

# CLIMARTE

## EMERGENCY:ACTION

### VISION

To harness the power of the arts to communicate the Climate Emergency in all its manifestations thus helping to mobilise the public to demand an *emergency mode* facilitating immediate effective action; a [transition to zero emissions](#) while at the same time [drawing down legacy carbon](#) at emergency scale and speed, before 2030.

### MISSION

To increase the amount of climate focussed and socially engaged art with which to inform and inspire the public; raising awareness about the causes and readily available solutions for the Climate Emergency while elevating the role of the Arts and creative workers as powerful change makers in society.

### THEORY OF CHANGE: ART + SCIENCE + COMMUNITY

Recognising that art is arguably humanity's most powerful universal language, [CLIMARTE](#) was established (2010) to harness the creative power of the arts to engage, inform and inspire action to address the most urgent common threat in human history - the Climate Emergency.

Founded on the best available science, [CLIMARTE](#) communicates through collaborations between artists, scientists, academics, and activists to mobilise and amplify public responses to the Climate Emergency in all its manifestations.

Creative workers are by nature complex systems thinkers, resourceful and multi-skilled. Possessing a broad range of problem-solving skills and talents, we know that artists can creatively communicate—in extraordinary, even magical, ways—the terrifying scientific data as well as powerfully articulate hopeful solutions to mobilise Australia to rapidly transform from the third largest producer of fossil fuels to a leading force urgently, effectively addressing the Climate Emergency.

We believe that engaged local communities are the foundations for healthy democratic societies. As such, CLIMARTE collaborates with trusted and diverse organisations, communities and individuals to produce and present highly successful, impactful, participatory exhibitions and public forums exploring all aspects of the Climate Emergency and associated social justice issues in time-effective ways that can be adopted by local communities anywhere.

In the context of the Climate Crisis, having expertly brought together a broad alliance of arts organisations, practitioners, artists, academics, administrators and audiences from across the creative sector, CLIMARTE has:

- produced and presented three highly collaborative and socially engaged [ART+CLIMATE=CHANGE](#) festivals;
- commissioned three major [Poster Projects](#) (2016, 2019, 2022)
- commissioned the project [TREE](#) (2022) informed by the City of Melbourne's ground-breaking Urban Forest map raising awareness and appreciation of the plight of Melbourne's trees in a dangerously warming climate;
- initiated and operated the world's first known Climate Emergency focussed [gallery](#) (Nov 2021 to Aug 2023) which during 20 months of operation worked with 16 creative producers and 215 artists to present 17 ground-breaking participatory exhibitions addressing interconnected and interdependent ecological impacts as well as effective, justice-based solutions to the Climate Emergency;
- additionally, the Gallery hosted 25 robust programs of public-facing [events](#) that delved into critical discourse between art, science and civil society; and
- in 2023 launched ongoing experimental public art projects [Creative Constellations: Atlas of Radical Hope](#) and [CLIMARTE Window Reflections](#).

### **WHY DOES CLIMARTE'S WORK NEED TO BE DONE? (context)**

As evidenced by the most recent terrifying yet still conservative [IPCC report](#) (as well as daily [news reports](#)), the world is already in advanced stages of a climate breakdown that could have been avoided with planning and action even 20 years ago.

Like so many other places around the world, numerous neoliberal [Atlas Network affiliated 'think tanks'](#) are based in Australia. They are in effect front groups for the fossil fuel industry (among other harmful industries) for whom facts threaten legitimacy and profits. And at this stage they seem to have access to unlimited 'dark money' funding and power to spread disinformation and manipulate important public discourse and policies in ways that undermine most Australians now and in the future.

Australia is a mecca for both fossil fuels and the renewable industry. As a result, extremely well - 'dark money' - funded 'culture wars' can seem to feel particularly intense here. To be clear, these 'culture wars' are led by people seeking to prevent an energy transition to clean, safe and fair systems that will benefit everyone, the environments they live in and the global climate. Expressed another way, they are trying to maintain control over the access to energy—no matter how dirty and dangerous—to maximise personal wealth and power. Another way of contextualising it is [Energy Democracy](#) vs [Fossil Fascism](#).

As such, representing concerned artists and creative workers, we believe we have an important role to play in calling out and countering the corrosive cultural influence of these so-called 'think tanks'.

CLIMARTE was established during the lead up to the creation of Australia's Clean Energy Act 2011. Operating from mid 2012 to mid 2014—as a complementary suite of 18 bills informed by independent experts—Australia's Clean Energy laws were arguably the world's most effective climate and environment protection laws at the time.

Not only did our emissions come down significantly and quickly but tens of thousands of new more sustainable jobs were created, and local economies that needed them most benefited from hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment in the clean energy sector.

Australia's game-changing laws were the result of a transparent and accountable 'Multiparty Climate Change Committee', a Greens Party condition of support for the then Gillard Labour Government that was promising effective climate action. As has been well documented, Australia's massively powerful transnational fossil fuel industry (and allies) reacted with hysterics, setting the country back decades during a critical decade. It's also important to note that a large share of profits from mining Australia's finite resources [flow offshore](#).

