

MEDIA RELEASE

THE HUNTER CLIMATE SUMMIT

8.15am – 5pm Friday 11 October 2019

Wollotuka Institute, University of Newcastle, Callaghan

The Hunter's Biggest Climate Meeting: 100+ local community leaders to converge across sectors to talk climate on October 11

More than a hundred community leaders from across the Hunter will converge on the Wollotuka Institute of the University of Newcastle in October to give voice for the first time to those most affected by climate change but so often left out of the solutions.

The inaugural Hunter Climate Summit will bring together leaders from across the community, from emergency services, science, First Nations, farming, faith, women, workers and youth, to medicine, aged care, LGBTQIA+, women, homelessness, media, education, business, refugees, disability, victims of crime, renewable energy, Landcare and forest protection, coming together to collaborate across sectors on the renewed, solution-oriented way forward that is so desperately needed in the region to address the increasing climate emergency.

Keynote speaker at the Summit **Greg Mullins** is a former NSW Commissioner for Fire & Rescue, founder of **Emergency Leaders for Climate Action** and a Climate Councillor. Mr Mullins said *"This is no longer theoretical or something in the future: climate change is already hurting people – a warmer, drier climate has led to longer, more severe bushfire seasons, with extremes never before recorded. Fires are burning in rainforests where they have never burned before. All of this after just a single degree of temperature increase – we are entering dangerous, uncharted territory yet there is still no credible political response to the threat."*

Convenor of **Newcastle Climate Change Response**, Jacquie Svenson, one of the organisers of the event, said *"For too long those who stand to be most affected by the future effects of climate change – the elderly, the young, those without the easy resources to handle the devastating prospects that are to come whether vulnerable indigenous peoples, those living with mental illness, health problems or disabilities – will be brought into the conversation and find each other to work together on a way forward."*

"It is a privilege to be able to facilitate this coming together, and to be part of the conversation towards a new, reinvigorated and cross-sectoral movement in support of action on climate change in our region. Let this be the turning point where we come together and combine knowledges, skills, resources and passions so as to together address this defining issue."

Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE) Newcastle Chapter co-lead Ben Saxon said *"It is important that we hear from those in the Hunter where so many livelihoods are dependent on fossil-fuel related industries. BZE will bring its award-winning research across all sectors to show solutions which are available now to bring our emissions to zero in ten years."*

Rev. Robyn Fry, Anglican Ecocare, panel speaker at the Summit said *"The faith based teaching, love your neighbour as yourself, applies to dealing with climate change and global warming. The mission of Anglican Communion includes responding to human need by loving service, transforming unjust structures of society, challenging violence of every kind, pursuing peace and reconciliation, safeguarding the integrity of creation and sustaining and renewing the life of the earth. We must look to what comes next, and fight current battles. It's a big ask but as others have said, true civilisations are built with cooperation, not competition and so we aim to work with others to bring about better futures for all."*

In addition to Mr Mullins and Reverend Fry, the 40+ confirmed contributors in various roles include:

As second Keynote Ann Porcino, renowned international speaker and CEO of RPS Consultants; Robyn Blackwell, General Manager Summit Care Wallsend; Nissa Lee, Hunter Homeless Connect; Jenny Whittard, Branch Organiser (Newcastle) NTEU; Suzanne Ross, Dharug Descendent and UoN Business & Law student; Manjot Kaur, School Strike for Climate; Siobhan Isherwood, Hunter Councils; Heather Stevens, graduate of Al Gore's Climate Reality Project; Teresa Brierley, Director Pastoral Ministries, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle; Kevin Sweeney, Amnesty International; Niko Leka, Hunter Asylum Seeker Advocacy; Dr Kathleen Wild, Doctors for the Environment; Garry Derkenne, Chairperson, Adamstown Uniting Church; Dr Patrice Newell, Farmers for Climate Action; and many more that will be confirmed in the coming days. **Full schedule and speaker list** with further comment from additional presenters will be released on **Friday 4 October 2019**.

For media comment contact:

Jacquie Svenson – Convenor, NCCR: 0434 223 789

Greg Mullins – former NSW Commissioner for Fire & Rescue, founder of Emergency Leaders for Climate Action, and a Climate Councillor: 0418272871

Ben Saxon – Beyond Zero Emissions Newcastle Chapter Co-Lead: 0422 196 841

Contacts for any of the speakers listed other than these can be obtained from Jacquie, above.

Summit tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/the-hunter-climate-summit-tickets-63368590159>

About the organisers:

Newcastle Climate Change Response

Founded in September 2018, NCCR is a community group of friendly passionate locals from all walks of life wanting to build upon the inspiring and diverse threads on social change research and organising arising from the Narratives of Climate Change Symposium held by Newcastle Law School in July 2018. More than a “new group” working on climate change in Newcastle, it aims through connecting with and growing diverse communities and through providing a place for individuals to come, to bring climate change to the kitchen table, the barbecue, the political office, the bus stop, the water cooler, whatever and wherever it needs to be heard, with we as communities collectively declaring: CLIMATE CHANGE - NOT ON OUR WATCH; to provide a space and a nurturance to bring together people who want to MAKE INEVITABLE, powerful and effective cultural change against climate change and keep the world within safe levels of warming. Where a transition to a future safe from climate change becomes a defining paradigm of the next decade, and rescues that future.

Beyond Zero Emissions

Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE) is a Melbourne-based, award-winning not-for-profit independent climate think tank, showing how Australia can reach beyond zero emissions using solutions available today. Its Newcastle Chapter is one of the most active in Australia, and was founded in 2013.

We are a community of technology experts, scientists, researchers, communicators and concerned citizens who freely give our time and expertise so that a safe climate can be secured for all. BZE exists because we care about human beings and the environment. The organisation aims to restore a safe climate for a maximum quality of life for all. This is inclusive of families, communities, animals and our ecosystems across the globe.

Climate Action Newcastle

Climate Action Newcastle is a long-standing, non-party-political community climate group focused on local projects, and adding weight to regional and national climate campaigns.