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Climate Change Project Team
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
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To Whom It May Concern

Climate Change Adaptation Plan Discussion Paper

Hobsons Bay City Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of Victoria's second Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Council has a strong commitment to action on climate change through mitigation and adaptation measures within our Corporate Greenhouse Strategy 2013-20 and Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2013-18.

The overall direction of the discussion paper is supported in principle. It is recognised that all levels of government will need to work collaboratively to effectively manage the impacts of climate change. Council is encouraged by the Victorian Government's attention to the management of climate change and would welcome of the creation of strong links between the Climate Change Adaptation Plan, actions from the Climate Change Act review and the Victorian Government's 2050 target.

However Council believes that further discussions are needed between different departments at all levels of government to assist in building a shared understanding of how climate change impacts their service areas. This is a critical first step to enable both the management of climate impacts and clarification around roles and responsibilities.

Hobsons Bay City Council welcomes any additional opportunities to provide input into the development of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Should you wish to discuss the submission further please contact Kathleen McClusky, Manager Strategy and Advocacy on 9932 1004 or email kmclusky@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Chris Eddy

Chief Executive Officer



Hobsons Bay City Council Submission to the Climate Change Adaptation Discussion Paper

Hobsons Bay is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Immediate action is necessary to build capacity to respond to the challenges of climate change, enable a more effective response, and minimise economic and social impacts.

Climate change presents many challenges for Hobsons Bay including higher average temperatures, reduced rainfall, extreme weather events and sea level rise. It is important for Council to provide the community with information on how to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and how to adopt environmentally friendly behaviours.

The discussion paper covers three main areas: land use planning (discussion topic 1), infrastructure and asset management (discussion topic 2) and state and local government collaboration (discussion topics 3 to 5). While each of these areas is important there are many more service areas that will be impacted by climate change. In each of these cases cross governmental collaboration will be advantageous to the community. Additional service areas include, but are not limited to: community wellbeing and public health, emergency management, economic development, biodiversity management and “soft” or “green” infrastructure such as parks and trees. Council would encourage consideration of each of these issues.

Discussion topic 1: Climate change adaptation in land-use and urban planning

Land use planning relating to climate change, population growth and dealing with state government’s strategic directions and objectives is a complex issue for Hobsons Bay. In Hobsons Bay two of our major activity centres (Altona and Williamstown) are located on the coast. On the one hand the state government policy is to manage coastal hazard and not increase densities and on the other the policy is to increase development and densities around centres like Altona and Williamstown. There needs to be an appropriate decision making framework around these conflicting issues to ensure sound land use planning decisions are being made.



Council foresee amendments to overlays and particular provisions to enable a local or area specific response for the inclusion of particular types of adaptation responses. An overlay is helpful to create transparency as it has a visual element showing where it applies. Whereas a particular provision may be more relevant for municipal wide controls. An example of this is the Environmentally Efficient Design amendments submitted by several inner Melbourne local councils gazetted by the Minister for Planning on the 19 November 2015, which would address mitigation issues.

Council agrees that training will be an important component of building the skills base to enable climate appropriate solutions to be incorporated into land use planning. Training should be extended to land use planners, Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal members and Panels Victoria members to ensure awareness throughout the planning and appeals process.

To improve awareness within the development industry, Council suggests that training should be extended to developers and professionals who are involved in the planning process. Social planners, civil engineers and other consultants play a key role in providing guidance on development applications.

An important action for this plan is in clarifying liabilities to local governments in relation to land use planning decisions and the impacts of climate change. Providing a statutory defence for local governments acting in good faith and on best available science to prepare for, reduce and adapt to climate change risk should be an important action for this plan. The example used in the discussion paper of the NSW government's immunity would be a good precedent for this adaptation plan to consider.

Discussion topic 2: Climate change adaptation in Infrastructure and asset management

As Victoria's population increases, demand for the use of coastal areas increases. Coastal councils are required to cater for access and infrastructure needs in excess of the demand created by their own residents, as residents from inland municipalities utilise coastal municipality infrastructure, particularly in summer months. This results in coastal councils being required to support and improve local infrastructure that has a regional benefit. There is no acknowledgement within the discussion paper regarding



the current lack of clarity and inconsistencies regarding the defined property boundaries and associated roles and responsibilities. In the absence of this it is assumed that local government is responsible (particularly where Council is the appointed Committee of Management (COM)) however the majority of COM delegations are not clear and are inconsistent. This results in inefficiencies and inconsistent management of assets along the coastline, which may protect coastal areas from the impacts of climate change such as sea level rise. The state needs to develop tools and methodologies to support local government but as a priority the property boundaries and roles and responsibilities need to be clarified/confirmed.

Climate change impacts must be taken into account during infrastructure and asset management planning. Planning and design processes should be informed by the most up-to-date climate change prediction information available to ensure that the conditions expected throughout, and for the entirety of, an asset's life are considered. For example, if a drainage system is planned to be updated every 80 years, the design should consider climate change impacts over 80 years.

