



MEDIA RELEASE
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Fiddling in Bennelong while the planet burns

Nero Claudius Caesar who ruled from 54 AD was known for his focus on diplomacy, trade, and promoting athletic games and wars. Sound like anyone we know ?

"Nero was the emperor who fiddled while Rome burnt. That's exactly what Mr Howard has done in relation to climate change. He has fiddled while the planet has steadily heated up. In fact he's done worse. His inaction is tantamount to piling fuel on the fire" said Jo Spangaro, spokesperson for Ryde-Gladesville Climate Change Action Group.

"The solutions to climate change aren't a mystery. They have been clearly spelt out by the scientists, the economists and the energy experts. We need to put a price on carbon, end our dependence on coal, bring in decent renewable energy targets, cut emissions and ratify Kyoto to have a seat at the next round of discussions in Bali. But we need to do these things now, not in 5 years."

The Ryde Gladesville Climate group wrote to Mr Howard in August seeking a meeting. Not receiving any acknowledgement to the letter, subsequent fax or phone calls, they decided in their frustration to adopt a new approach to getting their message to Mr Howard. They invited a professional string quartet, who performed today under the name of Fourcast outside Mr Howard's Bennelong office. Passersby enjoyed the tragic strains of "Nearer My God to Thee", remembered as the music played by the quartet in the film "Titanic" as the ship sank. Albinoni's Adagio and "Amazing Grace" were also performed. "This is music for the sinking of a planet" said Liz Gormley, lead violin with Fourcast.

"Mr Howard has been busy letterboxing the electorate telling us that his response to climate change is practical, commonsense and balanced. People in this area know it's really been a case of inaction, indifference and irresponsibility" says Jo Spangaro spokesperson for the group. "Despite the fact he has now started to talk about the issue, none of the things the coalition government have done or proposed will reduce Australia's emissions to the level needed. Valuable time has been wasted in reducing emissions, while other countries have surged ahead. The federal government has made Australia a nation of climate bludgers."

Ryde Gladesville Climate Change Action Group came together in February this year after a group of parents started to share their concerns about government inaction on climate change. It now has almost local 300 supporters. They are not affiliated or auspiced by any other organisation.

Mr Howard will do well to listen to the Fourcast.

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