

**COMING MEETINGS**

March 11<sup>th</sup> – Pat Cleaver – Monbeef

18<sup>th</sup> March – Andrea Forsythe – Snowy Mountains Regional Recovery Officer

25<sup>th</sup> March – Peter Thompson – Ambulance Officer

**Rotary Club of Cooma**

**Theme:**

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Month**

**Jenny Goldie, Environmental Activist**

**Meeting statistics:**

**Attendance:**

**Guests:**

Jennie Goldie (Club)

**Apologies:**

**Leave**

Hass

**Rosters for March 2020**

**Attendance** Brenda / Helper

**Property** John C / Helper

**Fellowship** Liz / Katrin

**Thought** 11<sup>th</sup> Nil  
 18<sup>th</sup> Terry  
 25<sup>th</sup> Nil

**3 Minuter** 11<sup>th</sup> Glenys  
 18<sup>th</sup> Nil  
 25<sup>th</sup> Sandra

**Intro** 11<sup>th</sup> Peter D  
 18<sup>th</sup> Richard H  
 25<sup>th</sup> John K

**Thanks** 11<sup>th</sup> John C  
 18<sup>th</sup> Geoff  
 25<sup>th</sup> Jeanette

**Market** 15<sup>th</sup> John Ch. Tony B, Jan P, Sally

Towing - Terry & TBA

Coffee Van – Mark JN & Helper

*For apologies or guests for upcoming meetings, please advise Brenda at 6453 5585 or [blenderandherdefender@hotmail.com](mailto:blenderandherdefender@hotmail.com)*

*Failure to advise of absence will incur a dinner cost.*

**Significant Dates: February**

**Birthdays:**

11<sup>th</sup> Brad, 13<sup>th</sup> Margaret E, 18<sup>th</sup> Dave,

**Date Joined Rotary:**

4<sup>th</sup> John Cl & Jan P, 25<sup>th</sup> Brenda, 28<sup>th</sup> Glenys & Terry,

## Announcements

### John Cl

The Rotary Foundation Newsletter has recently been released. Have a read to learn how the Foundation disburses the monies it raises.



### Richard H

The Pride of Workmanship Award nominations close on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Please return any outstanding nomination forms to Richard by this date.

### Lessons from the Fires at the Cooma Ex-services Club

Join Climate Action Monaro on 14 March while our great speakers unpack what happened over the summer.

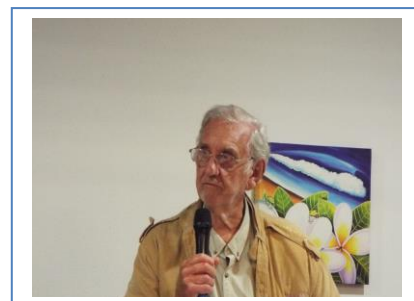
The program includes:

- \* Setting the record straight on hazard reduction burning, Dr Kevin Tolhurst from University of Melbourne.
- \* Climate change increases the risk of extreme wildfires, Professor Jason Sharples from University of NSW
- \* A representative from Emergency Leaders for Climate Change
- \* A panel of politicians from the major political parties

Tickets are \$10 for adults \$5 for students/concessions, please pay cash at the door. Afternoon tea is provided.

### Thought of the Week – Peter D

The brave do not live forever but the cautious do not live at all.



### Guest Speaker – Jenny Goldie, President, Climate Action Monaro

Jenny Goldie is a former science teacher and science communicator with CSIRO. She has degrees in science and in journalism. While interested in all environmental issues, she confines herself now to climate change and to population. She lives with her husband Nick in Cooma, having moved from Michelago two years ago. She is deputy national president of Sustainable Population Australia and President of Climate Action Monaro.

When adults asked her as a child: ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’ She didn’t say: ‘environmental activist’. She said she wanted to be a kindergarten teacher. The term ‘environmental activist’ hadn’t been invented back then. But clearly, she wanted to be an activist of some sort, because on finishing school, she started a degree, not in kindergarten teaching, but in agricultural science with the intent of feeding the world. For some spurious reason, she switched to straight science after a year and studied Zoology under the late Professor Charles Birch at Sydney University. From Jenny’s perspective, this was fortuitous because Professor Birch was already warning about the damaging effects of human overpopulation on other species. This was the early 1960s.

