

Forests and Climate Change: a call to collaborate now

Australia is today ranked as “the world’s worst on climate action” by our own government’s latest voluntary reporting towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals Index – a set of targets to be met by 2030 agreed by 193 countries at the United Nations in 2015.

In a review of **Great Southern Forest NSW strategic directions and effectiveness**, our priorities reside within a context of effective actions in present national politics. Decision power lies in the political domain so this is where we prioritise our attention and efforts. The NSW election is on 23 March 2019 and federal election by mid May 2019 if not sooner. How can we most effectively exert influence to deliver positive outcomes for forests?

In the ecology of nature and society all of our concerns are interconnected. Our shared power lies with joining in, and where possible orchestrating, **alliances** with a broad range of other active groups by integrating a **shared simple message with our members, the public and particularly governments – it’s time for governments to take urgent, multiple and significant effective actions to address climate change.**

The strategy is to build an inclusive **Alliance with the unifying issue being Climate Change:**

- It is an urgent, global issue yet still contentious and unresolved in Australia;
- It defines differences and so voter choices;
- The majority of citizens want action – real action;
- Politicians have manipulated the issue to delay any real engagement and action;
- It is predicted to be a major issue in the coming federal election;
- A large number of politically active Australian groups coalesce in agreement on this overarching issue (forests, Adani, anti-coal, agriculture, renewable energy, Great Barrier Reef, water security, waste, fire risk, health, implicated in social justice, +++);
- At this moment a powerful national campaign can be built from a broad base by aligning on climate action while **each organisation still retains its own voice and specific focus**. This can amplify a huge coalition in the run up to national and state elections (rather than diverse groups competing for scant political and media attention which is the norm).

Making multiple aspects of climate change an Australian elections issue

In the urgency of climate disruption, our poor political leadership needs a huge push which, together, we can deliver from the ground up to generate a fundamental shift in national direction.

A national campaign on the responsibility of our politicians to act dramatically and immediately on Climate Change focuses attention where we want it rather than have the agenda pointed in the direction of short-term, self-centred issues – business as usual or distractions of tax minutiae.

To seize the day on this watershed issue we need fast and responsive organisation and the broad cohesion of a simple clear message: **it’s time for governments to become the leaders they should be for the country and for our grandchildren, and help us all make a difference to Climate Change.**