

STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
5 FEBRUARY 2007 **POLICY AND PLANNING**

A2	LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
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FILE NO.:	
ATTACHMENTS:	CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP – AN INITIAL PERSPECTIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This (Attachment 1) is an inaugural climate change report to Council.

It aims to provide Council with advice on the impacts of climate change on the City of Port Phillip and recommend a *Climate Action Plan* that targets council operations, as well as community capacity.

In summary, the report finds that global warming is already occurring and will profoundly change the planet and climate within the next 20-30 years. This will have irreversible impacts and consequences on growth, development and vital resources, unless we act now.

Local impacts include risks to foreshore activities, assets and infrastructure.

International consensus on the magnitude of action required includes:-

- **Acting immediately to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions**, by the equivalent of about 75% of current emissions within the next 2-3 decades (or 25% decrease in global emissions in the context of a world economy in 2050).

This level of abatement is an unprecedented challenge and is only the necessary, first step in mitigating further global warming. It also means taking immediate adaptation action, within the next decade, to invest in and foster the tools and technology for a transition into low-carbon, climate-adept future – the Stern Review recommends a 2-5 fold increase in investment in green energy technology alone.

The significant and urgent challenges, resulting from climate change, provides an opportunity for Council to demonstrate leadership and good governance in enabling the solutions and tools to building a low-carbon, climate-adept City.

The report recommends a series of actions for Council to consider and commit to, over the next 3-4 years.

These include:-

- Abatement and adaptation,
- Assessments of current management plans,
- The development of new tools, and
- A community climate action campaign.

There are significant implications for both the organisation and the community in terms of climate change, as well as actions.

As climate change does not begin or end at municipal or regional boundaries, Council will also face new challenges in forging regional, national and international collaborations and networks in order to develop an effective global response through local solutions abatement and adaptation.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Council Plan Initiative

During the 2005 Council planning process, the prospect of impending climate change and potential local impacts was raised.

In particular, there was the question of the impact of climate change on Council's Infrastructure and other assets. This found expression in the current Council Plan as *-Recognising the city's coastal location, undertake a literature search on the impact of climate change on the city and advise the council of any implications arising.*

During February-September 2006, Council established energy and water use data systems that established Council had reduced its greenhouse gas emissions (16% less than in 1996) and water use (39.4% less than in 2001).

This was followed by data collation on community energy and water use.

As a municipality, water use has decreased by about 20% over the last five years but greenhouse gas emissions has risen significantly, to 28% more than in 1996.

In September 2006, Council commissioned the **NATCLIM research group (Earth Systems & Planning Research Centre, University of Sydney) to develop a climate change case study for the City of Port Phillip, to provide an initial assessment of local climate change impacts and the resulting planning considerations for Council.

NATCLIM is a major research project that seeks to gather data at a local, municipal level in order to understand the local impacts of climate change and how to best plan for the likely effects. Council was briefed on the project on 2 October 2006.

Completed in January 2007, the report provides an initial assessment of potential climate issues and their associated risks for this City; the consequences on impact areas – built environment, water management, transport infrastructure, tourism and the natural environment and the resulting abatement recommendations, for

Council to consider in actively reducing the City's exposure to climate change.

** Council is currently in the process of updating its umbrella strategy on environmental sustainability - the *Toward Zero - Sustainable Environment Strategy 2007 (draft)*. The SES sets clear targets, timelines and directions for nine key sustainability challenges. These include greenhouse gas abatement, water conservation and reuse, and climate adaptation.

Emerging Global Consensus on Climate Change

Over the past 6 months, some clear and convergent directions on climate action have emerged, as a result of three significant events or reports.

They are:-

The Fourth IPCC Report on Climate Change –

The final report will be released in early February 2007 but its' initial assessment findings, on climate change, are that climate change is accelerating and there is now a greater risk of reaching the upper limits of estimated temperature rises for the second half of this century.

It is also anticipated that on current trends, we will have doubled carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere to 550-600 parts per million by 2050 (since pre-industrial times) – this equates to a 3-6°C rise in global average temperature.

