City of Port Phillip

Consultation Submission:
Climate Change Summit Discussion Paper

June 2008

Introduction

The City of Port Phillip (CoPP) welcomes this opportunity to provide a submission on the Victorian Government's Climate Change Summit Discussion Paper – *A Climate of Opportunity: Summit Paper*.

The recommendations made in this submission are a result of the City's practical efforts and experience as outlined in the *Background* (below) and focus on the identified and real opportunities and challenges that face densely populated, inner urban, foreshore municipalities. This submission covers recommendations in three key areas –

- Recommended State Government Approaches to Climate Change Policy & Action
- Recommended Primary Needs & Instruments for Greenhouse Gas Abatement
- Recommended Primary Needs & Instruments for Adapting to Climate Change.

The recommendations across these three key areas pertain to proposed strategic directions Nos. 3-10 as outlined in the Climate Change Summit Discussion Paper (pages 27-30).

Background

In January 2007, the City of Port Phillip formally committed to an urgent agenda for municipal-wide and regional action on both greenhouse gas abatement and climate change adaptation. This followed a council-commissioned study into the local impacts of climate change on the municipality over the next 40-50 years (please see Attachment A for a summary of the results). The City is currently updating its local climate impacts data ahead of initiating a detailed in-council assessment of the municipality's climate change adaptation needs over the next 20 years, in particular, the areas of:

- Infrastructure management
- Assets, buildings and development management
- Foreshore management
- Stormwater and flood-risk management.

This assessment of local adaptation needs will also point to some **critical amendments and new approaches that may be required in State and Local Government legislation, tools and funding instruments to build community resilience to climate change**. It is anticipated that the assessment will be completed by December 2008.

In June 2007, the City's *Toward Zero Sustainable Environment Strategy* set targets and timelines for substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, potable water use and waste across both council operations and community sectors in the municipality (Please see Attachment B – *Toward Zero Sustainable Environment Strategy*). These include:

- zero emissions and a 70% reduction in potable water use in Council operations by 2020
- a 50% reduction in community emissions and potable water use by 2020.

Council-introduced actions in its operations are currently projected to deliver at least a 50% permanent reduction in emissions and potable water use by 2012 or sooner. Council has moved to dramatically increase the delivery of community programs, incentives and community building that target measurable savings in energy and water use. However, as faced by other Cities and Shires, the primary challenges for the City of Port Phillip lie in:

- **gaining sufficient community engagement and action to deliver significant measurable reductions**
- **the absence of practical state-wide tools and instruments that can accelerate this agenda to match the science-based targets.**

1. Recommended State Government Approaches to Climate Change Policy & Strategy

The Victorian Government is urged to incorporate the following approaches when developing climate change policy and strategy -

1.1 Adopt current science-based targets and timelines for both abatement and adaptation action, utilising an adaptive management approach

The City of Port Phillip believes that the State Government must urgently move to adopt the latest science-based targets and timelines for climate change action. Further, the State Government is urged to utilise adaptive management approaches that update targets and strategies as science provides better information. The State Government must demonstrate proactive leadership by using current climate science data to develop timely policy and strategy if it is to meet the primary challenges of climate change.

- There is a significant disjunct between current science-based and state-set targets and timelines.
- Without realistic targets and timelines, the Victorian community faces the disadvantage of a 'time and policy lag' in understanding the urgency of action required to build climate-friendly opportunities, solutions and resilience.

1.2 Ensure that climate change policy and strategy is incorporated into relevant core business across State Government

The City of Port Phillip urges the State Government to develop an integrated, whole-of-state-government implementation framework for its climate change policy and strategy to ensure consistent interpretation and practice across all relevant core business areas.

Climate change policy and strategy is not an exclusive and self-contained action area (such as the Department of Climate Change) – its effective delivery lies in decentralising action, collaboration, leadership and innovation through the relevant core business areas. For instance, an umbrella policy with greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets and actions should further relevantly enunciate into the primary drivers and targets for core business in all state agencies and departments involved in the management of the primary activities that result in greenhouse gas emissions including stationary energy, transport, planning and building development, waste management and product stewardship.

1.3 Ensure a collaborative approach with key stakeholders to determining modelling needs, tools, instruments and minimum standards

The City of Port Phillip urges the State Government to take a collaborative approach to developing and implementing its climate change policy and strategy to ensure consistency, local relevance, effective application and measurable progress. Further, the State Government is urged to advocate for and support collaborative COAG (coalition of Australian Governments) approaches to the development of regional and national climate change policy and strategy.

