almost certainly a contributing factor in the Hazelwood Mine Fire and is increasing the likelihood of severe fires in Valley’s open cuts.

Gardner states that the public impression that coal mine fires are infrequent is incorrect and noted that: “Brown coal has been mined for 125 years since 1889 and there have been fires in the open coal pits of the Latrobe Valley on at least 8 occasions. These occurred in 1902, 1927, 1929, 1944, 1977, 1983, 2006 and 2014. This information is incomplete and there may have been other times when spot fires entered the pits and were quickly extinguished.”

“Further there have been many occasions in that same period when bushfires either burned the country now covered by the open cuts or were nearby. These include the Black Saturday fires which threatened Loy Yang.”

He also noted that: “there are other related effects of brown coal open cut and electricity generation that have threaten and continue to threaten our health and our electricity supplies. These include flooding, subsidence, earthquakes and mercury and other heavy metal pollution in the Gippsland Lakes.”

“With climate change upon us the likelihood of these fires and other hazards occurring in the open cuts is increasing dramatically. It is time for us to embark on massive a “Snowy Mountains” style program to change completely from coal generated electricity to renewable energy as quickly and smoothly as possible.”

Gardner attacked both the major parties and their grandiose plans for further brown coal developments including the recent (September) public grant of \$25 million to a Chinese company to produce briquettes to sell to the electricity generators. He is firmly opposed to any new coal or onshore gas developments stating that farming must have priority over these mining projects. As Tim Flannery said “Coal is the new asbestos.”

Centralised coal mines and electricity generation are vulnerable to climate change related threats including bushfire threats to mines, generators substations and transmission lines and surges in demand during heatwaves. Gardner advocates

improving reliability by obtaining power from variety of renewable sources and the establishment of micro grids.

PRESS RELEASE No.9

2.11.14

Land Use, Carbon Emissions and Revitalising the Bush

Peter Gardner, an Independent Candidate in Gippsland East running on a 'Vote Climate Vote Solar' ticket has praised a new report on land use emissions and possible solutions. The report entitled "Zero Carbon Australia Land Use: Agriculture and Forestry" has just been published by the independent organisation Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE).

The director of BZE Stephen Bygrave stated: "Beyond Zero Emissions has been working for several years on a major research project to look at reducing greenhouse emissions from the Land Use sector — agriculture and forestry. The result, released this week, is the [Zero Carbon Australia Land Use Report](#)... The Land Use sector is right up there with the highest emitting sectors of Australia's economy. But the report also shows that there is massive scope to reduce emissions of short-lived greenhouse gases, giving a relatively fast, sharp reduction to Australia's global warming impact..."

Bygrave added: "We also need to find ways to put trees back into the countryside on a (large) scale...Farmers and communities on the land should have the support to operate on the front line of Australia's efforts to combat climate change; they are certainly the people most affected. Regional centres will benefit from implementing changes to land use in a way that reduces carbon pollution. New revenue streams could open up to farmers, allowing them to remain on their properties; bringing young people back to rural Australia. Regional areas could be rejuvenated by new jobs, more people, and more income – a stark contrast to the situation we face where farmers are being forced to leave their land from drought and increasing number of extreme weather events."

Gardner noted the report highlights a path to reduce Australia's agriculture emissions to around net zero, with reductions from land clearing, enteric fermentation, soil carbon and manure management. Substantial carbon sequestration will also be achieved by revegetation. He also agreed with Bygrave that farmers and people in Gippsland have the most to gain from reducing greenhouse emissions and the most to lose if they are not addressed.

Gardner has practiced reforestation on a small scale on his property in Ensay in association with Landcare and Greening Australia. "These are wonderful organisations but a lot more needs to be done. They are just the embryo of much bigger organisations that will be required in the future." Gardner makes all his campaigns carbon neutral by offsetting his election expenditure with tree planting.

He calls on East Gippslanders to help to rejuvenate regional and small town Gippsland by a massive program to combat carbon emissions and to prepare for the most harmful effects of climate change. "You can help send a direct message to Spring St and the major parties by firstly voting independent or minor party before casting your preference for the party of your choice."

PRESS RELEASE No.10
9.11.14

Climate Change and the Bushfire Mitigation Public Meeting in Bairnsdale

Independent Candidate in Gippsland East Peter Gardner said he was disappointed that the issue of climate change was dealt with so fleetingly at the Bushfire Mitigation Public Meeting at Bairnsdale on Wednesday.

Gardner noted that climate change was mentioned only in passing and that science of global warming was treated with a certain disdain. Gardner stated: "My concern above everything else is climate change and this includes the dramatic effect climate change is having on our weather and bushfires.

"The problem of climate change and its effect on bushfires is so immense it is obvious we must work on best science. Everything else is wasted effort and funds.

"Best science indicates that with climate change we will have increasingly longer fire seasons, more severe fire danger days, more heatwaves and more catastrophic bushfires. These are going to happen whatever we do.

"Anecdotal evidence indicates that fuel reduction burns have little effect on catastrophic fires. Large areas burnt in 2003 burnt again in 2006/7. Recent studies of the Black Saturday fires indicate that logging actually increases the severity of these fires.

"We must work to reduce the severity of the problem and adapt to those changes we cannot prevent. We must commence proper controlled studies on the best actions to take. In the meantime we should adopt and act wholeheartedly on current knowledge.