The Stern Review of the Economics of Climate Change – Commissioned by the British Exchequer and prepared by Sir Nicholas Stern, it was released in October 2006. It looks at the global consequences of climate change as well as greenhouse gas abatement and climate adaptation action on the planet, people and the economy.

The Stern Review gives an international and regional focus on the scale and tools of abatement and adaptation required within the next decade. It also provides the implications on government and economic policy and decision-making.

In essence, the Review argues for a strong global response to greenhouse gas abatement and investment in green energy technology within 10-20 years to avert the worst impacts of climate change. Stern recommends acting now at a cost of around 1% global GDP per year and a 2-5-fold increase in investments in low-carbon technology.

UNFCCC Twelfth Convention of Parties on Climate Change –

Held in Nairobi, in December 2006, a primary outcome was a consensus that a 2°C temperature rise is now the aspirational target for climate stabilisation by 2050.

This equates to seeking to limit the atmospheric levels of Co2 to 450ppm and aligns with the Stern Review and IPCC Report findings.

It endorses the need to dramatically cut greenhouse gas emissions over the next 10-20 years to 25% below current levels by 2050.

In real terms, this is the equivalent of abating over 75% of greenhouse gas emissions (on 2000 levels) in order to stabilise Co2 concentrations in the atmosphere by 2050.

A Shift in Community Concern

In recent months, there has been unprecedented shift in community concern and understanding of climate change, reflected by increased queries on climate change, as well as requests for assistance.

This could be attributed to several factors, none of which alone would have produced such a shift.

From September/October 2006 onwards, climate change has taken a prominent place in the thinking of the community, as reflected by the almost daily commentary of both the print and electronic media.

Some of the factors leading to this shift are:

- Increasing community concern over climate change and its emerging impacts
- An Inconvenient Truth – the release of both the film and the book by Al Gore confronted people with the seriousness of climate change in powerful and new ways.
- The worst drought in living memory – widespread and worsening drought in Australia provided tangible experience of the effects of climate change. Increasing water restrictions, an early and extreme fire season and hardship on the land, provide daily reminders of climate change and its effects.

RECOMMENDED OPTION

Climate Change in the City of Port Phillip – an initial perspective

This report aims to provide an overview of the local climate change impacts and the resulting consequences and challenges facing the City.

It also aims to provide some clear emerging directions, considerations and implications for Council and its' community.

Part 1

Executive Summary – Provides all findings and conclusions at the global and local levels and provides seventeen (17) recommendations as an Action Plan for timely Council assessment and consideration

Part 2

Gives an overview of the scientific and economic case for local and global action on climate change. It explains the causes and effects of climate change. It also includes the outcomes of the UNFCCC 12th Convention of Parties at Nairobi in December 2006.

Part 3

An examination of the City of Port Phillip's climate footprint – greenhouse gas emissions, water use and availability, climate change impacts and

their associated risks (NATCLIM report), and the resulting climate challenges faced by the City.

Part 4

The emerging policy and strategy directions – for Australia and internationally and some emerging directions for Council collaboration and advocacy on climate change.

Part 5

An outline of current Council actions and recommendations, forming an Action Plan for Council assessment, consideration and actions between 2007-2010 to achieve a comprehensive action plan of local, regional and global greenhouse gas abatement and climate adaptation.

An Opportunity for Council Leadership

To date, Council has demonstrated community stewardship and good governance in the greenhouse gas abatement and water conservation areas through awareness, information and community behaviour change programs.

Largely, these programs have focused on community awareness and self-help.

Climate change adaptation, across the municipality, is an entirely new sustainability challenge for Council.

As such, **Council has an opportunity to show leadership through more comprehensive greenhouse gas abatement, water conservation and the introduction of climate change adaptation for the City.**

Climate change discourse can often result in alarmist or doomsday community views that leave individuals, groups and communities feeling helpless, ineffective or disengaged from the 'problem'.

While we are facing significant climate change challenges, they are not currently insurmountable.