1.4 Provide urgent clarity and capacity in the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) to ensure currently relevant sustainable design principles and adaptation responses to assessed risks

The State Government must work with key stakeholders to introduce clarity and capacity in the SPPF for the improved environmental performance and resilience of local built form and development. As a minimum, such a framework needs to consider building efficiency (energy, water, waste), increased onsite permeability, stormwater treatment (WSUD), and relevant adaptation responses to minimise local climate impacts (eg. storm damage, flooding inundation).

1.5 Enable the state-wide development of local planning schemes and amendments that include sustainability principles and locally relevant climate change adaptation needs

The City of Port Phillip believes the State Government must urgently review its current assessment formats for amendments to local planning schemes (LPPF Clause 21 & 22) to enable the inclusion of sustainability principles and climate change adaptation measures in line with current Local Government policy and strategy.

- While some Cities have been successful in seeking such amendments (City of Melbourne – office developments, City of Manningham – Doncastor Hill), others have not (City of Bayside – stormwater and WSUD)

- Bayside cities have particular cause for local planning scheme provisions that address sustainability and climate change adaptation provisions.

2. Recommended Primary Needs & Instruments for Greenhouse Gas Abatement

Working with key stakeholders, the Victorian Government must proactively initiate the urgent provision of a variety of instruments to enable and measure community and Local Government action in abating greenhouse gases. These recommended instruments are as follows:

2.1 **Provide consistent and currently relevant sustainability principles in built form & development, and ensure consistency and clarity on the correlation between planning permit conditions and building regulations**

The State Government should urgently update the Victorian planning framework and building code to ensure a minimum standard of at least 6 star FirstRate (or equivalent) for building design and development. Further, it should urgently move to provide clarity and consistency across both building and planning provisions by requiring sustainability principles and updated minimum standards in both.

- The current planning framework does not support the enforcement of appropriate standards of environmental performance for Victorian buildings and development. This continues to result in poorly designed and resource-inefficient buildings as well as inconsistent standards in building performance, particularly in typical inner-city developments such as mixed-use developments and existing dwelling extensions.
- The current planning framework and building code updates for improved environmental performance in buildings and development (current and planned) are already inadequate within the context of current climate science.
- There is a lack of state support of the use of proven tools that assist developers and property owners to design for sustainable built form (eg. the STEPS & SDS tools). Further, the FirstRate tool has not met its intended outcome in reducing energy use in new dwellings.
- As a minimum, building design needs to consider solar orientation, passive cooling and heating requirements, 5-6 star energy and water efficiency ratings, onsite energy generation, water harvesting and reuse, onsite stormwater treatment (water sensitive urban design) along with the use of thermally efficient and sustainably sourced building materials with a low carbon footprint.

2.2 **Provide state-wide formats for timely, relevant and comparable community greenhouse gas emissions aggregation**

The State Government must introduce formats for the provision of timely, consistent and comparable greenhouse gas emissions data and profiles across all Victorian community sectors by local postcode, to ensure the availability of the intelligent data so necessary for the design of relevant and targeted actions and solutions.

- A primary gap exists in the availability of local emissions data, making it difficult to understand local community emissions profiles or design and target relevant and effective actions and solutions. This is further complicated by the fact that private retailers hold much of the information and are currently not contractually obliged to either collect or provide emissions profiles by postcode. Yet this data capacity is already available for water use.
- The current formats used in Victoria for community greenhouse gas emissions aggregation vary widely depending on the availability, timeliness and source of data; making the task of developing, understanding and comparing local community emissions profiles complex, time-consuming and assumptive.
- Current formats for community greenhouse gas emissions profiles remain simplistic and are not capable of adequately quantifying community greenhouse gas emissions from consumption and lifestyle activities (do not go beyond stationary energy, transport and waste emissions). Such activities are estimated to be responsible for as much as between 30-50% of total emissions per person. Without a more sophisticated model for demonstrating community emissions profiles, there is a significant risk of disenfranchising community engagement and participation in currently unconsidered but highly relevant abatement activities.

2.3 Provide state-wide formats for the evaluation of community greenhouse action programs to measure progress toward emissions reductions

The State Government must work with key Victorian providers of community action programs to develop evaluation tools and formats that enable the aggregation and regional comparison of measurable progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Further, such evaluation instruments need to be widely applicable yet provide consistent information across different community programs and action areas.

- Without such evaluation mechanisms, Victorian communities are missing out on a primary opportunity to understand and improve on which actions work and why
- Evaluating what works is an absolute necessity given the urgency and magnitude of the task required in rapidly abating greenhouse emissions to meet science-based targets and timelines
- Evaluating what works and demonstrating results is a proven primary motivator to increasing continued community engagement in abatement actions.

