

ACT Government Climate Change Council Annual Report 2012-13

Contents

Letter of Transmittal	3
Establishment of the Climate Change Council	4
Membership of the Council	4
Administration	5
Activities of the Council	5
Advice to the Minister.....	5
Submissions by the Council.....	6
Stakeholder engagement.....	7
Appendix A: Member's attendance	11
Appendix B: Climate Change Council Budget	12

Letter of Transmittal

Mr Simon Corbell MLA
Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Dear Minister

In accordance with Section 19 of the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010*, I submit the second Annual Report of the Climate Change Council for the year ended 30 June 2013 for tabling in the Legislative Assembly.

The Climate Change Council was established under Section 16 of the Act to advise the Minister on matters relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and addressing and adapting to climate change. The Climate Change Council was formally established on 20 October 2011.

The Council looks forward to providing advice to you on implementing effective climate change strategies and action in the ACT during the coming year

Yours sincerely

Professor Barbara Norman
Chair
Climate Change Council

12 September 2013

Establishment of the Climate Change Council

The ACT Climate Change Council (the Council) is established under *the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* (the Act).

The Act sets out the functions of the Council and outlines how they are to be exercised:

S17 Functions of the Council

- (1) The main function of the Council is to advise the Minister on matters relating to-
- (a) reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and
 - (b) addressing, and adapting to, climate change.

Membership of the Council

The Council must consist of at least five, but not more than nine, members appointed by the Minister. The Minister must, to the greatest extent practical, ensure that the council includes people with a broad range of skills and knowledge relating to addressing or adapting to climate change.

On 1 July 2012 the Climate Change Council comprised:

- Professor Barbara Norman, Foundation Chair, Urban and Regional Planning, University of Canberra; Deputy Chair, Regional Development Australia (ACT) and Director, Canberra Urban and Regional Futures (CURF) project;
- Professor Will Steffen, Commissioner on the independent Climate Commission and Adjunct Professor, Australian National University;
- Dr Frank Jotzo, Director, Centre for Climate Economics and Policy and Deputy Director, Climate Change Institute, Australian National University;
- Ms Maria Efkarpidis, Director, Rock Development Group;
- Ms Lynne Harwood, Chief Executive Officer, Communities@Work; and
- Mr David Papps, Director General, ACT Government Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate and Chief Planning Executive.

In January 2013, Mr David Papps tendered his resignation from the Council. His position on the Council will be filled in 2013-14 by Ms Dorte Ekelund, Director General, ACT Government Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate and Chief Planning Executive.

The attendance of members at Council meetings and official events conducted during the reporting period is provided in [Appendix A](#).

Administration

Annual report

Section 19 of the Act requires that the Council provide an annual report about the Council's activities during the financial year, including any advice or recommendations made to the Minister. The Council must give the report to the Minister within three months after the end of the financial year.

Member's fees

Remuneration for the Council is set by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal and reviewed annually. The Tribunal determined per diem remuneration of \$465 for the Chair and \$390 for the other members, effective from 1 November 2012.

Secretariat

The Climate Change, Energy and Sustainability Policy section within the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate provided secretariat support for the Council during the reporting period.

Gender report

The gender balance of the Council is taken into consideration when members are appointed. Within the reporting period the Council consisted of three female members and three male members until the resignation of Mr Papps in January 2013.

Freedom of information

No freedom of information applications concerning Council business were received during the reporting period.

Activities of the Council

The Council met on four occasions during the reporting period:

- Meeting 4 - 19 July 2012
- Meeting 5 - 6 November 2012
- Meeting 6 - 20 February 2013
- Meeting 7 - 20 June 2013

Advice to the Minister

During the reporting period, the Council provided advice to the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate through Council meetings on the following issues:

Meeting 4: Council reviewed the Draft AP2 document. Council considered that while the focus was on mitigation, more action was required on adaptation given a 2060 context.

Meeting 5: Council focussed on energy issues. It expressed concern over current institutional arrangements applying carbon price cost increases to all electricity consumed in the ACT, including GreenPower. This reduces the attractiveness of purchasing GreenPower products and ultimately the effectiveness of the GreenPower program to reduce stationary energy emissions.