Council's governance, leadership, advocacy and capacity building roles are primarily about enabling –

- *Community engagement with the solutions to abatement and adaptation*
- *The community to undertake and increase actions that work*
- *Key stakeholder and regional collaboration to leverage shared investment and resources in developing a low-carbon, climate-adept City and community.*

There is the opportunity for Council to engage with the community in a different way, through a **Community Climate Action Campaign**.

This is one of the seventeen (17) recommendations in the attached report – a draft outline is provided in Appendix 3.

An initial campaign would target individual, neighbourhood and community awareness and capacity to undertake abatement and adaptation measures. It would include a Community Climate Forum and a Community Climate Action Kit.

Further opportunities

The most significant opportunities are those provided by the potential for regional collaboration and advocacy to -

- Leverage the development of good public policy and investment in local sustainability action;
- Strategically pursue change strategies and public policy changes that enable local abatement and adaptation and
- Develop local innovation and tools.

Longer-term community campaigns that can build on an initial Community Climate Action Campaign include:-

- .15.1. Carbon Challenge 1000 – encourages energy efficiency and greenhouse abatement champions across the municipality
- .15.2. Water Challenge 1000 – encourages water efficiency and reuse champions across the municipality
- .15.3. Sustainable Precincts – encouraging community collaboration and cooperation to achieve local adaptation and abatement.

Criteria for recommendation

The recommendations of the Climate Change Report provide a significant and strategic Action Plan of the assessment and consideration of current and emerging Council activities to become a low-carbon, climate adept City and community.

This Action plan is important in progressing the aims and priorities of the –

- Council Plan
- Council Challenge 2
- Environmental Pillar.

Sustainability assessment

Economic Pillar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net increase in Council expenditure on abatement and adaptation measures. <p>However, a business-as-usual approach will result in considerably more expenditure on abatement and adaptation measures in 10-15 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscally responsible, as it assesses the consequences of climate change on local assets, infrastructure, systems and activities of value.
Environmental Pillar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows a strategic and effective approach to climate change and its associated abatement and adaptation measures. • Takes a responsible and precautionary approach to climate change. • Net increase in policy and program requirements.
Cultural Pillar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .Demonstrates good governance and leadership to the community • Builds community capacity
Social Pillar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an equitable format for enabling community climate action.

Policy and legislative implications

As outlined in the **Recommendations for Assessment and Action** (refer the Executive Summary of the Climate Change Report), there are several policy and legislative implications across a number of different Council areas .

For instance, the implications are that Council assess the adequacy of its drought and stormwater management plans in view of estimated climate change impacts.

As outlined in the recommendations, Council is asked to consider implementation of the recommendations in a timely manner.

These assessments, undertaken over the next six (6) months, will require extensive cross-Council consultation and provide a more comprehensive picture of the policy and legislative implications.

Resource implications

While climate change action will have resource implications, until a closer assessment as outlined in the recommendations is made, it is impractical to estimate the resource implications.

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The opportunity to influence behaviour change in the community is unique, given a new level of concern about climate change.

The resource implications associated with new broad-scale campaigns should be referred to the findings of the recommendations of the report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

This is Council's inaugural Climate Change Report and one of the first Local Government climate change assessments performed in Australia.

There are no alternatives offered, at this time.

PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This initial report, discussion paper and set of action recommendations have just been completed and are presented to Council, in the first instance.

As such, the findings should trigger a comprehensive cross-council consultation process.

It is recommended that this process is undertaken during February and March 2007, ahead of a scope and assessment of implications for each of the recommendations and a further report to Council.

Internal

The people who will be engaged with in relation to this issue include City Development, Asset Planning, Building & Maintenance, Asset Design & Delivery, Statutory Planning, Strategic Planning, Business & Tourism and other Environment Units such as Sustainable Transport and Sustainable Design.

The primary aims of consultation will be to share the findings and develop formats for assessing climate change consequences on council assets and capacity, ahead of the scope and assessment of implications for the recommendations.

External

The external organisations who will be engaged with in relation to this issue are:

- The Association of Bayside Municipalities
- IMAP
- Department of Sustainability & Environment, Melbourne Water and Sustainability Victoria.
- The Municipal Association of Victoria.