Those lectures by Professor Birch came back to her about five or six years later when living in New Haven, Connecticut, and having heard a talk by two biologists. They showed a slide which demonstrated how animal populations grow, then crash dramatically when the food supply runs out. To Jenny, the obvious conclusion was that this could happen to human populations as much as rabbits or deer or insects. About that time, she read “The Population Bomb” by Paul Ehrlich and decided to limit the number of biological children she would have. She had the one child of her own, adopted three and long-term fostered another. They are adults now with their own children.

An activist needs an in-depth understanding of his/her issue. It can come through work and political engagement, as was her case in the 1980s, or through extensive reading which is now the case for her.

In 1988 she started a group in Canberra called Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population with eight other like-minded people. Not all of them had a biological background: there were poets, engineers, a violinmaker, a soil scientist and a librarian. They came together because they had one thing in common, they had all written letters to the *Canberra Times* about population. Fellow environmentalists said the group would not survive but compared to other local groups they flourished.

After a while the group went national with state branches and changed the name to Sustainable Population Australia. That was easier to pronounce but left out the critical word “ecologically” which lay at the heart of their very being. They were, after all, not just interested in lowering immigration as a means to stabilising population numbers but sought ecological sustainability in its own right. Now 32 years later, they are not a large organisation, but they do have credibility.

In 2013, the Academy of Science awarded them the rights to hold the Fenner Conference on the Environment. That conference was on ‘Population, Resources and Climate Change’. Now they have been awarded the rights to hold the 2020 Fenner conference, this one on ‘Making Australian agriculture sustainable’.

Jenny has been active for 32 years in AESP/SPA and is currently the national vice-president and newsletter editor. It’s hard work but she gets to do interesting things, such as attend the Conference of the Parties 15 climate talks in Copenhagen in 2009 where they were trying to get population onto the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change agenda. She was in Bonn in 2018 to try to get population included in the Sustainable Development Goals. She has also attended meetings in Washington and London with people from population groups.

After 32 years of hard work, has SPA succeeded? Not really, though there may have been a slight brake on untrammelled population growth in Australia. Back in 1988 when they began, there were 16.5 million people in Australia; now there are 25.4, an increase of over a third. Some would rate this as failure, but the arguments being presented for many years are now starting to be heard. These are not necessarily the environmental ones but ones like infrastructure, where in the major cities it is not keeping up with current population growth rates. And if infrastructure doesn't keep up, living standards fall, along with general environmental amenity.

In Canberra, Jenny is known as a population activist but in Cooma it is for being president of Climate Action Monaro, or CAM. CAM was set up in 2011 by a few friends in Cooma and Michelago. The first meeting at Cooma Public School featured Professor Will Steffen as speaker. He is Australia's pre-eminent climate scientist. When CAM started, there was a reasonable amount of hostility directed towards them but that has lessened with time as the general public comes to understand the gravity of the climate crisis confronting us. CAM's main aim is to educate the public about the science of climate change, and this is done through a weekly email bulletin and twice-yearly public meetings. Last year they were an active part of Repower Monaro whose aim was to have all candidates in the seat of Monaro adopt strong policies on renewables. For their efforts, they were nominated as Environmental Group of the Year by the Nature Conservation Council of NSW. CAM didn't win that award as it went to a group in Gloucester NSW who stopped a coal-mine being built.

Running an environmental organisation has its ups and downs. One of the definite 'ups' was in December last year, when they held a successful meeting at the Cooma Car Club that featured five speakers, including a ten-year old boy Dash Cook from Nimmitabel, and 15-year-old Alexis Cross from Jindabyne. They showed the doco-movie by Damon Gameau about solutions to climate change, called '2040'. A recent 'down' was during this year's O-week at ANU where Jenny was scheduled to give a talk on population aspects of climate change but due to circumstances the talk did not happen.

She is currently an activist on two fronts: population and climate change. Why only two? Because there is a limit to the time and energy that any activist can put into a cause. You need many skills to be an activist, but you also need time to read, to write, to advocate, to organise, to speak. You also need mediation skills because in volunteer organisations, conflicts arise and if you want people to stick around and do the work, then you have to sort out those conflicts.

