

ITEM-10 LMM 26/05/2020 - Climate Emergency Australia Council

MOTION

That City of Newcastle:

1. Notes that community engagement has commenced on the development of our 2025 Climate Action Plan, with the aim of building on the achievements of the existing 2020 Carbon Water Management Action Plan (CWMAP, originally adopted in 2008), which have ensured that CN has:
 - Reduced the City's carbon footprint by 77.4 per cent on 2008 levels, equal to a reduction of 17,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide for the year to date, the equivalent of taking 4,000 cars off the road
 - Secured 100 per cent of electricity from renewable sources including our own 5MW solar farm at Summerhill
 - Reduced total electricity usage by 14.5 per cent
 - Upgraded 31 per cent of streetlights to LEDs (with more to come)
 - Reduced potable water usage by 8.6 per cent
 - Reduced liquid fuel use by 7.0 per cent
2. Notes that City of Newcastle is considered a national and international local government leader when it comes to strong action to address climate change;
3. Recognises that City of Newcastle has previously declared a Global Climate Change Emergency and formally committed to the principles and targets of the Paris Climate Agreement;
4. Notes the expert testimony of the Bureau of Meteorology's Head of Climate Monitoring, Dr Karl Braganza, on 25 May 2020 to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements that climate change has already seen the lengthening of the fire season in eastern Australia by an additional four months since 1950;
5. Notes City of Newcastle's continued commitment to a just transition and economic diversification of our region, including following the recent release of the Grattan Institutes 'Start with Steel' report, which further supports efforts for a just transition in the Hunter, outlining the viability of a high-tech, globally competitive, renewable energy powered 'green steel' jobs in our region (Attachment A)
6. Receives the briefing paper from Climate Emergency Australia (Attachment B), noting that following a workshop held on 15 February 2020 held at the National Climate Emergency Summit, where more than 70 local councils, represented by more than 150 attendees from Local Government, endorsed the formation of 'Climate Change Australia', as 'a national network of governments and sector partners, to provide the climate leadership Australia needs';
7. Endorses the formation of Climate Emergency Australia, and commits to the principles of a Climate Emergency Australia Council (CEA Council), by committing CN to:
 - Continued advocacy for climate action within a just transition framework
 - Share knowledge of what works and what doesn't with other member councils
 - Take part in joint advocacy campaigns
 - Use jointly developed messaging in public and internal communications
 - Identify opportunities and resources for collaborative approaches to the climate emergency
 - Work together and provide input to CEA projects
 - Identify issues, barriers and opportunities in project implementation, and refer these to CEA Strategic Advisory Group

BACKGROUND:

City's action to address climate change set to be strengthened

With City of Newcastle already leading the local government sector on climate action, the community and local businesses are now invited to learn about the development of a new strategy to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions even further as we continue to drive the City's journey towards a net zero emissions future.

The City's new climate action plan will outline specific goals and priorities for the next five years, paving the way to further positive environmental impacts, such as additional clean energy initiatives, resource efficiency, emissions reductions in supply chains and more sustainable transport.

Community engagement on the 2025 Climate Action Plan will help build on the achievements of the existing 2020 Carbon Water Management Action Plan (CWMAP), which winds up at year's end.

The CWMAP helped slash carbon emissions through construction of a five-megawatt solar farm, installation of more than half a megawatt in rooftop solar panels on council facilities across the city and our suburbs, significant streetlight LED upgrades and a power purchase agreement that sees the City running on 100 per cent renewables.



Constructed on a former landfill site after securing a \$6.5 million loan from Australia's Clean Energy Finance Corporation in 2018, our solar farm is the city's single largest investment in a renewable project, following eight other solar installations at our Waratah Works Depot, Newcastle Art Gallery, City Hall, Wallsend and New Lambton libraries, No.1 and No.2 Sportsgrounds and Newcastle Museum.

The solar farm at the Summerhill Waste Management Centre builds on one of Australia's most advanced renewable energy setups at a waste facility - with a 2.2megawatt landfill gas generator and a small wind turbine also located onsite.

Meanwhile, the City has begun transitioning to electric vehicles, installing electric vehicle charging stations to encourage EV take up and investigating the use of electric trucks to reduce diesel usage and further cut emissions.

“Through strong and consistent actions to reduce our emissions, in part due to our ambitious 2020 Carbon Water Management Action Plan, City of Newcastle is now recognised as one of the leading local government authorities when it comes to implementing initiatives to address climate change,” Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes said.

“After achieving so much over the past five years, in particular becoming the first NSW Council to become powered by 100 per cent renewable energy this year, our transformation to a sustainable city will continue under a new Climate Action Plan.”

“People can learn about the goals we’re looking to adopt in tackling climate change during the month-long public exhibition period.

