

12 December 2013

Climate Change Authority
GPO Box 1944
Melbourne VIC 3001



COMMITTED TO A
SUSTAINABLE
PENINSULA



Re: Climate Change Authority Targets and Progress Review Draft Report

Mornington Peninsula Shire would like to thank the Climate Change Authority for the opportunity to submit a response to the Targets and Progress Review Draft Report.

Mornington Peninsula Shire strongly supports the need for mitigation of carbon emissions to avert the most severe impacts of climate change, and encourages immediate and appropriate action to be taken by all levels of Government.

The Shire's detailed submission is attached. Please contact Gabrielle McCorkell – Outcome Facilitator, Renewable Resources on (03) 5950 1297 if you would like to discuss any aspects of this submission.

Yours Sincerely,

Niall McDonagh
Manager – Renewable Resources

Mornington Peninsula Shire's Submission to the Climate Change Authority's Targets and Progress Review Draft Report

Background – About the Mornington Peninsula

The Mornington Peninsula Shire is located south east of Melbourne and covers approximately 720 square kilometres of land with a coastline that extends over 190 kilometres which is 10% of Victoria's coastline. The Shire has 40 settlements spread across the peninsula, with the majority of the residential population living along the coastline of Port Phillip. The Shire has an estimated permanent resident population of 145,356 (2008). As a popular holiday destination the population can increase by 30% during the summer holiday period.

Approximately 70% of the Shire is highly productive agricultural land as well as highly significant landscapes and ecosystems. The Mornington Peninsula and Western Port are also a part of the worldwide network of biosphere reserves recognised by the United Nations.

The Mornington Peninsula has a growing and diverse local economy that includes retail, manufacturing, construction, wine production and business services. Tourism is a significant contributor to the local economy, with the Peninsula being a popular weekend, recreation and holiday destination.

Our Approach to Climate Change

The Mornington Peninsula Shire has been preparing for the potential impacts of climate change for over a decade. Our approach has been driven by our *Sustainable Peninsula Initiative*, which was developed in conjunction with our community in 2001. The Initiative provides a framework that ensures we incorporate sustainability principles into our operations. Managing the potential impacts of climate change is one the eight key goals in the Shire Strategic Plan, which is translated into a number of specific objectives.

Key aspects of our approach to climate change have included reducing our greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) as well as reducing our vulnerability to the potential effects of a changing climate (adaptation).

Greenhouse gas emission reduction initiatives completed by the Shire include reducing the size of fleet vehicles, tendering for zero emission waste collection contracts, energy efficiency retrofits, reducing air leakages from buildings, landfill gas capture, installation of solar panels on community facilities and coordinating solar power and solar hot water group purchase programs for residents. In March 2013, Council released its Energy and Greenhouse Management Improvement Plan, committing to a further 35% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from Shire buildings, relative to current levels, by 2017.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Submission Climate Change Authority: Targets and Progress Review Draft Report

Context

The Shire acknowledges climate change is affecting communities globally and the Mornington Peninsula community is no exception.

To better understand local climate change impacts the Shire participated in a study conducted by the CSIRO investigating the impacts of climate in the Western Port Region. This study gave some dramatic predictions for climate impacts to 2070. Droughts will be longer and more severe. Temperature is predicted to rise by 3.5 degrees by 2070 and the number of days above 30 degrees will increase by 5 by 2030 and by 16 by 2070. Sea level is predicted to rise by up to 49 cm and storm surges could increase by 65 cm, putting coastal communities and infrastructure at risk of erosion and flooding. High fire risk weather will increase, placing ecosystems, life and property at risk. Storms will be more frequent and severe, which will increase the risk of flooding in many homes and shops as well as damage roads, water supply and sewage, placing greater strain on emergency services. Extreme weather events are already being experienced locally, as is the case across Australia.

The Shire has taken a proactive approach to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, based on the climate science available. The Shire supports an emissions budget that limits a global temperature increase to 2 degrees. For this to be achieved there is a need for urgent, decisive and coordinated action at the local, national and international level.

Even under 2 degrees of warming, it should be acknowledged that there will still be consequences and the Federal Government will need to ensure all levels of government are appropriately resourced to manage these impacts, particularly local government, being the closest level of government to the community.

Emission Reduction Goal for 2020

The Shire supports the Draft Report position that a 5% reduction by 2020 is not enough, particularly if we are to limit a global temperature increase to 2 degrees. As noted in the Draft, failing to do more in the short term is likely to increase future costs and cause unnecessary disruption to the economy and community more broadly.

In line with Australia's relative prosperity and present high per person emissions, the Shire believes Australia should be a leader in its commitment and action associated with greenhouse gas emission reductions.

In line with the Shire's own commitment to greenhouse gas emission reductions, it supports a national 2020 target of at least 25% below 2020 levels.