Meanwhile, the greater public's awareness and understanding of the Climate Emergency has grown significantly since the 2020 Bushfires, as well as the drastic increase in incidences of extreme weather here and seemingly everywhere. Yet most people are still generally unaware of the seriously exacerbating consequences of the *lag effect* resulting in much of the carbon pollution created two or more decades ago only presenting as impacts now as well as the cushioning of current impacts due to *global dimming* that is creating cooling effects of up to half a degree, particularly over cities.

As detailed in the [IPCC report](#), the science is unequivocal in its findings that if we are to escape the ever intensifying and ever worsening consequences of ecological collapse, greenhouse gas emissions must fall to zero within a few scant years (not decades). At the same time work on drawing legacy carbon down from the atmosphere must commence immediately and at emergency scale and speed, but will take many decades, perhaps centuries, to bring back to levels safe for Earth's biodiversity and life as we know it.

Yet, too many Australian leaders are still acting as though they do not have a fundamental duty of care to protect people from the Climate Emergency. This must change as a matter of extreme urgency. In saying this we applaud David Pocock's [Duty of Care](#) private members bill to Parliament and the politicians who are supporting it.

Whilst it's hopeful that some Local and State Governments are committing to decisive action, they are also [cracking down on climate/environment defenders](#) rather than those responsible for the intersecting climate and inequity crises. And it is against a backdrop of continued confusion and obfuscation at the Federal level; prevarication that appears aimed at rewarding fossil fuel political donors and thus certain political interests. In addition to causing the climate and biodiversity crises and associated humanitarian crises causing climate refugees to have to flee their homelands to survive, reports show that—through its ruthless, shadowy interference in public debate and policy formulation—the fossil fuel industry (and allies) is a [major threat to our democracy](#).

Significant and intersecting threats to effective climate action include:

- more than 100 [new coal and gas projects in development in Australia](#). Australia is already the world's third largest exporter (behind Saudi Arabia and Russia) of greenhouse gas emissions;
- the Safeguard Mechanism's ['junk carbon credits'](#) undermining legitimate emission reductions;
- [poor environment laws](#) that have no 'climate trigger' and in numerous other ways are failing to protect Australia's unique ecosystems;
- advanced ['state capture'](#) of Australia's democratic processes by the fossil fuel industry and allies operating through global neoliberal [Atlas Network affiliated think tanks](#);
- anti-democratic concentrations of media ownership that enable misleading and deceptive content to be widely disseminated with little to no accountability, as detailed in our co-authored submission to the Federal Government's [Media Diversity Inquiry](#);
- poor [political finance laws](#) that allow loopholes for powerfully-organised groups to use 'dark money' to influence elections and public policies in ways that are not accountable or transparent;
- limited and compromised capacities to [investigate and expose corruption and serious misconduct](#) by law makers;
- an absence of ['truth in political advertising'](#) that are nationally consistent, constitutional and uphold freedom of speech. As was crudely and tragically demonstrated during Australia's Voice to Parliament Referendum, ['rampant disinformation' funded by 'dark money'](#) (allegedly siphoned through Atlas Network affiliated groups) is posing a serious threat to our democracy;
- inadequate regulations to deal with ['greenwashing'](#) that is enabling companies that are fuelling the crisis to gaslight consumers in order to increase their profits; and
- As detailed in the ['Consequences of information suppression in ecological and conservation sciences'](#) report, the systematic gagging of academics, scientists and educators as well as public servants being banned from using terms such as Climate Emergency.

Whilst we are somewhat encouraged that in some fields the evidence of advanced ecosystem collapse is well understood, and direct policies are being implemented. Governments who fail to act are becoming more isolated as core constituents, including some corporations, move ahead with genuine responses to the Climate Emergency.

Although dangerously late, the Climate Emergency is now largely accepted as reality and, in the absence of effective government leadership and policy, action is being taken by many on many different fronts. In the absence of a consistent, well-developed Emergency Mode at the top levels of decision-making means genuine responses are stymied, simply not knowing how to overcome major obstacles. Notwithstanding this, the level of willingness to undertake radical solutions has grown significantly.

This was not the case when CLIMARTE began in 2010. Over the years CLIMARTE has increasingly been credited with advancing climate crisis conversations in the Arts sector; conversations that were initially unwelcome at best largely due to our sector's heavy reliance on funding from extractive and exploitative industries.

As former CLIMARTE Committee member and artist turned Greens politician Gabrielle de Vietri's ['Maps of Gratitude, Cones of Silence and Lumps of Coal'](#) (2019) and 350.org's ['Fossil Free Sponsorships'](#) campaign show, the boards and major supporters of some of Australia's leading arts and culture organisations—critical crucibles in a healthy democracy—include people with strong ties to the fossil fuel industry, as well as enablers in the finance and media sectors.

CLIMARTE strongly argues that it is beyond wrong for Australia's Arts sector to be largely dependent on funding from heavily polluting and politically abusive industries for survival.

