



COMMITTED TO A
SUSTAINABLE
PENINSULA

4th August 2008

Premier of Victoria
Climate Change Submission
GPO Box 4912
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Premier,

RE: A Climate of Opportunity - Summit Paper

Please find attached the Mornington Peninsula Shire Submission to the Victorian Government Climate Change Summit Discussion Paper.

Mornington Peninsula Shire supports the endeavours by the Victorian Government to engage the community on climate change issues and welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the discussion paper.

In reviewing the Discussion Paper, four key issues were identified by Mornington Peninsula Shire. These issues should be viewed as fundamental considerations in the development of the State Government Climate Change Strategy. These issues are:

1. Community Engagement and Empowerment
2. Industry and Skill Development
3. Public Transportation Networks
4. Land-Use Planning

Additional commentary has also been provided addressing the ten strategic directions contained within the document.

I would be pleased to provide additional information on these matters if required. For further clarification please contact my office on the telephone number provided below.

Yours faithfully,

Alison Leighton
Team Leader – Renewable Resources
Mornington Peninsula Shire



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Victorian Government Climate Change Summit Discussion Paper

SUBMISSION

To

Premier of Victoria

Organisation: Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

Address: 90 Besgrove Street
Rosebud VIC 3936

Postal Address: Private Bag 1000
Rosebud VIC 3939

Contact Name: Alison Leighton

Title: Team Leader – Renewable Resources

Facsimile: 03 5950 1254

Email: alison.leighton@mornpen.vic.gov.au

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Mornington Peninsula Shire contains a population of approximately 145,000 people, increasing to over 190,000 during the summer peak period, and occupies a significant 720 square kilometres. The municipality has coastal boundaries of over 190 kilometres which comprise 10% of Victoria's total coastline.

The Shire is a mixture of urban areas, resort towns, coastal villages and rural land. There are significant areas of residential growth including Mornington, Mount Martha, Somerville, Rosebud and Hastings.

This coastline abuttal is a major asset and attraction for the residents and visitors to the Mornington Peninsula Shire. The majority of the population resides within 1 km of the coastline – particularly around Port Phillip Bay.

The Council and the Community of the Mornington Peninsula Shire therefore see climate change and its impact on coastal reserves and the adjacent communities as being one of critical importance.

Mornington Peninsula Shire is a member of the Westernport Greenhouse Alliance and as such has been involved in a significant number of climate change related projects and initiatives. The most notable being *Impacts of Climate Change on Human Settlements in the Western Port Region: An Integrated Assessment*. This recently completed, two year project, partly funded by the Federal and State Governments, with analysis being conducted by the CSIRO, examines in detail the impacts climate change will pose on the communities of the Western Port Region. To disseminate this information to our communities Mornington Peninsula Shire will be delivering twelve 'Climate Change Conversations' at various townships throughout the municipality during the month of August. These meetings which focus on both mitigation and adaptation issues constitute a significant climate change consultation program with the residents of the Mornington Peninsula and provide a real example of climate change education and empowerment in action.

Key Issues for Consideration

The following five key issues have been identified as the most significant factors facing Mornington Peninsula Shire in the context of mitigating and adapting to climate change. These issues should be given full consideration and attention in the development of the draft Victorian Government Climate Change Strategy.

1. Community Engagement and Empowerment

Meaningful community engagement is critical to achieving a high level of support and participation regarding climate change adaptation.

A common challenge faced by all levels of Government is the ability to engage with a broad spectrum of the community regarding issues of importance. There is a need to move from traditional methods and provide a diversity of options for community engagement. Identification of the barriers that limit the community from having their say is necessary, as is the need to put measures in place to resolve these.

Engagement innovation is needed to reach those in the community we commonly refer to as 'the unreachable'. During the development of the upcoming Victorian Climate Change Strategy, different and diverse methods of consultation will need to be sought to ensure there is broad community input into this issue which will ultimately impact on each and every Victorian.

2. Industry and Skill Development

Opportunities for new and expanded markets to meet the current and emerging skill requirements should be targeted to areas where they will provide the highest financial, social and environmental benefits. The *working closer to home* model which was developed by Interface Councils aims to deliver local jobs for local people living in the Interface and will not only reduce vehicle emissions, it will reduce the cost of living and increase quality of life.