"On the adaption side we must retreat from the forests and work hard on the protection of towns, farms and communications routes. We must greatly expand our fire protection and emergency services in the bush. This includes having permanent CFA officers, each with an apprentice, at each fire station.

"With mitigation we must phase out logging of native forests as these forests are a natural store of carbon (the only form of carbon capture and storage that works) as soon as we can provide full employment in the bush. As well current logging practices appear to exacerbate severe fires. In the shorter term any logging within 10km of settlements should be stopped and strategic regrowth areas should be manually thinned as an added means of protection of communities. Timber should come increasingly from plantations and these should be managed appropriately including fire protection, thinning, pruning and removal of undergrowth.

"The science is in on climate change. It is happening. It is getting worse. It is man made. "Nero fiddled whilst Rome burned" goes the saying. Every delay by our politicians to act on this matter brings us closer to the climate emergency."

PRESS RELEASE No.11
17.11.14

Climate Change and Revitalising East Gippsland or Jobs in the Bush

Independent Candidate in Gippsland East Peter Gardner stated that the countryside can benefit in the fight against climate change. He said: “The countryside is the frontline in the fight against the severe and damaging effects of climate change. These include more frequent and prolonged droughts, heatwaves, floods, storms including increasing thunderstorms and related bushfires of which we will have an increasing number of the catastrophic variety.

“The first half of 1998 was a classic example of a short severe drought followed by a couple of intense rainfall events where many places received more than half their annual rainfall in less than a week. Most of these extreme weather events of the last 25 years have been influenced by climate change or in simple terms made worse by it. Country people have the most to gain by combating climate change and the most to lose if nothing is done.

He continued: “East Gippsland and the bush generally should benefit from the massive redirection of our resources away from the city. This is required to combat climate change. Emphasis should be on putting people on the ground, giving people jobs – not bricks and mortar or spending large amounts on technical solutions.

“The policies can be financed by a redirection of funds away from big developments in the city with the notable exception of public transport. Under a succession of governments over the last thirty years the bush has been left to decline. History is littered with examples of civilisations that have collapsed because they neglected or destroyed their agriculture systems.

“My policies are designed to combat and, or adapt to, climate change and many relate to employment. To implement them will provide a boost to the local economies and jobs – especially for young people. These policies include boosting all emergency services, bringing on the renewable energy revolution with local community based energy projects of many kinds, strengthening CFA and the DSE in fire fighting and fire prevention in country towns and on communications routes, bolstering Landcare in private and community revegetation projects, decentralisation of government departments, and last but not least a general public transport upgrade including increased services, especially of the feeder buses, increased maintenance and the replacement of the Stratford bridge.

In general Gardner supports the Federal coalition’s Green Army but insists it should be engaged in serious projects concerned with either mitigating or adapting to climate change.

“We are all in the same boat with regards climate change. Anything more than the projected 2 degrees average increase in the earth’s temperature will be catastrophic. Now is the time to do some ‘heavy lifting’, to return to a bipartisan approach that puts people above party, and starts to treat the problem with the seriousness it deserves. Now is the time to phase out coal – the new asbestos. Coal has helped develop our society but now we know it kills, and like asbestos we must cease exploiting it as quickly as possible. To do nothing is to endanger life on the planet as we know it. That is why I ask you all to vote one for the vote climate, vote solar platform.”

Candidate Statement of Peter Gardner “Climate Emergency” Independent in Gippsland East (20.11.14)

Climate Change is the Elephant in the (politician's) room. Everybody knows about it. Most people realise that the effects may be bad or even disastrous for all humanity. It is happening now with more frequent and more severe weather events – in particular heatwaves, sharp dry spells and related bushfires. Tomorrow it will be worse. Malcolm Turnbull said: *“Climate change is a global problem. The planet is warming because of the growing level of greenhouse gas emissions from human activity. If this trend continues, truly catastrophic consequences are likely to ensue from rising sea levels, to reduced water availability, to more heat waves and fires”*

The science is clear. Fortunately, the ways of tackling climate change are also clear. We need to reach for the economic, health and environmental opportunities of clean electricity, water and clean air: a low emissions economy with jobs and knowledge in emerging industries that can prosper now and long into the future. We can start the urgent action required at this election. Climate Change is a health hazard and affecting us all now.

There are many things we can do now and must do in the future to combat climate change and adapt to the effects we cannot stop. The ‘vote solar’ part of my slogan is a summary of the many things that can be done.

I am offering a detailed range of policies on coal and coal seam gas (which must be left in the ground), public transport, employment, emergency services and the solar revolution. In general I support farming over mining when the two are in conflict. All large scale projects should be carbon neutral. This includes mining projects planning to truck ore over long distances. Fighting climate change means putting more jobs back in the bush. It is not a matter of whether we do these things. It is a matter of when and how.

At the moment there is reluctance to accept the momentous problem of climate change at all levels of government. Governments have been offering token projects (and sometimes reducing or closing these down) and will not challenge big coal or the mainly foreign owned electricity providers. Both the major parties - the Coalition and Labor - remain enthralled with big coal. The burning of coal is a major part of the problem. Coal is the new asbestos. We can replace coal completely over the next ten or fifteen years with renewable energy sources and are then much closer to solving the problem. Since 4 out of 5 Victorians support the idea of renewable energy it is time that the solar revolution is broadly embraced whatever the dictates of government. This can be helped in a small way by voting 1 for Gardner on your ballot paper. Send a message to Spring Street that climate change is the most important challenge facing us all.