2.4 Accelerate the implementation of sustainable public lighting – energy-efficient lights, fittings and cost-shared upgrades

The State Government should –

- Work with key stakeholders to establish an accelerated plan for the installation of energy-efficient public lighting across the state, with upgrades cost shared in an equitable and transparent manner between electricity distributions businesses, retailers, Local and State Governments.
- Work with the Essential Services Commission (ESC) to improve and speed up the processes for efficiently testing, approving and adopting emerging energy efficient lighting technologies. For instance, the 2 X 14 Watt T5 light currently under consideration as a replacement for the 80 Watt Mercury Vapour public light still needs its OMR (operation, maintenance and replacement) charge set by the ESC despite over 5 years of testing and evaluation by various agencies.
- Reduce the current limitations of a regulated monopoly of public lighting to adopting the other potential improvements available for sustainable public lighting (eg. active reactors, compact fluorescents).
- Introduce incentives and requirements for electricity distribution businesses to improve the efficiency of their public lighting assets.

2.5 **Increase sustainable transport options**

The State Government should work with key stakeholders and transport providers to –

- Ensure the incorporation of science-based targets and timelines into all State transport core business (management, infrastructure development, major projects) to reduce transport emissions
- Develop a targeted and time-lined plan for increased public transport and bicycle use across metropolitan Melbourne, particularly in exchange for car-trips over 3 kms
- Provide sufficient resources to fully investigate alternative fuel technologies and the development of their infrastructure (eg. electric and hydrogen-fuel stations) to enable Victorians to switch to more low-carbon fuel alternatives
- Support the use of small and fuel-efficient vehicles, whether locally or overseas manufactured, including a requirement for all government fleet vehicles to meet minimum fuel-efficiency standards
- Advocate to the Federal Government to implement fringe benefits tax (FBT) equity between fleet cars & public transport tickets/cycling to increase the exchange of work-related car trips for public transport or cycling.

2.6 Enable local renewable energy generation to both reduce state-based coal-fired electricity and meet new demand

The State Government should work with key stakeholders to develop a plan to enable community and Local Government-led opportunities for supporting the decentralised generation and distribution of renewable energy (particularly wind, solar, cogeneration and tri-generation) on group blocks of private properties and community facilities to support local and regional energy demand. Decentralisation provides the additional bonus of increased energy security and supporting grid-connected transmission efficiencies. Community-led local initiatives could include the following:

- Group residential solar installations supported by State and Federal Government rebates regardless of income (or at least equivalent to the baby-bonus cut-off household income of $150,000) with a 75% subsidy for low-income households

- o Renewable energy infrastructure development support for aesthetically pleasing, well designed and locally supported onsite generation (wind or solar) at public and community landmark and foreshore sites of significance
- o Incentives for local renewable energy supply to meet new demand.

2.7 **Minimise waste emissions through the development of relevant waste management and processing technologies**

The State Government should work with the Metropolitan Waste Board to significantly subsidise and establish new waste technologies that utilise processes which minimise emissions and waste to landfill, and are capable of energy extraction from waste. Further, Sustainability Victoria and the Department of Sustainability & Environment need to ensure that the Victorian *Towards Zero Waste Strategy* is updated to reflect a primary aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maximise energy extraction from waste.

2.8 **Enable the potential to utilise crown land as carbon sinks and support 'sister-city' agreements to utilise corporate offset contributions to this effect**

The State Government should work with Local Governments and key stakeholders to enable the utilisation of crown land (including foreshore areas) as carbon sinks, provided there are nationally accredited formats for calculating greenhouse sinks. Further, the State Government should support 'sister-city' agreements between urban and rural/regional municipalities to develop carbon sinks and biodiversity corridors. There is significant potential for urban & large provincial cities to leverage –

- o Funding through developer contributions to develop foreshore areas as carbon sinks, with the potential further benefits of reducing foreshore erosion and sea-surge /flood calming
- o Corporate offset contributions and schemes to fund rural and regional shires and their communities to develop biodiversity corridors and carbon sinks.