“I encourage everyone to let us know what they think should be prioritised and what role not only the City but businesses and the community should take to realise net zero emissions.”

In May 2019, City of Newcastle recognised that there is a global climate change emergency and urgent need for real action on climate change.

In doing so, the City reaffirmed our commitment to a just economic transition for coal mining communities, including support for investment in hydrogen as an export energy, construction of large-scale renewables and pumped hydro, and manufacturing of electric vehicles.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes said the City also plays a strong advocacy role when it comes to pushing for action on climate change from the local government sector.

“City of Newcastle has long ensured local government steps in to fill the policy gaps left when other tiers of government and the private sector have failed to assist in reducing global emissions.

“Dating back to the Pathways to Sustainability Conference held in Newcastle in 1997 and subsequently by the development of local strategies and solutions through the Cities for Climate Protection Program, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and through development of practical implementation programs for local government in Australia and New Zealand, City of Newcastle has long led the way by working in partnerships to develop and implement strategies and initiatives to tackle climate change head on,” the Lord Mayor said.

City of Newcastle is a founding member of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), a founding member of the Business Renewables Centre, a member of the Cities Power Partnership, a member of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, and recently became a Pioneer City for ICLEI’s CitiesWithNature program.

City of Newcastle has formally committed to the principles and targets of the Paris Climate Agreement.

An online information session will be held on Thursday 28 May at midday to provide further information on the City's current and future initiatives before the draft plan goes on Public Exhibition later in the year.

Under the 2020 CWMAP, to date City of Newcastle has:

- Reduced electricity usage by 14.45 per cent
- Upgraded 31 per cent of streetlights to LEDs
- Secured 100 per cent of electricity from renewable sources
- Reduced potable water usage by 8.59 per cent
- Slashed the City's carbon footprint by 77.36 per cent
- Reduced liquid fuel use by 6.97 per cent

Attachment A: Grattan Institute, Start with Steel report, released 10 May 2020:
<https://grattan.edu.au/report/start-with-steel/>

Attachment B: Climate Emergency Australia Briefing Paper
Briefing paper - Climate Emergency Australia – first 12 months

Date: 24 April 2020

Author: Karen Gardham, NAGA

1) Background

Since Darebin City Council declared a climate emergency in 2016, more than 90 municipalities across Australia, representing over eight million people, and more than 1,400 local governments across the world have declared or acknowledged a climate emergency, with momentum building particularly over the last year.

As declarations have gathered pace, councils have been in contact with Darebin City Council and with their regional climate change networks, seeking advice and support on understanding what it means to declare a climate emergency. As the number of requests has grown, there is increasing recognition that there is a need for a coordinated national approach to support local governments that have declared a climate emergency. A workshop was held on 15 February 2020 as part of the National Climate Emergency Summit to discuss how Australian councils could make this happen.

Nearly 70 councils from across the country were represented by over 150 attendees. Two proposals were agreed at this workshop:

- 1) That we form Climate Emergency Australia (CEA), a national network of governments and sector partners, to provide the climate leadership Australia needs. CEA will enable:
 - an agreed framework for climate emergency policy, action and accountability;
 - collaboration with, and advocacy to, other governments and sectors; and
 - further momentum and movement building in response to the climate emergency.
- 2) That we endorse a Network Development Group (NDG).

2) Developing the Climate Emergency Australia structure

A Network Development Group has established to develop a structure through which councils can work together. The group has representation from six States and Territories following a self-nomination process. The administration of the development of CEA is being carried out by secretariat of the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA), a network of nine councils in Melbourne's north working together on climate change projects, advocacy and knowledge sharing.

The scope of work of Climate Emergency Australia has been defined following input from over 70 councils across Australia via the Climate Emergency Summit workshop; a survey of declared and interested councils; and the Network Development Group.

Scope

- External: Developing public advocacy campaigns and joint messaging
- Operational: Developing a framework and supporting tools for what it means to declare and governance around this
- Collaborating with others:
 - Identifying or coordinating climate emergency projects e.g. developing best practice advise / toolkits, joint procurement
 - Sharing resources and knowledge between councils across Australia through discussion groups, workshops, webinars

3) The first 12 months

This project will be run for a start-up period of 12 months in order to oversee the work of a Coordinator. It will allow work to get started sooner rather than later e.g. time taken to get councils/people officially part of a structure. CEA beyond this time period will be informed by a review towards the end of the 12 months, and an appropriate governance structure will be set up for beyond that

CEA will not have a formal membership structure for the first 12 months. Councils can be part of the movement by contributing their time, signing up to the messaging and advocacy activity, and sharing good practice – these are “CEA Councils”. CEA will be funded by “Founding Funders” - councils who see the benefit in working together with other councils, acknowledge this needs resources to get it started, can afford to contribute, and are willing to provide funding to receive the mutual benefits that coordinating this work together brings rather than a direct return to themselves.