We know that in response to increasingly frequent intensifying and extreme weather events and unnatural disasters, urban Australians are becoming increasingly concerned about their own and rural communities. CLIMARTE's creative projects are developed to help bridge the divide between city dwellers and people living in rural areas; to demonstrate care and concern in ways that cut through the divisive narratives that largely dominate corporate media reporting.

In developing its programs, CLIMARTE actively creates production models that can take art where it's needed most; to communities on the frontline of increasingly extreme weather and economic transitions; to counter polluter propaganda aimed at maintaining the status quo.

Our extensive experience has convinced us that community-led events are particularly effective in cutting through 'information disorder' to provide important public interest information based on the best available facts and data as well as numerous, significant opportunities for further learning and public debate in ways that are creative and accessible, including free of charge.

An award-winning organisation, CLIMARTE is globally recognised for the quality, depth, and scope of its work enabling emotional engagement with climate threats, as well as the many powerful, readily available, equitable and affordable solutions. The facts, data and evidence show that transitioning to zero emission technologies will bring a boom of many more jobs, better human and ecological health, as well as positive purpose to communities on the frontline of extreme weather and unnatural disasters, as well as resource conflicts and solutions.

After more than a decade of experience intersecting art, science, culture and community, we know how effectively the arts can communicate the terrifying data as well as the hopeful solutions to mobilise Australia to transition from a global climate wrecker to a leading force addressing the Climate Emergency.

By every definition, this is urgent essential work. It is the sort of societal transformational work that artists do best.

Understanding that artists bring a raft of exceptional skills to the table, CLIMARTE is well positioned to guide and promote exciting and hopeful Climate Emergency plans co-designed by scientists, economists and creative workers.

Meanwhile, as 2023 closes, the world continues to face accelerated catastrophe and devastation due to human impacts on ecosystems. The recent [United Nations COP28](#) meeting in Dubai—which [hosted at least 2,456 known fossil fuel lobbyists](#)—reported that emissions continue to rise despite the commitment of governments to drastically reduce them.

Further to this, most Australians are still reeling from the recent defeat of our nation's Referendum for an [Indigenous Voice to Parliament](#). This devastating outcome is the direct result of intense interference by largely fossil-fuel funded industry front groups affiliated with the globally organised [neoliberal Atlas Network](#). Witnessing our Indigenous people's honest campaign for a greater say in the policies and programs that affect them be utterly overwhelmed with disinformation and fear mongering spread by shadowy political actors was absolutely devastating. Given that Traditional Owners are best placed to take legal challenges against ecological projects proposed on their lands, and to demand better terms and conditions from extractive industries in general, the attacks on Australia's democratic processes by the aggressive 'Vote No to Division' campaign make a lot more sense.



Given that subsequent surveys have found that [eighty per cent of Australians support improved reconciliation as well as formal truth-telling processes](#), this was undoubtedly Australia's 'Brexit moment'/'Trumpian election'. Could this tragedy have been averted with effective truth in political advertising and reporting laws in place? There is so much *cultural work* to be done.

## **CORE ACTIVITIES**

In the context of the Climate Emergency, CLIMARTE collaboratively develops:

- groundbreaking participatory exhibitions and creative projects addressing interconnected and interdependent ecological impacts as well as effective, justice-based solutions;
- robust programs of public-facing events that delve into critical discourse between art, science and civil society;
- ongoing opportunities for the community to collectively express deep fear, grief, anxiety and despair while organising actively hopeful pathways to urgently usher in available solutions;
- ongoing opportunities for artists and creative practitioners to exhibit 2D, 3D and digital artwork;
- ongoing opportunities for creative workers to be fairly remunerated for their important work;
- programs exploring the role of creative workers in crisis preparedness, response and recovery; and
- frameworks for creative workers to play key roles in designing pro-active pathways towards building a regenerative economy that serves all people and nature.

## **KEY GOALS**

Intersecting climate, community and culture, CLIMARTE's activities:

- engage artists to create powerful climate emergency/regenerative focussed work;
- engage curators, along with other creative practitioners to produce diverse, socially engaged exhibitions and public programs focussed on the most effective, democratic responses to the Climate Emergency;
- creatively engage and educate local communities on the urgency for rapid transformational change as well as ecologically and socially sustainable solutions to the Climate Emergency;
- host inclusive public discussions on the Climate Emergency and associated justice-related issues;
- form collaborative partnerships with trusted organisations to get creative projects out to where they are needed most;
- elevate the role of the arts in society; and
- achieve organisational viability in order to walk the talk in delivering all of the above.

## **MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

Using digital and manual accounting tools, measure and record:

- increased reach and engagement, including online analytics, media coverage, website visits and newsletters;
- number of, and attendance at exhibitions;
- number of, and attendance at, public events held in association with exhibitions;
- increased diversity of collaborative partners;
- number and diversity of external speaking opportunities;
- depth of audience awareness and engagement;
- greater engagement with communities on the frontline of resource conflicts and energy/economic transitions; and
- an increase in the diversity of locations and collaborators for CLIMARTE's activities;
- an increase in unsolicited offers and requests relating to all of the above; and
- invitations to participate in round table events, community-led think tanks and collaborations working at resolving higher level problems.