Meeting 6: Council noted that the quality of the ACT Government’s public housing stock is not sufficiently well built or maintained to meet energy efficiency standards and this presents a problem for residents and the Government. The Government’s outreach program has been successful in providing education and rebate programs but these are not always suitable for low-income households. Council expressed concern that in this context the \$2 million per year provided under Action Plan 1 is insufficient to upgrade the housing stock.

Council advised that the solar program is a good example of incentivising renewable energy. Time of use pricing would be a good initiative to reduce energy use particularly as gas prices are likely to rise in the near future, placing cost pressures on households.

Council advised that increased energy efficiency building standards could be applied to new buildings at only a small additional cost to buyers. In particular, new housing standards could also mandate rainwater capture and energy efficient inclusions such as wall and ceiling insulation.

Council highlighted the importance of connecting transport and infrastructure developments. The light rail corridor through the inner north could be developed as a demonstration project inclusive of public housing outcomes, light rails and alternative options (walking/cycling). The project could exemplify best practice. Council would have a role in promoting the project in the community.

Submissions by the Council

During the reporting period, Professor Will Steffen provided a submission to Government on behalf of the Council to the “City to Gungahlin Transit Corridor” regarding greenhouse gas emission implications. A copy of the Council’s submission is attached. Professors Norman and Steffen both participated on international panels at COP 18 Doha.

Stakeholder engagement

One of the roles of the Climate Change Council is to consult with representatives from business and the community on matters relating to climate change.

The ACT Climate Change Council conducted its first public conversation and forum on 4 April 2013 at Pilgrim House in Canberra City. The event was conducted between 6:00pm and 7:30pm.

Professor Barbara Norman, Ms Lynne Harwood, Professor Will Steffen and Dr Frank Jotzo from the Council were in attendance.

The forum was attended by 25 people from diverse backgrounds. Issues and questions raised in the forum included:

- What is the Government doing to reduce emissions given that 2020 is only 7 years away?
- What mechanisms are in place to track the Territory's progress towards the 2020 target?
- What the Government is doing to build the resilience of the natural landscape?
- What is the current feed-in-tariff for rooftop solar PV systems?
- Should there be a consistent approach across Government to address climate change through urban infill?
- Should precinct codes be used as a mechanism to encourage the construction of energy efficient housing?
- Should building regulations be changed to impose financial penalties on builders who do not build energy efficient buildings?
- How does the Council's advisory role work and what advice has the Council provided to the Minister?
- Should Queanbeyan be included in any light rail project?
- Should the ACT Government declare the Territory a Coal Seam Gas (CSG) free area?
- Greater engagement with the community needs to occur to harness the intellectual capital and resources of the Territory; and
- Emissions associated with goods 'imported' into the Territory need to be accounted for in the Territory's greenhouse gas inventory.

Council met with Mr Bob Neil, Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment and Ms Sarah Burrows of the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (OCSE) in February 2013. Under AP2, the OCSE will publish Implementation Status Reports on the implementation of ACT Government climate change policies. These will be delivered every three years: in 2014, 2017 and 2020. In undertaking their reporting functions, the OCSE will be informed by the views of the Council. Council members have provided written input to the OCSE on the framework, content and data requirements of the status reports.

The Council sets aside part of each meeting to liaise with stakeholders.

For the fourth meeting on 19 July 2012, the Chair invited the Presidents and Chairs of the ACT Community Councils to attend the Council's meeting to discuss climate change issues. The Council hosted:

- Mr Leon Arundell, Chair, North Canberra Community Council; and
- Mr Ewan Brown, President, Gungahlin Community Council.

Issues raised included:

- There are a number of issues to be dealt with at community council meetings. Climate change issues often get pushed back as more important issues require attention;
- Need to feed climate change information to community councils that can be relayed to the community;
- Planning and infrastructure, with a particular interest in land use planning and its effects on transport;
- Support for higher residential densities with consultation an important factor to gain community support;
- General concern about sustainability issues (including climate change);
- Insufficient access to footpaths for residents making access to public transport more difficult;
- Community councils are generally in favour of public transport but the current suite of options are too narrow;
- More park-and-ride and rapid transit hubs are needed in Canberra (potential for a hub in Calwell to pick up Monaro Highway traffic);
- Concerns over cycling rates, particularly among children;
- Safety and security issues for cyclists - not enough thought going into ensuring the security of property while not in use (i.e. the security of bikes while the rider is away), and increased traffic flows leading to greater danger for cyclists.
- Support for light rail. Want a more viable options in the transport corridor study and evidence of the success of options from a global perspective;
- Want a two-way process for assessing public transport options - more employment opportunities in the Gungahlin area to counter the movement of traffic away from Gungahlin during weekdays;
- Need to balance the preservation of yellow box woodlands with the need for more community parkland; and
- 'Great Wall' of high density residential development blocking out good examples of sustainable building design such as the new Gungahlin College.

