

CLIMATE CHANGE:IT'S NOT ALL DOOM AND GLOOM

When looking for climate change news we mostly find doom and gloom. Global temperature is rising, glaciers are retreating, snow cover is decreasing. These are all true and scary facts, but it's not all scary, as humankind is making real change, from Ireland setting up the “Deposit Return Scheme”, to the EU creating tougher penalties for illegal logging and environmental destruction. Let's take a look through what environmentalists have achieved in the past few years.

In 2021 a massive covid pandemic was raging and even in these dark times we made some big ‘splashes’ in the war against climate change. In Australia “Coral IVF” helped aid the beautiful Great Barrier Reef: a spectacle to all who witnessed it, but unfortunately it had been dying for some time. In 2020, a study showed that roughly half of the Great Barrier Reef's corals had disappeared in the last few decades. However in 2021 it had seen some recovery with scientists making man-made pools in a process similar to in vitro fertilisation, moving eggs from areas of the reef where coral had been growing and then transferring them in an

effort to regenerate areas affected by bleaching or destruction by humans and storms. This process aided in the birth of a billion new coral babies. The reef is still in danger but scientists and environmentalists hope that technology like this can help bring it back to its full glory.



In 2022, we saw a huge spike in the use of renewable energy, it hit record levels this year. Due to the war in Ukraine countries looked for alternatives to power their homes and businesses, when the EU hit a gas shortage due to Russia's cut off they decided to ramp up the production of renewable energy infrastructure. In the second quarter of 2022, 43% of the bloc's energy mix came from renewables, with 19 of the bloc's member states achieving record wind and solar power generation. While it's true that some countries returned to coal, recent data shows that the EU emissions in November reached their lowest value in the last 30 years. Europe was not alone, with China, and India, which has been largely fueled by gas and coal, making great advancements

towards alternative energy usage.

In 2023 there was bad climate news everywhere as it was the hottest year on record by a large margin but there was also good news, and universally, there will always be positives where there are negatives. Countries and companies cracked down on methane; methane traps about 80 times the heat over a 20 year period and accounts for at least a quarter of overall warming above our pre industrial past. This year the head of the US Environmental Protection Agency announced at the UN climate conference that it will soon require oil and gas companies to monitor their methane emissions across their pipelines, wells, and facilities and sharply reduce leakage. There was other good methane related news at the UN conference as well with major oil companies BP, Exxon, and Saudi Aramco pledging to cut their methane pollution by at least 80% by 2030. As well as that, a handful of other nations joined an international coalition committed to easing global emissions by 30% by the end of this decade, while others stepped up their pledges and funding.

Even though it's still early days in this year, we already have some good climate news such as Hawaii ending reliance on its last coal plant with a battery, yes a battery! They're really showing the world that yes, you *can* have a functional grid without fossil fuels, all you need is one massive battery.

While there's still much work to be done in this fight to save our planet from ourselves we must remember not to get swept up in the horrible, but to always look for the positive.

Always recycle when you can, don't litter and look after your part of the world because we need to look after this planet if we want it to continue to look after us.

By Grace O'Leary

Sources:

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