



## BREAZE 2019 AGM – President’s Report

BREAZE continued its role as a major environmental group in the Ballarat region, and by using our large social media reach, we supported our projects as well as promoting other local groups and initiatives. We are seen by the Federal, State and local governments as a point of reference. The media has also used BREAZE for comments on local and national environmental issues throughout the year. However it was disappointing that at the federal election in 2019 action on climate change failed to get the recognition and policy changes that need to be made to meet the current climate emergency.

Our monthly events and special activities has resulted in a steady growth in our membership. Due to building works near the library we have successfully moved our monthly Smart Living Ballarat (SLB) (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month) to the Eastwood Leisure Centre. These successful talks continue to attract large and varied audiences to a variety of topics. Similarly, we have moved Green Drinks to the Lake View Hotel on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. The audiences for these are continuing to grow. We are also looking for new topics, guest speakers and volunteers to assist in the running of these projects.

Again, this year we, we supported the Sustainability Expo in Buninyong. This event had well over 50 environmental based stalls providing a wide range of environmental products and services. With over a 1000 attendees who are there to learn, buy and implement ideas, this continues to be a major support for residents of our region to implement the positive environmental changes that are required.

The other national events we supported were World Environment Day and Sustainable House Day. For World Enviroment Day we screened the film “Demain” followed by a panel discussion. We also ran our annual children’s writing competition. Both events were well supported and I would particularly like to thank Mary Debrett for her efforts in organising these events. To support sustainable house day we ran related talks at Green Drinks and Smart living Ballaratas well as promoting the open houses via social media.

This year we successfully ran the first of what we hope to be a series of climate adaption forums. The “New Bushfire Reality Forum” attracted over 100 attendees. The interesting and knowledgeable presenters gave an insight into the issues and realities of the new fire reality. The group discussion and following panel Q&A raised many questions. These are currently being compiled by the organisers for feedback to attendees and the Ballarat Emergency Management Committee. Many thanks to Joe Natoli and his team of volunteers for the running of this event.

BREAZE continued with its policy of supporting affiliated environmental groups. Buninyong Boomerang Bags continues to operate providing free bags to the Buninyong Community. The Buninyong Community Collective recently celebrated its 1<sup>st</sup> birthday as a food collective in the Buninyong region. This year also saw the establishment of the “Ballarat Repair Café”. After several years of planning the café has been successfully running for 4 months and BREAZE is very keen to see its progress in 2020. BREAZE would like to thank all volunteers associated with these projects. If you have a project or event you would like to run, please discuss with us how we can provide the infrastructure support.

The Community Power Hub has been a successful endeavour working with Sustainability Victoria. BREAZE has coordinated the assessment of multiple projects and provided feasibility studies on the viable projects. Funding was also available to complete additional assessments. Therefore BREAZE's involvement will extend into 2020. Hopefully this will eventually lead into the completion of multiple projects in the Ballarat region. The flagship project, a 500kw solar system for Grampians health Services in Ararat is currently out for tender for stage 1.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the board members, volunteers and supporters for their assistance in 2019. In particular I would like to thank Ian Rossiter. As well as being President for 4 years Ian has provided great knowledge, leadership and experience to the board. His experience will be missed. Ian will be exploring other ways to support the environmental movement and I and the BREAZE board wish him the best into the future.

In summary BREAZE has the infrastructure, acceptance and capability to continue influencing the environmental discussions and actions in the Ballarat region. However to do this BREAZE needs further assistance from volunteers. Only with your help as volunteers, or via affiliated groups we can continue and potentially expand this role during 2020.

Paul Duggan

President 18/11/2019