

## Janet Rice for the Senate

Talk to Casey Cardinia Dandenong Greens branch  
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I want to start tonight by taking us on a journey into the future.

### **A journey to when we have solved the climate crisis!**

A journey to the time when we have solved the climate crisis. When we can look back with relief at having averted a future of heat, droughts, floods, rising sea levels, large parts of the planet being uninhabitable, vastly reduced ability to produce food, vastly reduced water supplies, huge levels of suffering, loss of life, massive extinctions, likely major wars over resources, potential nuclear war.

That's the journey we are on - solving the climate crisis, and with it by the way all the other parallel crises we face – our biodiversity crisis, the fact that we have been on an orgy of non renewable resource use for the last 100 years and surprise surprise now are running out, the human over population of the planet.

### **Why solving it is important**

We have to solve it because suffering it is unimaginable.

I attended the Greens school in outback south west Queensland a few months ago. It was held on the lands of the Kooma people, on a property they own at a place called Murra Murra, 700 km west of Brisbane.

We discussed, you wouldn't be surprised to learn, climate change and the impact it would have on this country, its peoples, its wildlife. It's scary. This is pretty dry country, in the very upper reaches of the Darling River system. We were staying on the only permanent waterhole of the Nebine creek which flows through the property.

Uncle Dave is one of the Kooma elders. He posed the question, where are the Kooma people going to go when their country was uninhabitable?

It's only in the last decade after all the turbulence of dispossession, of being thrown off their land, that they have been able to properly reconnect with country, to look after country, having gained native title, and ownership of a good chunk of land through the indigenous land corporation. They are doing an amazing amount of rehabilitation of their land, fencing off wetlands, looking at carbon farming, involving young people in conservation work, on art projects. It's hard, but satisfying work.

So this is what climate change means to the Kooma people – Murra Murra will most likely be uninhabitable under 2 degrees warming, let alone 4 or 6. Where are they to go? Where are we all to go?

It places new sobering meaning on acknowledging the traditional owners of the land, of knowing that it always was, always will be aboriginal land. How can we truly acknowledge traditional owners, and truly pay respect to their elders past and present with such a future in store?

Climate change will result in the ultimate dispossession for so much of the world's population and wildlife. We can act to stop it. We must.

### **Electing Senator Janet Rice**

That's why I am standing for pre-selection as your Senator. All my adult life I've been an activist. I've been a campaigner for forests, for sustainable transport, as Mayor and Councillor working on climate, energy, transport, for a fair go for everyone in our communities, including the disabled, newly arrived refugees, people struggling to make a go of the challenging hand they've been dealt. I'm currently working with Climate Emergency Network on a project called groundswell which a planned massive mobilisation of the community to act and demand action of politicians and business for a safe climate economy within a decade. I want to take this activism into the Senate, just as I took it into our party twenty years ago. I want to share power with you to achieve change.

I've had parallel careers too – as a mother of two amazing kids now aged 20 and 17, as a consultant in environmental planning, facilitation, community involvement, and as a founder and ongoing contributor wearing many hats of The Greens.

Most recently my current paid work is as a strategic transport planner with Hume City Council in the outer northern suburbs which is really interesting, working at the coal face of a growth area municipality, limited public transport, with a big freight and logistics industry, facing the challenges of just how do we make this sustainable?

### **What I bring**

I bring all of this to the senate – but the areas I feel are particular strengths and passions are climate change, transport and urban and regional planning– including public transport, the shape of our cities and regions, bikes and walking, national freight and ports and transport policy and strategy, underpinned by my underlying connection to nature.

### **My motivation - connection**

My key motivation throughout all the facets of my life is all the peoples and all the amazing diversity of life of our fragile planet.

My politics is driven by connections. John Donne said it so well really

No man is an island entire of itself; every man  
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;  
if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe  
is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as  
well as a manor of thy friends or of thine  
own were; any man's death diminishes me,  
because I am involved in mankind.  
And therefore never send to know for whom  
the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

And when you feel the connections, when you attempt to grasp that what happens to the great barrier reef, to the Alps, to the outback deserts, to the Arctic and Antarctic matters, for the species that live there and for us, not just as a resource, but as beautiful wild places, as inspiration, as nature, then you feel the potential loss.

And I know that leaving others to do something about it is abdicating my responsibility. I am empowered enough to know that what I do can make a difference.

Connection with nature is a driving force for me – from enjoying the beach and swamps of my childhood home in Altona; through camping trips to Wilsons Promontory, and outback South Australia; Lake Eyre with water in it visited as a teenager and again this year; getting to know the magnificent old growth wild ancient forests of East Gippsland as I campaigned to save them... they matter.

The other motivation is that every person on this amazing planet, has as much right as everyone else to live a happy and satisfying life. It's only fair. It's not fair that living a good decent life is be the preserve of rich people in the developed world, that those who have get to have more, that those , who merely because of the accident of where and to whom they were born, should be consigned to much much less.

The other thing that connects together caring for people and nature is that it's people working together that change things. If we want people to care, to live sustainable and just lives, then they have to be in a state that they can care.

If people are struggling to survive, poorly educated, with poor health, in unsatisfying, poorly paid work, if in work at all, then its highly unlikely that they will be able to engage with changes for a better more sustainable world.

And people have to be given opportunities to work together, to feel valued in working for change.

Which brings me to what I really love about working with The Greens – we're working with all of these issues, all at once – everything truly is connected!! And we care. We care about nature, we care about each other, we are committed to working together, working collaboratively, bringing people together.

We can do it – we can achieve great things once we set our minds to it.

Humans have an amazing ability to cope with change once we know it's inevitable . I'm thinking of people I know who have been diagnosed with cancer. The stakes are high, so they submit themselves to incredible medical interventions. We need to get our society to realise that the stakes are high for the planet and the odds of survival are getting worse every day we delay action.

### **We need to create s safe climate economy**

I'm committed to talking economics in this election campaign, because we are the party that makes economic sense. A safe climate economy is the medicine which will bring the planet back to health.

Our current economy is not working, built as it is on endless mindless growth for growth's sake – living beyond our means, living the high life on our credit card and pretending the bill will never come.

There is a simple problem with our current economics – it's based in a made up la la land; where 'externalities' such as depletion of resources, and pollution don't count. It presumes an infinite supply of resources, and an infinite sink for our wastes. It's based on a premise that what happens

and is profitable for someone today is much, much more important than the future –. So even if it's obvious that what's happening now makes no sense when you take a long term view – such as logging old growth forest, and burning fossil fuel; our market economics says that these consequences aren't nearly as important as making money now!.

The good news is that our economy is purely a social construct. We can change it, invent new monetary instruments, - the carbon tax is a small beginning; and make it desirable to invest in the future

**In summary: Why vote for Janet?**

- Experience – but that's not enough. You have to judge me on my future, not my past
- Passion
- Wisdom and judgement
- Deep knowledge about a huge range of issues
- My people skills- my underlying commitment to work with people, to share power, to stay connected
- Ongoing enthusiasm and energy
- I can win – I was elected twice to Maribyrnong Council., the first time with 42% of the vote. I got the biggest swing to The Greens in the state when I stood for Footscray last year.

I'm determined. It's my time. With your help and support, I can win preselection, and I can win the election. I'm ready to be Senator Rice!

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