

## 8.4 Community Wellbeing

### 8.4.1 Response to Petition - Declare a Climate Emergency

**Directorate:** Sustainable Communities

**Councillor Portfolio:** Environmental Sustainability - Cr Jonathon Marsden and Cr Sandra Wilson

**Appendices:** Nil

#### Purpose

To respond to the petition, containing 681 signatures (293 from Hobsons Bay residents), requesting that Council declare a climate emergency.

#### Motion

**Moved Cr Sandra Wilson, seconded Cr Angela Altair:**

**That Council:**

1. **Notes that Council declares a climate emergency and is accelerating a range of actions in response.**
2. **Continues to actively implement climate change actions in adaptation and mitigation through the Climate Change Policy and fast tracking emissions reduction programs.**
3. **Notes the opportunity to consider climate change in the next review of the Council Plan (incorporating the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan).**
4. **Continues to advocate to all levels of government to urgently introduce effective policy, legislation, funding and action to address climate change.**
5. **Writes to the lead petitioner advising of the outcome.**

**Carried unanimously**

#### Recommendation

**That Council:**

1. **Notes that Council recognises the climate emergency and is accelerating a range of actions in response.**
  2. **Continues to actively implement climate change actions in adaptation and mitigation through the Climate Change Policy and fast tracking emissions reduction programs.**
  3. **Continues to advocate to all levels of government to urgently introduce effective policy, legislation, funding and action to address climate change.**
  4. **Writes to the lead petitioner advising of the outcome.**
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## Summary

Council has a strong commitment to addressing climate change supported by a suite of climate change policies. These have a strong bias to action, including fast tracking direct action to reduce corporate emissions. Council works actively with the community to build resilience and strengthen the ability of our natural and built environment to respond to the impacts of climate change.

At the Ordinary Council Meeting on 9 July 2019, Council received a petition requesting Council declare a climate emergency. Council recognises that we are in a state of emergency and is already taking a wide range of actions to respond to climate change. Current policies include the Climate Change Policy 2013; actions within the Climate Change Adaptation Plan (Council has reviewed the existing plan, consulted with community on broad actions, and will be finalising the new draft Plan shortly); the Corporate Greenhouse Strategy 2013-20; and the Community Greenhouse Strategy 2013-30.

## Background

Council received a petition on 9 July 2019 consisting of 681 signatures, 293 of which are residents of Hobsons Bay. The petition reads as follows:

*'We ask the Mayor and Councillors of Hobsons Bay City Council to declare a climate emergency with the following actions:*

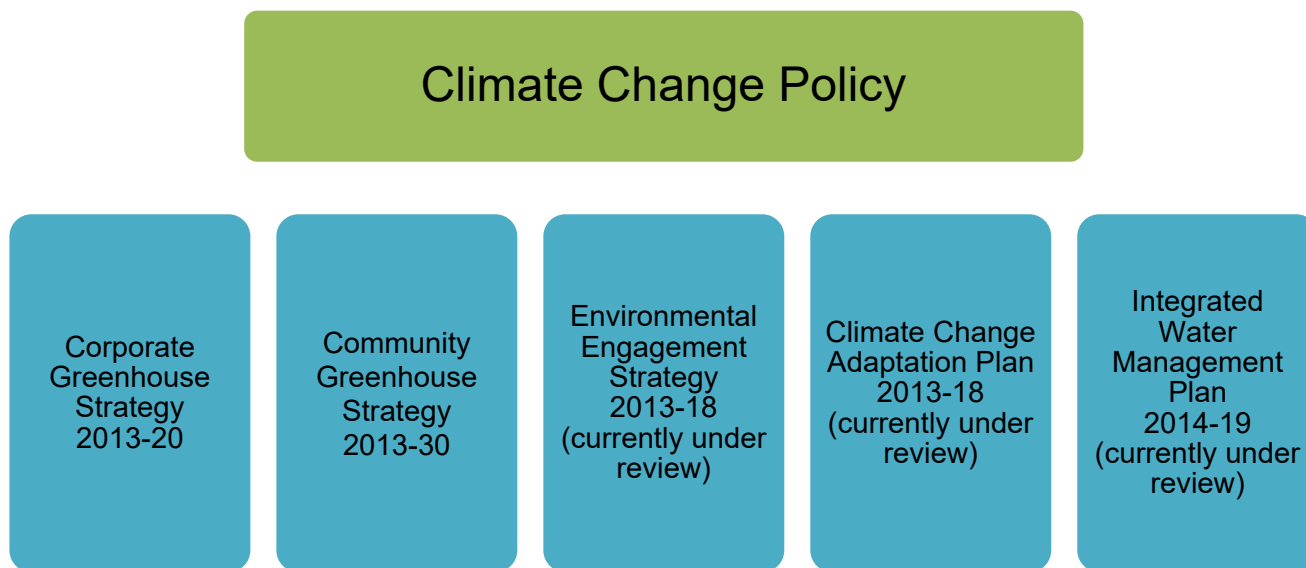
- 1. Declare that we are in a state of CLIMATE EMERGENCY that requires urgent action by all levels of government, including local councils.*
- 2. Immediately review the Hobsons Bay City Council Plan, and Greenhouse and Adaptation strategies and plans to take URGENT ACTION to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contribute a fair share to the drawing down of the excess carbon in the atmosphere and respond STRONGLY to the impacts of climate change.*
- 3. Encourage other governments to declare a CLIMATE EMERGENCY.'*