Very high numbers of Mornington Peninsula Shire residents travel very long distances to work, including a significant number who work in inner Melbourne. This not only has a high environmental costs associated with vehicle emissions, it also impacts both financially and socially. These individuals incur high travel costs and unduly long working hours. Governments also struggle to address these issues with only limited funding for road and public transport infrastructure improvements.

A concerted focus on *working closer to home* provides significant opportunities to not only reduce carbon emissions, but improved living affordability and quality of life for residents living in Interface areas and on the outer fringe of Melbourne, such as those who reside in the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

3. Public Transportation Networks

The differential impact of increasing transport costs on different communities threatens to create significant socio-economic divisions. Public transport systems must be tailored to communities needs and deliver an adequate level of service that is safe, convenient and affordable.

Public transport on the Peninsula has undergone a number of major improvements, particularly over the last 5 years, including increased frequency and hours of service, and a substantial reduction in fares. However, more improvement is required to provide an adequate level of service to those residents who are public transport dependant before we can seriously expect a significant behavioural shift from those residents who are currently car dependent.

A sizeable modal shift from private transport will not be achieved unless an adequate public transport system is developed which is competitive in regards to cost and convenience.

4. Land Use Planning

The summit paper indicates that the most significant risks in the land use planning sector come from changes in extreme weather events, and from sea level rise and associated impacts.

The specific issues of coastal impact, infrastructure capacity, changing fire regimes, water demand and supply etc will clearly require an effective response. However, the community also looks to land use planning as a key means of expressing a coherent and integrated vision for the future, bringing together transport, infrastructure planning, land use, built form, service delivery etc.

The Mornington Peninsula community accepts the need for change but seeks to direct that change in a way which retains the distinctive form and character of their unique coastal and rural environments. In other words, to adapt while remaining distinctly non metropolitan. This will require an effective planning partnership with the State government, involving a higher level policy framework which leaves scope for local choice in the forms of implementation.

Response to the 10 Strategic Directions

The following table provides feedback on the Strategic Directions identified in the discussion paper. The feedback has been provided within the context of the Local Government sector and as such focuses on those issues pertinent to Local Government operations and considerations.

Strategic Direction	Issues for Consideration
<p>1. Positioning Victorian Industry to capitalise on the new jobs, new technologies and new markets that will flow from the transition to the low carbon economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of strong and resilient industries that have the capacity to access opportunities arising from the carbon market will require support from all levels of Government. • An approach which identifies and communicates these opportunities to all stakeholders will result in maximum benefit being obtained. • Local Government should be engaged by State and Federal Governments on an ongoing basis to ensure that these opportunities integrate with existing land use and structure planning processes, and to ensure that any changes to such frameworks are communicated and accepted by local and/or regional communities. • Adequate engagement with Local Government and transparent discussion will more readily facilitate changes at a local and regional level. • A strategic and consultative approach should be adopted when citing regions where such sunrise industries could be established. Factors such as unemployment, accessibility and regional development should be carefully considered in assessing possible locations. • Local Government are often the best placed level of government to showcase new technologies through demonstration projects. These opportunities should not be discounted. Partnership opportunities between academic and/or research bodies, State or Federal Government authorities and Local Government should be encouraged. Appropriate funding should be provided to establish and showcase such technologies to the wider community.
<p>2. Supporting an ETS with complementary measures that smooth the transition for the Victorian economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provision and engagement with community, business and industry is required to reduce uncertainty and anxiety regarding the ETS and any potential changes to our cities and towns. • The Victorian Government should take an active role in educating the Victorian community on the purpose and merits of an ETS. The level of knowledge and understanding of climate change issues within the community should not be overestimated. • Measures directed to ease the impact of the ETS on vulnerable sectors are fully supported. These measures may include increasing concession rates, additional subsidies, market-based incentives and/or support, and may apply for either an indefinite or discrete period of time depending on their objective.
<p>3. Pursuing cost effective emissions reductions in sectors of the Victorian economy not covered by the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to maximise energy efficiency in all sectors should be fully exploited. This is often the most cost-effective means for emissions reductions and emphasises the importance of resource conservation.

