

The Alternative Journal of the Rainbow Region

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100% renewables by 2030!

by Omega Breakspear

Dozens of climate activists were arrested in Melbourne's CBD less than a week before Lismore's peaceful Climate Strike protest on 20th September.

Extinction Rebellion activists had blockaded the Princes Bridge in Melbourne on the previous Saturday as part of the #weekforfuture climate actions. Police, including mounted police, responded with over 36 arrests and dozens of searches.

By contrast, the local Extinction Rebellion NR had pre-organised with the Council and the police for two blocks of Magellan Street in Lismore CBD to be closed for the 3,460 people who came for Global Climate Strike Day.

"Millions of people from all over the world are standing together today," said Rebel Ruth from Extinction Rebellion at the Lismore protest.

"Young people, workers, families and communities are saying that we want action by those who hold power on climate emergency."

Originally organised by the School Strike for Climate movement, started by Greta Thunberg in Sweden last year, the climate strikes have spread to over 170 countries.

Students from a number of local schools participated in the Lismore protest, despite some high schools allegedly banning their students from striking.

Kids from Nimbin school sang rousing chants as they marched together up and down Magellan Street. Students took photos of their friends with homemade signs and catchy slogans.

"I'm skipping lessons so I can teach you one" was one sign.

Lismore's strike had a festival atmosphere. There were two stages set up with music and speeches.

And there was placard-making, urban art performances, creative letter-writing to the earth, badge-making and getting an EX logo stamped onto your clothes.

Alako Myles from a local high school gave a speech, along with other school students on a stage set up on the back of a small truck. He also played drums at the strike in

a band with other students he'd met at the Nimbin Youth Film Festival.

Alako reminded us we are witnessing the effects of climate change.

"The fire inferno that has engulfed Northern NSW and rural areas of Queensland is destroying homes, natural habitat and animal lives right now," Alako told us.

"And we still have to endure this summer and next summer. Things are only going to get worse unless we have rapid change in Government policy."

He says that the Liberal National Party policies on deforestation and mining spell doomsday for us all.

Alako thinks the archaic attitudes that leaders such as Scott Morrison take towards these issues should have no place in the actions we need to prevent climate disaster.

Community groups and businesses had a chance to show their support for student climate action.

The Lismore Environment Centre's Philippe Dupuy thought it was great that so many different groups organised for the day.

There were stalls that included the Country Womens Association, NEFA, the National Tertiary Education Union and the Knitting Nanas.

Meg Neilson from the Farmers for Climate Action was there. She said they were supporting the strike and ongoing actions.

Over 30,000 farmers involved Australia-wide are working together and with the government for urgent action on climate change.

The problems facing action on climate change are enormous.

A major road construction going on in the adjoining street provided a sobering backdrop to the strike. Big trucks and noisy heavy machinery rumbled on even during an attempted five minutes of silence for the earth.

Some thought it was a lost opportunity to take direct action while the thousands of climate activists were there.

It was all exactly as the crowds at Lismore's climate strike chanted: "This is what democracy looks like."

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