The climate emergency declaration and associated petition, led by Darebin City Council, was launched in May 2016. Over 30 jurisdictions across Australia have declared a climate emergency, including the Australian Capital Territory Government. The climate emergency declaration seeks to restore a naturally safe climate through a rapid transition to Zero Net Emissions across all sectors. It aims to achieve this via support for scientific evidence and a specific approach to mobilise and take action.

Transition Hobsons Bay is a local community group that initiated the petition. Transition Hobsons Bay aims to inspire and promote local responses to climate change whilst supporting neighbourhoods to build resilience in the face of climate change.

## Discussion

Council recognises the climate emergency we are facing and has a strong commitment to addressing climate change. Council has been actively working to address climate change over a number of years. Council's climate change planning is framed by an overarching Climate Change Policy, and supported by a number of more detailed plans (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Council's climate change planning framework to respond to climate change**

Through the above mentioned planning framework Council has undertaken a series of actions providing both mitigation and adaptation outcomes, as well as fast tracking emissions reduction projects. This includes:

- reducing Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions by 16.5 per cent since 2013 and commitment to Zero Net Emissions by 2020, including fast tracking infrastructure to reduce Council's total energy consumption by 70 per cent over the next ten years
- joining the Local Government Power Purchasing Agreement tender process to decarbonise the remaining 30 per cent of Council's electricity through the purchase of renewable energy
- trialling hydrogen vehicles and updating the Council fleet to electric vehicles
- installing and trialling electric vehicle charging stations for community
- implementing a significant coastal Capital Works Program to reduce vulnerability to sea level rise, storm surge inundation and erosion, and advocating to the Victorian Government to play a more active role in coastal management in light of climate change
- developing a Coastal Management Plan
- supporting the development of stormwater harvesting projects
- implementing community programs such as growing food at home, My Smart Garden, and retrofitting homes to respond to extreme temperatures
- delivering the Future Leaders Program in collaboration with CSIRO and students from years 9 and 10
- developing a Sustainability Leadership Program to enable the development of emerging leaders
- becoming a signatory to the Global Covenant of Mayors
- implementing the Cool Streets project which substantially increases tree planting in residential streets, with extensive tree planting (approximately 36,579 tree seedlings and tube stock planted in 2018-19)
- drafting an Urban Forest Strategy to further accelerate the establishment of tree canopy across the municipality
- adopting the Waste and Litter Management Strategy 2025 to achieve a circular economy for the municipality's waste and litter
- advocating to the Victorian and Australian Government for legislative and policy change

The Council Plan is prepared on a four year cycle, informed by a range of community consultation and supporting documents. One of these is the Climate Change Adaptation Plan, which is currently being reviewed and revised, to update our adaptation strategies. The community will have an opportunity to review this draft Plan and provide feedback within the next few months. Hobsons Bay 2030 Community Vision, the leading organisational Plan, also has a strong focus on sustainability and informs current and future Council Plans.

Some of the most important levers to address climate change and the climate emergency are held by other tiers of government. National and state emissions targets, setting a price (or tax) on carbon, and investment in infrastructure that can withstand the effects of climate change, must be priorities for federal and state governments. Council will continue to advocate to all levels of government to urgently seek action on policy, legislation and funding changes to address climate change.