

Take one artist, 1,000
 A powerful and arresting image
pre-loved washing
 that carries an amazing story
machines and a community
 of what is possible when
wanting to act on climate
 concerned people get creative.
change and what
do you get?



THE ORGANISATION BEHIND THIS EVENT WAS CLEAN ENERGY FOR Eternity, a grassroots movement that erupted in the South East last year at the instigation of Bega orthopaedic surgeon, Matthew Nott. Well before the media and politics discovered the issue of climate change, Matthew used his local profile and credibility to build a team and establish a track record of making things happen.

First of all, there were 3,000 people forming a human sign of the word 'Eternity' on Tathra Beach, next came a winter swim of Lake Jindabyne, then a rally in Canberra and a continuing campaign, formally endorsed by Bega Valley Shire Council, to reach 50% energy reduction and 50% renewable energy targets by the year 2020, hence the catchcry (& bumper sticker) of 50/50 by 2020. With this groundswell building and particularly in the Bega Valley, it was just a matter of time before the artists came into play.

More familiar for his large scale metal sculptures, Tanja based artist Richard Moffat was invited by Matthew last year to conceive of a public art installation to help carry the message. His resulting design of a cyclone vortex represents the changing weather patterns indicative of climate change and the unwanted whitegoods were deliberately chosen to exemplify our wasteful and energy hungry lifestyles.

For months beforehand, the call had gone out for the community to donate and collect discarded washing machines, clothes dryers and dishwashers and it wasn't long before the target was reached.

With a team of nearly 100 willing helpers on New Year's Eve, the installation took shape on the river flats between Tathra and Bega with the resulting aerial image appearing in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, ABC TV News, *Canberra Times*, *Illawarra Mercury*, *Capital* magazine and all of the local papers.

At the same time and lending weight to the media coverage, the Tathra Lifesaving Club was re-opened with grid interactive photo-voltaic cells and micro wind turbine systems to reduce the club's carbon emissions by three tonnes and the annual electricity bill by \$1,000. The Clean Energy group has now challenged all other surf clubs to follow suit.

After three weeks, the whitegoods whirlpool was reshaped into '50/50 by 2020' before the machines were then crushed on site for recycling and the farmer got his paddock back.

This project provides another demonstration of the capacity for the arts to engage the community and produce work which helps change the way people not only think, but also act. According to Richard, it's critical for people to feel they can make a difference with the issue of climate change. "People go from ignorance to despair without anything in between. It's important to do something in the middle to create a positive change by changing the way we use energy."

The Clean Energy group recently launched an action plan, detailed on their web page, and South East Arts Region will be looking to support their continuing program and ensure that one of the cleanest and greenest power sources is maximised, namely the creative energy of artists working with communities. ■

goodclean
 by JENNIFER HUNT
art



The whirlpool of whitegoods in Tathra in January. Photo: Robert Hayson

Jen Hunt is the RADO for South East Arts Region (see pp.16–17)

Clean Energy website <http://thebegavalley.org.au/?id=6059>

April

20 – 22 April

 **ST ALBANS** Folk Festival – 3 big days of music, fun and frivolity in an historical township. Including the best of Australia's folk musicians, dance presenters, poets, singers Tel 0418 264 709
 Website www.snalbans.iwarp.com

20 April – 2 May

 *Just Bert* a retrospective exhibition of the art of Bert Nielson, active member of the Art in the Garage Project. Spiral Gallery, **BEGA** Tel 6492 5322

20 April – 3 June

 *Saltwater* Yirrkala Bark Paintings of Sea Country Documentation of the Yolngu people's ownership of land in Arnhem Land. Lake Macquarie City Gallery
BOORAGUL Tel 02 4965 8260
 Website www.lakemac.com.au

21 – 29 April

 **CAMDEN** Haven Music Festival
 A veritable feast of musical instruments joined by dancers and theatre performers in 9 days of entertainment & talks.
 Tel 02 6556 9622 Website
www.camdenhavenmusicfestival.org.au