



26 February 2016

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
PO Box 500
Melbourne Vic 8002

Ask for: Kathleen McClusky
Phone: 9932 1004
Our Ref: A2311481

Dear Sir/Madam,

Victorian Climate Change Framework: Public Submission

Hobsons Bay City Council welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the development of the Victorian Climate Change Framework. Council supports the development of this framework and sees it as a necessary action to strengthen Victoria's response to climate change through coordinated efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and commencing measures to increase our community's resilience.

The key points in the attached submission primarily relate to local government issues that should be addressed within the framework. The Framework should:

- provide support to the community to overcome barriers to make greenhouse gas mitigation more affordable and accessible to all
- provide coastal councils with more resources so they can effectively manage regionally utilised infrastructure and natural assets
- clearly define roles and responsibilities to address climate change mitigation and adaptation and ensure that adequate resources exist, or are planned, to fulfil them
- contain direct links to other government departments and legislation to ensure that a comprehensive and holistic regulatory framework exists
- provide direct support, including funding mechanisms, to existing organisations and groups that are already taking well-planned and effective action to mitigate emissions and planning for adaptation measures

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I trust that the attached submission provides valuable input. If you would like to discuss this submission further, please contact Kathleen McClusky, Manager Strategy and Advocacy on 9932 1004 or email kmccclusky@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Eddy
Chief Executive Officer



Hobsons Bay City Council: Victorian Climate Change Framework Submission

Introduction

At the Climate Change Leadership Forum, The Hon Lisa Neville, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water called for rigorous conversation about climate change and the government direction in this space. In this spirit, Hobsons Bay City Council provides this submission in the confidence that rigorous conversation will result in significant action.

Hobsons Bay City Council, supports the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Paris in 2015 that, at present, climate change adaptation is important but that climate change mitigation is critical.

Council has adopted a Climate Change Policy (2013) which states Council's targets to: reduce its own emissions to zero by 2020; support the community to reduce its emissions to zero by 2030; and respond to the risks of climate change to Council assets and services and assist the community to be more resilient to the effects of climate change. Supporting this policy are adopted strategies being the Corporate Greenhouse Strategy, Community Greenhouse Strategy and a Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Implementation of each of these strategies is well progressed but climate change mitigation and adaptation can be challenging and costly for local councils.

In order to achieve sustainable change, councils need to work in partnerships, require supportive resources (such as research, tools or data) and value reliable funding streams. Clear direction about climate change action is required from both the Victorian Government and the Australian Government in order for stakeholders to invest in projects that will contribute to the solution. Council supports a framework that will lead and support communities in climate change mitigation and works towards thriving and resilient Victorian communities.

Resources for local climate action

The provision of direct support, including funding mechanisms, to existing organisations and groups that are already taking well-planned and effective action to mitigate emissions and planning for adaptation measures.

Council recommends that the Sustainability Fund be referenced as a primary source of funding. This fund is clearly appropriate, with one of its legislative purposes as defined by the *Environment Protection Act 1970* being to foster 'community action or innovation in relation to the reduction of greenhouse gas substance emissions or adaptation or adjustment to climate change in Victoria.' Over the past five years, there has been little investment by the Victorian Government to address climate change despite the extraordinary accumulation of funds in the Sustainability Fund during this time. According to Sustainability Victoria's 2014-15 annual report the fund's closing balance as of 30 June 2015 was \$384 million.

Local councils like Hobsons Bay, are showing leadership by continuing to reduce greenhouse emissions from their own operations and assisting their residential and business communities to reduce their emissions. Similarly, regional alliances such as the Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action (WAGA), are working in significant partnerships to reduce community emissions.

In addition, local councils are working to increase community resilience and protect and manage biodiversity assets of Victorian and Australian significance. Financial support to assist this work is critical to permit them to continue and expand such actions.



Effective and comprehensive legislation

The Climate Change Framework should contain direct links to other government departments and legislation to ensure that a comprehensive and holistic regulatory framework exists to cross-support related objectives within legislation and to deliver multiple benefits that span across government departmental portfolios. An example of where this is already occurring is the requirements under the Climate Change Act for preparing a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. Council supports this approach and recommends that it be utilised across State Government and its agencies.

Costs to coastal councils

As Victoria's population increases, and the effects of climate change increases, demands on the use of coastal areas increases. Sea level rise, low land flooding, storm surge and storm bite impacts are all coastal climate change risks. 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. Local councils with significant regional coastal assets should be supported to assist the effective management of regionally utilised infrastructure and natural assets. This could occur as direct support for the implementation of local and regional adaptation plans and to facilitate additional research as required.

Roles and responsibilities

The existing lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities is one of the most serious barriers to adaptation and mitigation. While the Climate Change Adaptation Memorandum of Understanding (2014) between the Victorian Government and the Municipal Association of Victoria acknowledges the need to provide more detail and practical application of roles and responsibilities under the Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan, improvement in this area is yet to be seen.

The framework should clearly define roles and responsibilities for addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation and ensure that adequate resources exist, or are planned, to fulfil them.

The existing lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities being one of the most serious barriers to adaptation as was clearly identified in the Productivity Commission's report, *Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation (2012)*.