For the fifth meeting on 6 November 2012, the Chair invited representatives from the Territory's energy sector. The Council hosted:

- Mr Michael Costello, Chief Executive Officer, ActewAGL;
- Ms Diane O'Hara, General Manager – Business Development and Strategy, ActewAGL;
- Ms Ayesha Razzaq, General Manager – Retail, ActewAGL;
- Professor Ken Baldwin, Director, Energy Change Institute, Australian National University;
and
- Mr Chris Mackenzie-Davey, Regional Coordinator, Renewable Energy Precincts, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

Issues raised included:

- Support for the emissions reduction goals of the Government;
- The 90 per cent Renewable Energy Target (RET) announced under AP2 will be challenging to meet. The most efficient method of applying this target would be to require ACT retailers to purchase 90 per cent renewable electricity from the National Electricity Market;
- Reaching the RET will be much harder if the ACT Government decides to build all of the renewable energy generation capacity required under a 90 per cent RET within the ACT and Australian Capital Region;
- Suggested that it did not matter where in Australia the renewable energy used to reach ACT RET was generated;
- Sustainability policies will have an impact on price. The impacts on those experiencing financial hardship will be higher;
- Opportunities for ongoing collaboration between the ACT and NSW Governments on the development of renewable energy;
- NSW planning guidelines relating to the placement of wind turbines will be released shortly. A 2 kilometre setback is likely to apply from houses;
- Inhabitants of the Australian Capital Region (ACR) may not want to see much more wind power. Significant capacity is planned in the area north of the ACT and will be constructed and operational shortly;
- Agreement that the ACT shouldn't be too focused on wind capacity based in the ACR.
- It is uncertain what sort of demand there will be for renewable energy in 2020. It would be wise to consider the option of power purchasing agreements (PPA) to reduce the risk of insufficient renewable energy being available in 2020; and
- Concern with equity issues relating to solar feed-in tariffs. Low income households will be the least able to afford solar panels and will be less able to safeguard themselves against increased energy prices.

For the seventh meeting on 20 June 2013 the Chair invited representatives from Territory based environmental groups. The Council hosted:

- Ms Clare Henderson, Director, ACT Conservation Council;
- Ms Anne Clarke, Executive Officer, SEE-Change; and
- Mr Tom Stayner, Canberra Loves 40%.

Issues raised included:

- Interest in being kept aware of progress in meeting legislated emission reduction targets and the implementation of actions under AP2;
- Interest in participating in community engagement efforts in support of emission reduction initiatives
- Interest in seeing the community engage in planning of light rail and issues related to increased urban density;
- Interest in further development of community participation in renewable energy investments/development;
- Making renewable energy more available to the community;
- Enhanced messaging of the science of climate change and its potential impacts on Canberra;
- Who is delivering what in the ACT in relation climate change initiatives?
- More information on what an individual can do to help address climate change and make homes and businesses more sustainable;
- The mainstreaming of climate change considerations – a single policy discussion;
- The need for a Food Security position, the Council should help develop this; and
- Concern regarding the lack of site selection management (e.g. solar and wind farms) to avoid issues faced in other jurisdictions.

Appendix A: Member's attendance

During the 2012-13 financial year the Council held four formal meetings. The Council held meetings on 19 July 2012, 6 November 2012, 20 February 2013 and 20 June 2013. The Council also conducted one public forum on 4 April 2013.

Member	Number of meetings/events during the reporting period	Number of meetings/events attended
Professor Barbara Norman	5	5
Professor Will Steffen	5	4
Dr Frank Jotzo	5	2
Ms Maria Efkarpidis	5	3
Ms Lynne Harwood	5	4
Mr David Papps	2 (resigned January 2013)	2

Appendix B: Climate Change Council Budget

Climate Change Council Expenditure 2012-13

- Council sitting fees - \$7,345.00
- Meeting venue hire – \$3,030.00
- Hospitality – \$1,366.50
- Advertising – \$727.62
- Total (including GST) - \$12,469.12