3. Recommended Primary Needs & Instruments for Adapting to Climate Change

In consultation with other government sectors, the Victorian State Government should initiate the urgent provision of a variety of instruments to enable timely community and Local Government action in building resilience and adapting to climate change. These recommended instruments are as follows –

3.1 Be a climate data information hub of timely state-wide climate change risk assessment and modelling support

The State Government is urged to act as an 'information incubator and provider' on regional and local current climate change risks and data, which in turn enables proactive regional action to understand local climate change impacts and implement adaptation responses and solutions. The State Government is already using systems capable of intelligent data (such as LIDAR), has modelling units in various state agencies and ready access to Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO data – all of which make it an ideal candidate for this role. Further, the State Government needs to lead in the collaborative development of consistent risk modelling and assessment formats to ensure accurate and comparative analyses of local climate change risks.

3.2 **Work with key stakeholders to incorporate locally relevant climate change adaptation requirements and principles in the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF)**

The State Government should work with Local Governments and other key stakeholders to –

- o Urgently determine key climate change risks and develop adaptation tools and minimum requirement responses to such risks in the SPPF (eg. vulnerability to sea level rises, flooding, inundation, erosion, fire)
- o Support local planning scheme amendments that address flooding management
- o Allow climate change adaptation interventions to be retrospectively brought on developments that have occurred or are proposed (eg. through development controls)

There is also a need to enable local scheme provisions to protect Local Governments against liability from past planning decisions (in line with SPPF) when developments are affected by climate change impacts.

3.3 Incorporate consistent and current water sensitive urban design (WSUD) requirements across all developments as soon as possible, including strengthened and correlated minimum requirements in the SPPF and building code

The State Government should take a whole-of-government policy commitment to WSUD, particularly with regard to the following:

- Strengthened and consistent WSUD principles in the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF), with related WSUD requirements in the building code
- Strengthened regulatory requirements for stormwater recycling and reuse utilising WSUD treatments
- Development and financial support for WSUD applications across major impact activities (such as roadworks and carparks)

3.4 Increase community capacity for water harvesting, water recycling and reuse

The State Government should increase community access and capacity for water harvesting, recycling and reuse, particularly with regard to domestic capacity for recycling water for flushing and irrigation. To this end, the Victorian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is urged to provide more accessible, updated and clear water recycling and reuse conditions for flushing and other domestic applications.

3.5 **Increase infrastructure development and regulatory support for stormwater reuse and storage**

The State Government needs to –

- Work with Local Governments and water authorities to provide accelerated development support for stormwater harvesting, treatment, storage and reuse; particularly for the irrigation of public parks, sports and recreational spaces (there is enormous potential to apply WSUD in the treatment of stormwater as well as use treated stormwater for public space irrigation)
- Move urgently to develop stronger regulatory requirements for stormwater recycling.
- Meet a significant need to develop a stormwater storage plan for Inner Melbourne (identifying suitable sites and use arrangements across several municipalities).

3.6 With key stakeholders, develop updated Flood Management & Mitigation Plans by 2010 for areas at risk of inundation

The State Government must work with Local Governments, water authorities and Catchment Management authorities to develop an updated Flood Management Plan for Metropolitan Melbourne that addresses the following:

- Update the Planning Scheme Special Building Overlay mapping areas of inundation in the 1 in 100 year storm across Melbourne to reflect verified current climate change scenarios, incorporating both Melbourne Water and Local Government stormwater catchments (whole-of-stormwater-catchment mapping)
- Prevention, flood calming and drainage strategies for foreshore, tidal and floodplains management in built areas
- Regional partnerships to address, develop and implement local flooding solutions
- Regulatory requirements for flood calming and management on private land and foreshore built areas identified as at risk
- Development controls and flood management requirements for foreshore developments.

3.7 Work with all Victorian bayside Local Governments and their communities to develop a Foreshore Management & Response Plan for Victoria

The State Government must work with bayside Local Governments and their communities to develop a Foreshore Management & Response Plan for Victoria that addresses the following:

- The protection of existing assets and infrastructure from sea level rises & inundation
- Coastal erosion and the loss of beaches
- Foreshore development and use.

3.8 Support the cultivation of 'Urban Green Corridors'

The State Government is urged to work with key stakeholders to support the cultivation and preservation of urban Green Corridors, to provide cooling in a progressively hotter and drier climate, enhance local biodiversity and migrating fauna protection.

3.9 Work with Local Governments to develop/update Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMP) to assist community safety and protect vital infrastructure services

The State Government is urged to work with Local Governments to develop or update relevant and supported Municipal Emergency Management Plans that address the following:

- Formats to assist local community safety, including safe community transportation, community assembly and support points
- The protection of vital local infrastructure services.
- Assist to educate the community about the role of local governments and state governments in emergency management planning
- Provide grants to local communities to assist them to plan for emergencies and mitigate risks in local areas
- Provide grants to local communities to assist them to recover from emergency events

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