

People's Climate Rallies call for united action

Over the last weekend in November, global rallies were held across the world in the lead-up to the UN climate talks in Paris, calling for decisive action on climate change.

In the Northern Rivers, large-scale rallies were held in Lismore, Murwillumbah and Byron Bay, while smaller actions took place in Ballina, Brunswick Heads and Lennox Head.

The Lismore People's Climate Rally was held to support the global action on Saturday 28th November, when between 1,100 and 1,500 people turned up in Spinks Park.

Beth Shelley, spokesperson for the Lismore People's Climate Rally, said the response was really amazing. "Many people now are realising that this is a huge issue for their children and grandchildren," she said.

Among the line-up of speakers, which included Mayor Jenny Dowell, was 18-year old Kudra Falla-Ricketts, from the 110,000-strong Australian Youth Climate Coalition.

"Young people are at the forefront of climate action because we know that our futures are at stake," Kudra said.

The Knitting Nannas had a stall and also organised one of the highlights of the day, the Climate Angels, who joined in a singalong with Keith Bale. The No Frills Twins, Rodeo Queen and Blakboi also performed, and everyone joined in a big group photo to send to the UN and AVAAZ as part of the global movement.

Beth Shelley said, "We received hundreds of email contacts from people wanting to be part of a climate change action group and keep the campaign going. Donations poured in, and it was obvious that people from all walks of life want our politicians to act decisively."

The Saturday rally at Murwillumbah attracted 3-400 people, and was addressed by Tweed Shire Mayor Katie Milne and Federal MP for Richmond Justine Elliot.

Greg Reid, from Tweed Climate Action Now, said, "Australia is highly vulnerable to the ravages of climate change – crippling droughts, heatwaves, fires, floods and storms – and per-person we are amongst the worst polluters. Yet our governments are not doing anywhere near enough to address this."



Photo: Brian Alexander

The Byron Bay rally was held on the Sunday in Railway Park, where some 800 people heard speakers call for urgent action by world leaders.

Arakwal spokesperson Delta Kay said: "Today we gather because country is in trouble, our jarjum's (children's) future is in trouble. We must talk with one voice. I'm fearful of my children's and grandchildren's future. Today let's stand strong."

Ecologist and writer Mary Gardiner said, "It's red alert for every coastal place that's three feet or less above sea level."

Other speakers included Labor representative Asren Pugh, Nationals Ben Franklin and Greens candidate for Richmond, Dawn Walker.

MC'd by actor Tony Barry, the Byron rally was entertained by music from Dorset Campbell-Ross, Lucy Gallant, Tim Stokes, Pricila Rios and friends, and 10-year old Spirit Bolton.



Photo: Jeff Dawson, echonetdaily

The rally concluded by marching down Jonson Street with banners and bugles, whistles and drums to Main Beach, where Climate Angels, a drum circle, positive visualisations and a heart-shaped human mandala sent the clear message of all the rallies: "We want action now!"



Murwillumbah's crowd, also Lismore's Climate Angels (above) and Byron's street march (right). Photo: Yastir Assam

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