4) Governance structure

For the first year the work of the Coordinator is overseen by a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) of councils from the founding funders as well as other councils that are representative of different sizes and geographical location of councils. A Terms of Reference will outline their work. One or two representatives from each state or territory will form the SAG, each representative to be nominated by two other councils and will be either a councillor, mayor or senior officer from a council that has declared a climate emergency.

Governance Group	Representation	Meeting frequency	Focus/role
CEA Strategic Advisory Group	Senior Staff Councillors Includes founding funders	Monthly	Ensure oversight and high level guidance of the work of CEA
CEA Working Groups – groups TBC	CEA Strategic Advisory Group members CEA Coordinator CEA Councils	As required	Potential working groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEA Framework development • Embedding CE within your council • Messaging development • Advocacy campaigns
CEA Host organisation	Host organisation	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit Coordinator in consultation with the Network Development Group then SAG • Provide day-to-day management of the Coordinator • Report back to Founding Funders at the midway point and end of the 12 months

Membership of Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)

The Strategic Advisory Group will consist of one or two elected representatives (Councillor/Mayor) or Senior Officers (a Director or Manager or equivalent) from each State and Territory, from a council that has declared a climate emergency. There will be places for Founding Funders where required - the aim is to involve the Founding Funders but balance the numbers for a functioning Group. Places on the Strategic Advisory Group are offered to individuals with the skills and ability to support CEA and not on a representative basis for individual councils. The process for nomination will be distributed once CEA arrangements have been finalised.

5) Operational structure

Coordinator

The Coordinator will:

- develop joint climate emergency messaging to be shared between councils, subject to project funding

- create and deliver at least one major joint advocacy campaign, subject to project funding
- work with councils to develop a climate emergency delivery framework
- identify key projects that are unique to climate emergency work and partners to deliver them
- provide a platform for councils to communicate with each other and share resources
- investigate potential ongoing governance models
- review progress and governance towards the end of the 12-month period.

CEA Councils

Climate emergency councils are any councils (and those carrying out local government functions e.g. the ACT government) in Australia that are committed to the aims of CEA and acknowledge that this is not business as usual climate change work can state their interest in being involved in any piece of work. There is no formal mechanism to become a CEA Council.

Climate emergency councils will:

- Share knowledge of what works and what doesn't with each other
- Take part in joint advocacy campaigns
- Use jointly developed messaging in their public and internal communications
- Identify opportunities and resources for collaborative approaches to the climate emergency
- Work together and provide input to CEA projects, including in-kind and cash resources where possible
- Mentor councils wanting to declare a climate emergency
- Identify issues, barriers and opportunities in project implementation, and refer these to CEA Strategic Advisory Group

6) After 12 months

Towards the end of the 12 month start-up period, the achievements and governance arrangements will be reviewed by the Coordinator and the SAG and a determination made about the future operations and governance of CEA.

7) Funding

Collaboration of governments needs resources and a structure to drive it forward. It is clear that this movement needs to not be "just another network" but work on bringing existing stakeholders together where they are interested in a role and drive specific action around the climate emergency where there is currently a gap.

NAGA is seeking funding for a start-up period of 12 months to kick-start the development of Climate Emergency Australia and its program of work. At the date of this paper, \$79,000 had been pledged, some of which is awaiting final confirmation.

A part-time Coordinator will be supported by the governance structure identified above that involves councils from across the country who both were able and not able to contribute financially.

Budget

- Coordinator salary for 0.6 for 12 months, plus on costs including cost of organisation hosting them: \$90,000
- Officer travel and events: \$5,000

If funding is only gained for the Coordinator role in the first instance, further funding will be sought from councils on a project specific basis to cover major projects such as:

- Specialist advice in developing messaging: \$20,000
- Advocacy campaigns: \$30,000

Funds are sought from councils to be a Founding Funder of this movement to ensure it is resourced and a Coordinator can be recruited. NAGA suggest that larger councils contribute **\$20,000**, but smaller councils may wish to contribute a smaller amount of between **\$2,000 - \$5,000**.

Founding Funders are councils who see the benefit in working together with other councils, acknowledge this needs resources to get it started, can afford to contribute, and are willing to provide funding to receive the mutual benefits that coordinating this work together brings rather than a direct return to themselves.

Funds are also sought from councils to contribute to the messaging and advocacy projects identified. It is suggested councils interested in this identify their contribution in their 2020-21 budgets.

Councils not able to contribute will still be able to be involved in the work of CEA. However, the work cannot be done unless we raise the funds indicated, so all contributions are welcome. An ongoing funding mechanism of Climate Emergency Australia beyond the first 12 months will be decided and implemented once the review of initial work and need has been completed.

8) Further information

If you would like more information, please contact Karen Gardham at NAGA:

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