When determining what actions should be prioritised to improve the resilience of infrastructure it is important to look at management systems as a whole and pair appropriate actions. For example, prior to requiring, 'local government to produce infrastructure and asset management plans that address climate change risk,' it would be useful to develop methodologies or tools to, 'support local government to assess exposure of infrastructure and assets to climate impacts.' If the state government were to lead on developing these tools and strategies this could reduce the differences in assessment practices that may eventuate if left to individual local councils. It may also assist in a state-wide approach and subsequent related works based on impartial findings.

Council supports the development of design standards that clearly address climate impacts. Where appropriate these should be linked to land use planning requirements to ensure that public and private development clearly address climate impacts. The standards will need to be reviewed and updated as our knowledge of the impacts of climate change grows and improves.



Council agrees that mechanisms to increase the availability of funding for infrastructure upgrades designed to improve resilience to the impacts of climate change is important. Current funding for foreshore works is targeted at renewal only rather than improving the resilience of existing infrastructure. In Hobsons Bay, the current fiscal environment is limiting the scope of works which can be carried out. For example, the Altona foreshore needs an increase in the height of the sea wall. Funding mechanisms should continue to support regional approaches to ensure consistency across local government boundaries and achieve cost efficiencies.

Trees

Hobsons Bay City Council, as a member of the regional urban greening initiative Greening the West, supports increased urban greening to reduce the urban heat island effects and its impacts on health and improve water and air quality. However a target to achieve these outcomes should be broader and more flexible than simply looking at numbers of trees. Species choice, in relation to extreme weather, width and density of canopy cover along with water availability and permeability influence the mitigation of urban heat islands. The use of Water Sensitive Urban Design and passive irrigation solutions have a significant influence over the extent of urban greening and cooling. Solutions such as green walls and facades have been shown to effectively reduce urban heat islands, improve air quality and are suitable for areas where there is physically no space for a broad canopy tree. A range of solutions are needed on both public and private land to improve urban greening and reduce urban heat island impacts.

Council currently manages conflicting land management needs by recognising that different solutions are needed in different areas. For example high use and highly urban sites around activity centres may be a high priority for urban greening and the inclusion of dense canopy trees while streets abutting conservation areas may be a high priority for the inclusion of native species.



Discussion topic 3: Information state government can provide to assist local government

Council sees it as critically important to integrate the climate change adaptation and mitigation management into the governance and planning of all levels of government, including Council. Climate change is an organisational risk and should be treated as such. Training on these risks will increase organisational capability and reduce the onus on sustainability or climate change officers having to lead the organisation on adaptation. It is also key that other areas of council operations receive information for future service planning. Capacity building and the sharing of learnings is an important component of achieving this outcome.

Council supports the suggestion to make the latest science and climate predictions available in a readily accessible format. Information sharing along with tools such as a database or knowledge hub would assist to inform decision making. Any tools, guidelines, standards and responses should be evidence-based and use the best available science to ensure transparency and accountability.

Discussion topic 4: Supporting local government adaptation work

Critical to the success of this plan is capacity building within local government, state government departments, partner organisations such as health and emergency management service providers, and the private sector, including the transport and land development sectors.

With the consideration of rate capping, Council suggest that innovative financial mechanisms are used to enable funding of works and systems to improve resilience to climate change. Rate capping will constrain Council's capacity to invest in the exploration of new and untested works and systems. Public private partnerships should be considered where adaptations serve multiple stakeholders, for instance large developments adjacent to coastal areas.

Council would like to see an incentive program developed, aimed at increasing the resilience in existing biodiversity priority areas and adapting existing biodiversity areas by expanding the extent of suitable species and improving landscape connectivity.



Discussion topic 5: Governance arrangements for adaptation between state and local government

As recognised within the discussion paper, further clarity is needed around roles and responsibilities for climate change adaptation. However, many Council service areas do not yet fully comprehend what the impacts of climate change are likely to have on their service area. This limits the ability of governments and their agencies to attribute responsibilities in a way that is meaningful and beneficial. It is therefore recommended that, prior to clarifying roles and responsibilities, discussions take place to further explore and build understanding of the impact of climate change within each service area. These discussions should also include stakeholders from all relevant levels of government and any partner organisations and service providers.

Prior to reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding between the state and local governments it is important to review the existing governance arrangements already in place. Relevant legislation that has implications for governance arrangements and should be considered in the review includes: the *Local Government Act 1989*, the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, the *Climate Change Act 2010* and *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The review should identify any gaps and any areas that would benefit from improvement. This information should then inform a revised Memorandum of Understanding.

A cross-disciplinary approach is required to manage the impacts of climate change. The many alliances, including the alliances for greenhouse action, Municipal Association of Victoria, and Planning Institute of Australia all have a role to play in the transition to creating a climate resilient future.