Strategic Direction	Issues for Consideration
ETS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VEET scheme is supported and opportunities to expand the scheme beyond the residential sector alone should be explored. • As the level of government closest to the community, Local Government is ideally placed to facilitate the delivery of efficiency programs at the local level (i.e: residential and small to medium enterprises). However, it is strongly asserted that the responsibility must be coupled with the provision of appropriate delivery resources.
4. Ensuring the continued security, efficiency and affordability of Victoria's energy supplies by encouraging low-emission and renewable energy options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging low-emission and renewable energy options will require information provision, encouragement and education of the Victorian community. Again, Local Government, being the level of Government closest to the community has the capacity to support State Government actions in this regard.
5. Assisting households to adjust to the rising costs of electricity, fuel and other commodities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate modelling should be undertaken to assess the impact that these rising costs will have on households, particularly those falling within the low income category. • Through undertaking this modelling the potential impact will be understood and suitable measures can be developed to offset such impacts. • Open and transparent discussion with the community is a key factor in assisting households to adjust to these rising costs. • The role of rebates and concessions should be thoroughly considered in the development of the draft strategy. Such economic incentives will serve to reduce impacts to households, encourage efficiency measures and ultimately mitigate the future impacts of climate change.
6. Increasing our knowledge about climate change impacts and adaptive needs and possibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mornington Peninsula Shire, through the Westernport Greenhouse Alliance, has participated in a regional climate change impacts and adaptations assessment. This assessment has enabled information gaps to be identified and potential impacts to be identified. • As a result of this study, Mornington Peninsula Shire is now able to inform its communities of the future impacts of climate change. • Such studies should be expanded across Victoria, through the regional greenhouse alliance frameworks, to enable the Local Government sector to understand local climate change impacts and commence development of adaptation strategies. • Meaningful research is required to enhance understanding of adaptation options to government, industry and the community. Such research should be distributed to all stakeholders and should include the enhancement of hydrological and coastal modelling data sets to better understand sea level, storm surge, coastal erosion and flooding impacts at the local level (this is one of the major constraints in local climate change impacts assessment)

Strategic Direction	Issues for Consideration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of sharing knowledge should not be underestimated. As part of the draft strategy a framework to distribute such information should be developed. This might include a <i>Climate Change Knowledge Warehouse</i> whereby reports and other relevant information is made available to the wider community, industry and government.
<p>7. Increasing the climate change resilience of the State's regions and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of the vulnerable regions, communities and individuals is required as a first step in increasing climate change resilience. It is accepted that the elderly, the very young and individuals from low income regions and households are the groups most exposed and therefore most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. These groups will need focused support and assistance to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Such support should involve engagement, education and empowerment, as well as tangible assistance mechanisms, such as subsidies and concessions. It is reiterated that Local Government have established effective networks with these vulnerable groups and this should be capitalised upon in the development of actions to increase resilience.
<p>8. Assisting our natural assets and ecosystems to deal with the pressures and challenges that climate change will bring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact assessment and the identification of remediation measures and actions is fundamental if the effects of climate change on our natural assets and ecosystems is to be minimised. Mornington Peninsula Shire has submitted separate comment on the Land and Biodiversity at a time of Climate Change Green Paper. This comment more fully discusses the issues which relate to this strategic direction.
<p>9. Supporting Victorian individuals and communities to get active on climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement and empowerment is perhaps one of the most important factors in climate change mitigations and adaptation. A Climate Change community engagement strategy should be developed to address these issues specifically. This strategy should be developed in partnership with local government to ensure consultative methods are tailored to meaningfully engage and educate the diverse range of communities across Victoria. As recognised in the discussion paper, the Local Government sector have successfully engaged their communities on climate change through information forums and workshops and through the development of climate change reference committees and action groups. Local Government should be engaged in a meaningful way and information flow should be two-way to allow the full range of actions to be identified.
<p>10. Ensuring Victoria continues to play a pro-active role in global efforts to address climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victoria should play a notable role in demonstrating global leadership on issues relating to climate change. Partnerships should occur at all three levels of government and internationally to ensure that practical collaboration and

Strategic Direction	Issues for Consideration
	<p>tangible actions take place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="630 422 1365 602">• To assist in such partnerships, working groups and stakeholder committees should be established at the national, state, regional and local level. These committees should be inter-connected so that information flow and consultation is optimised and so that a holistic approach to addressing these issues can be established.