It is intended that these organisations be briefed on the report and consulted on the emerging opportunities for regional collaboration, investment in local abatement and adaptation outcomes and advocacy priorities.

The Sustainable Environment Consultative Committee will also be consulted.

COMMUNICATION

Some sections of the NATCLIM report on local climate impacts contain sensitive information which needs to be assessed from a risk perspective before being made available to the community.

With regard to community concern and awareness, the Community Climate Action Campaign is seen as a primary vehicle for communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:

1. Notes the findings of the report on climate change; which recognises that global warming is already occurring and will profoundly change the planet and climate within the next 20-30 years, which will have irreversible impacts and consequences on growth, development and vital resources unless we act now to abate greenhouse gas emissions and become climate-adept.
2. Undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the implications of the following recommendations and develops an action plan on climate change and that, a further report be brought to Council advising of their cost implications, resources required and the frameworks for how these can most efficiently be employed.
3. Further considers the recommendations of the Report, as the basis for an assessment and action plan on climate change, which will include the following:
4. Council will work with key state, federal and regional stakeholders, with a view to gaining the following outcomes across the municipality by 2020, as outlined in its *Sustainable Environment Strategy 2007* –
 - 50% reduction in community greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 (from 2000 levels)
 - 50% reduction in community water use by 2020 (from 2000 levels)
5. Council will initiate a Community Climate Campaign to manage community concerns and expectations regarding climate change, as well as enable community capacity in greenhouse gas abatement and climate adaptation.
6. Council considers the following targets for its corporate activities in its *Sustainable Environment Strategy 2007* –
 - Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2020
 - 70% reduction in potable water use by 2020 (on 2000 levels)
7. Council enhances its' development of energy efficient facilities, infrastructure and street lighting through Council's *Energy Management System*
8. Council enhances its' development of sustainable and low-emissions transport modes and infrastructure, in collaboration with key stakeholders
9. Council develops a strategy to move toward onsite, grid-connected renewable energy generation for its buildings and facilities
10. Council enhances its' use of recycled water and stormwater for irrigating public parklands, reserves, parks & gardens, in collaboration with key stakeholders
11. Council enhances its' development of water-wise and drought-tolerant parks, gardens, reserves and water management systems

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12. Council promotes water-sensitive urban design in all council developments and redevelopments and planning requirements.
13. Council promotes water-sensitive urban design to develop a City with increased permeability, reduced water needs, & climate adept systems & infrastructure across the municipality
14. Council advocates to expand the scope of NATCLIM, regionally to the Association of Bayside Municipalities (ABM) to provide the following primary outputs –
 - Comprehensive local climate data, modeling and research across Port Phillip Bay over the next 4 years
 - A Local Government climate risk assessment tool to strategically identify priorities & develop solutions
 - Regional collaboration to achieve the remaining recommended outputs.
15. Council undertakes an assessment of Council infrastructure with regard to the capacity to be climate-adept – this includes an assessment of Council’s storm water and drainage systems, road infrastructure, in identified risk areas such as coastal roads and low-lying areas and coastal public amenities
16. Council undertakes an assessment of Council assets with regard to capacity to be climate adept – this includes most of Council’s public buildings, coastal parks and reserves and recreational facilities along the foreshore.
17. Council undertakes an assessment of Council’s management plans and contracts with regard to managing climate change impacts, particularly in - drought management, beach cleaning and maintenance, vegetation management, site development or redevelopment.
18. Council advocates for changes to state planning policy for sustainable and climate-adept built form through the planning and zoning process.
19. Council considers the development of a planning tool that works side-by-side with the STEPS/SDS tool to assist all developments, redevelopments & renovations in the municipality to become more sustainable and climate-adept.
20. Council undertakes an assessment of the local economic and social effects of climate change with regard to primary council units, such as Business & Tourism and Aged Care Services.
21. Council Increased efforts to regionally advocate for and collaborate on, climate change action through Council’s current regional Local Government forums such as IMAP (Inner Melbourne Action Plan) and ABM (Association of Bayside Municipalities).