

Hills Climate Action Group targets electricity substation

A new grouping of Hills climate activists resolved on May 31 to campaign against the proposed construction of a massive electricity sub-station in state forest in the Hackett's Gully area.

The Hills Climate Action Group was holding its first business meeting after forming at a May 17 public forum.

Hills resident Toni Warden told the meeting that the sub-station project is wrong on many levels and highlighted two major concerns in particular.

"Western Power intend to use the sub-station to reinforce the power grid connecting the metropolitan area with Collie where two new coal-fired power stations are under construction and two more are on the drawing board," she said.

"Coal-fired power stations produce more greenhouse gases than any other form of electricity production and it is appalling that we continue to build new coal-fired power stations in Western Australia."

"Considering the State and Federal Governments have now acknowledged the climate crisis we are all facing, the building of new coal fired power stations should be put on hold until coal sequestration technology is proven. "

Mrs Warden highlighted the destruction of up to 400 hectares of state forest as the second major concern with the electricity substation. "In selecting the proposed area for the project, centred on the Hackett's Gully state forest, Western Power gave no consideration to the environmental or social impacts of the project," she said.

"Burning coal is death for the planet and with less than 7% of forest left in Western Australia the substation is death for the state forest."

Local forums and possible rallies will be organised around the issue.

The meeting also discussed research into solar voltaic panels with the hope of securing a bulk discount for local homes, bulk purchase of water tanks, lobbying local councils on building regulations, waste reduction and footpaths and campaigning for a reversal of the federal government decision on means testing the solar electricity rebate.

"We have a full agenda of real action," meeting convenor Annolies Truman said. "At the end of the meeting one participant pointed to the long list we had on the whiteboard and commented that ordinary people have to work very hard when our governments are owned by the coal industry."

"Our local group is committed to working from the grass roots to make a real difference on climate change. Obviously, we can't leave it to those in power to do the right thing," she said.

The Hills Climate Action Group can be contacted on 9299 6453 or www.wardoffclimatechange.org.au