

COR/2894

1 August 2008

Premier of Victoria
Climate Change submissions
GPO Box 4912
Melbourne Vic 3001

Dear Premier

Victorian Climate Change Summit Paper

I welcome this opportunity to comment on the Victorian Government's *Climate Change Summit Paper - A Climate of Opportunity* on behalf of Bayside City Council. Bayside City Council has a strong commitment to greenhouse gas mitigation and adapting to climate change. It is reducing its operational greenhouse gas emissions and developing climate change adaptation strategies. Bayside City Council is assisting the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. It is recognised that effective partnerships with governments is essential for responding to the key challenges with climate change. In this context I wish to participate in the development of government climate change policies.

The City of Bayside is primarily a residential suburb of around 92,000 people and 34,000 households, so households and the metropolitan region is a specific interest. It is recognised that climate change is a global issue that will affect all sectors of the economy and regions. Ultimately a global solution is required for climate change. This submission follows the structure of the Summit Paper.

Par A Context

Government climate change policies and initiatives will ultimately impact on local communities so it is appropriate that local governments actively to contribute to the development and implementation of government climate change policies. It is noted that the key driver for the Victorian Government's review is the Australian Government's new policy agenda for climate change. The Australian Government's climate change policy is still evolving and the detail of this policy agenda is yet to be finalised.

The recent release of the draft report for the Garnaut Climate Change Review (July 2008) and Australian Government's *Green Paper for a Carbon Reduction Scheme (July 2008)* illustrate the complexity of this policy challenge. The two documents total over 1000 pages and will not be finalised until the end of 2008. The documents say that climate change policy will be the most significant structural economic reform of the Australian economy since the 1980s. It is appreciated that the Victorian Government is working with the Australian Government and other state jurisdictions

to introduce these reforms. At this stage it is difficult to comment on the Australian Government's policy agenda with certainty until it is completed and understood. It appears that Australian Government policies will impact on Victorian Government initiatives such as the Renewable Energy Target and Victorian Energy Efficiency Target. This response assumes that these matters are being addressed within current government processes.

The draft report for the Garnaut Climate Change Review (July 2008) and *Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Green Paper* (July 2008) suggest the early introduction of a carbon-trading scheme. The Green Paper flags that the Australian Government will introduce a carbon pollution reduction scheme by 2010. The introduction of such a significant reform by 2010 is a very ambitious and will impact of all sectors of the economy. Communicating and providing information the implications of these changes to local communities and businesses will be important. Anecdotal evidence suggests there is uncertainty in the community about these matters.

The Summit Paper refers (p 7) to a new era of cooperative federalism as an opportunity for addressing climate change. It will be important that local government participates as an active partner in this process because it is the level of government that works closely with and assists communities. As mentioned in the Paper (p 21), the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord process has helped improve dialogue and collaboration between local governments and the Victorian Government for addressing environmental sustainability issues such as climate change. It will be important that this is continued for the implementation of government policies and initiatives for managing climate change. This will require adequate resources for programs.

The paper (p 2) refers to the Victorian Government's target for a 60% reduction by 2050 compared to 2000 levels. Recent scientific reports suggest that this target may not be sufficient to manage the risks associated with dangerous levels of climate change and more dramatic action is required over the next decade. Many local governments, businesses and government agencies are setting more ambitious greenhouse reduction targets or developing carbon neutral strategies. This will provide context for the review of Bayside City Council's operational greenhouse reduction targets. Government targets will provide an important context for local governments' efforts in assisting the community to reduce its greenhouse emissions.

Part B Framework For Action

The 'subsidiarity' principle is mentioned in the paper (p21). The application of this principle to local government climate change activities means that local governments should have a key role in providing leadership and working with local communities (e.g. behaviour change activities). Through its Residential Energy Assessment Program (REAP) Bayside City Council is providing residents with skills and knowledge to undertake residential energy audits. This is a very resource intensive and requires considerable support. Achieving community wide residential targets may require much larger programs that are jointly funded by state and local government. It should also involve government support for community climate change action groups.

Bayside City Council has supported and partnered with the Bayside Climate Change Action Group (BCCAG) to deliver programs and actions that assist residents with understanding and responding to climate change. BCCAG has been a valuable partner with delivering community events and programs. The group comprises volunteer residents with a modest budget to undertake important community activities. Often the residents balance their volunteer work with other commitments such as employment and raising families. It is important that these groups are recognised as key partners for delivering programs. Consideration should be given to government support for these groups, perhaps in a similar way to the support that has been provided for regional greenhouse alliances.

Bayside City Council's work with the community indicates that more emphasis should be given to the provision of practical information and advice for the community. This should include more demonstrations of practical measures and face-to-face contact. The establishment of local community information and demonstration hubs may assist with this. This could be a joint-initiative between Sustainability Victoria and local governments.

These activities require the policy and regulatory frameworks to support programs. The recent achievements with reducing water consumption in Melbourne demonstrate the importance of regulatory measures to complement education, awareness and behaviour change programs. In this context the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (VEET) scheme is relevant. It is understood that regulations for VEET are scheduled for release in early 2009. At the moment there is little awareness or information about VEET however the target for a 10% reduction by 2010 appears ambitious if the scheme is introduced in 2009. The need for immediate action on climate change suggests that a series of more ambitious targets and measures is required. The role of local government in VEET is unclear. Local government could play an important role in the VEET scheme, for example a certificate process.

The paper (p 21) refers to the role of local governments in climate change through its statutory planning role. Like many other local governments Bayside City Council is seeking improved environmental performance in the planning system. Buildings are responsible for just under a quarter of Australia's greenhouse emissions and should be a priority for greenhouse gas abatement measures. Local governments' activities are constrained by government policies and regulation (e.g. planning scheme). Stronger direction and actions is required from the Victorian Government to achieve improvements in urban form. Council looks forward to the next generation of the 'Five Star' performance standard for planning controls to improve environmental performance however this appears to be some time away.

The suggestion (p 23) for sustained and continued investment in public transport is supported. Provision of public transport infrastructure is a key element that is missing from the implementation of Melbourne 2030. Improvements are required for public transport services in the City of Bayside particularly for the Sandringham railway line and bus services in southern parts of the municipality. In view of the concern for immediate action about climate change it is important that these measures are implemented as priorities.

The Summit Paper says (p 24) that the Victorian Government will continue to work with local governments and communities to explore and develop local adaptation

measures. Further progress with this would be welcome. Bayside City Council participated in a pilot climate change adaptation project with ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability. It involved identifying and assessing key climate change risks. Bayside City Council's involvement with this initiative demonstrated the need for supporting local government to develop climate change adaptation initiatives and the importance of a coordinated approach with government, particularly for drainage and coastal management where the management responsibility is shared.

Impacts of climate change on coastal areas are a specific concern. In this context the release of the Victorian Coastal Strategy and the Future Coasts project in 2009 may be helpful. A coordinated approach and resources will be required to assist local governments develop risk management plans and adaptation strategies for their communities. Statewide guidance and assistance will be required to assist local governments. Bayside City Council has had some initial involvement with Melbourne Water regarding the Port Phillip and Westernport Flooding and Drainage Strategy. Further progress with the implementation of this work would be welcomed.

Strategic Directions for Victoria

The Summit Paper's 10 strategic directions for Victoria and the specific questions have been considered. The strategic directions are adequate however the real challenge will be implementing measures to achieve them. Directions and questions that refer to the influence of a national emissions trading scheme are problematic at this stage because the specific detail of the scheme has not been finalised. Council has listed measures under the most relevant strategic directions. This response lists measures that have been identified from consideration of the Summit Paper's context and framework for action.

Supporting an ETS with complementary measures that smooth the transition for the Victorian economy (including the built environment and transport infrastructure).

- Stronger policy direction and regulation for more environmentally sustainable built form.
- Stronger direction and support for localised provision of energy and water infrastructure. This should include greater incentives and support for installation of photovoltaic technology, water tanks and co-generation schemes.
- Greater priority for and investment in improved public transport services.

Assisting households to adjust to the rising costs of electricity, fuel and other commodities

- Stronger support for community behavioural change programs that are delivered in partnership with local government.
- Improved information provision such as the establishment of community information hubs for providing information and practical assistance with implementing energy efficiency measures and behavioural change.

Increasing our knowledge about climate change impacts and adaptive needs and possibilities

- Providing state-wide guidance and support for local governments to develop local climate change risk management and adaptation plans.
- Developing of integrated risk management and climate change adaptation plans for shared responsibilities such as coastal and drainage management

Supporting Victorian individuals and communities to get active on climate change

- Coordinated implementation of regulatory measures such as VEET scheme, with local government as an active partner in their delivery.
- Expansion of the VEET scheme beyond the residential sector with a schedule for emission reduction targets.
- Recognition and stronger government support for climate change action groups to deliver community greenhouse abatement programs. This could follow that provided for regional greenhouse alliance programs.

I look forward to participating in the review process, including the release of the Green Paper.

Yours faithfully

Adrian Robb
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER