

7.2 CITIES POWER PARTNERSHIP AND PLEDGE PROGRAMS

Responsible Committee: Environmental Advisory Committee

That Council:

- 1. Participates in the Cities Power Partnership Program, and commits to the five (5) pledge areas nominated.*
- 2. Requests Council officers to initiate discussions with Sustainability Victoria regarding the benefits to Council of participating in TAKE 2 in its own right, including possible advantages in accessing grant funding and subject to officer support, participates in the Take 2 program.*
- 3. Delegates approval for the Mayor to send a letter to the Climate Council of Australia and Sustainability Victoria to confirm our participation in Cities Power Partnership, and TAKE 2 programs.*
- 4. Defer consideration of the ICLEI Covenant of Mayors Program until the benefits and costs are clarified.*

INTRODUCTION

City of Monash has been invited to become part of the Round 3 tranche of the Cities Power Partnership, which opened on March 29, 2018.

The Cities Power Partnership is a national coalition of mayors, councillors and communities who are committed to a sustainable, non-polluting energy future. Local councils who join the partnership pledge to take 5 key actions across renewable energy, efficiency, transport and working together.

The Environmental Advisory Committee reviewed this partnership and similar partnerships such as Sustainability Victoria's TAKE 2 program and provided recommendations regarding their value to council.

BACKGROUND

Cities Power Partnership (CPP), is a free national program that exists to celebrate and accelerate the emission reduction and clean energy successes of Australian towns and cities. It was launched last year and in January this year celebrated the round 2 entry milestone, bringing our membership to 70 Councils, representing 250 towns and cities and 8 million Australians. This makes us the largest climate program for local government in Australia.
<http://citiespowerpartnership.org.au/>

The CPP program focusses on supporting and celebrating the emissions reduction successes of local councils across the country. The program aims to connect local councils with shared emissions reduction project interests across the pledge areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transport and community advocacy.

To support councils in their work, CCP is offering increased connectivity for shared learnings, access to an online knowledge hub, information pack, monthly webinars, a web based project analytical tool, an annual summit and awards program, and profiling of success stories via our extensive media reach.

The Council has also been approached regarding its potential involvement in two other programs – Sustainability Victoria’s *TAKE 2* program and the ICLEI Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Program.

Monash is a foundation member of *TAKE 2* via the Eastern Alliance of Greenhouse Action (EAGA), but is being encouraged to join in its own right.
<http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/About-Us/What-we-do/Campaigns/TAKE2>

The Global Covenant of Mayors is an international program and 10 Victorian councils have joined including Mornington Peninsula, Moreland, Glen Eira and Melton
<https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/>

DISCUSSION

Monash City Council is currently considering possible pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the *Cities Power Partnership Program* run by the Climate Council of Australia.

A working group of the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) was formed to review the benefit of Council’s possible involvement in these programs and specify what actions it should pledge to undertake. The Working Group comprised Steve Owens, Andrew Armstrong, Caroline Bayliss and Howard Rose.

Outline of Programs

The *Cities Power Partnership Program* was established by the Climate Council of Australia (a not-for-profit, advocacy group) in 2016 as a national program for local governments. There are currently 35 Councils across Australia participating in the Program, covering 3 million people and over 200 towns and cities.

There have been two rounds of submissions since the Program’s inception – a third round is now open. Reporting against pledged actions is required on a 6-monthly basis.

The Program sets out 38 possible actions under 4 headings - renewable energy (15), energy efficiency (6), sustainable transport (9) and working together and influencing (8). Councils are required to make pledges against 5 actions.

The benefits of participating in this program are:

- Sharing information with like organisations
- Having access to analytical tools
- Having the opportunity to ‘buddy’ with similarly placed Councils

The *TAKE 2 Program* established by Sustainability Victoria is similar to the *Cities Power Partnership Program*, except that it is State based and has the extra benefit of providing access to grant funds.

There are no formal reporting requirements and submissions can be made at any time.

The *ICLEI Covenant of Mayors Program* is an international program and requires more formal pledges and detailed reporting. This Program was initiated in Europe and has only been recently introduced into Australia. This program may suit Monash at a later date when we develop our formal reporting under the *Environmental Sustainability Strategy*.

Formalising our commitment to Cities Power Partnership

In terms of formal processes for the Council briefing, Monash needs to provide a letter from our Mayor to our Acting CEO Martin Rice confirming our participation.

Following approval, Council needs to identify 5 items within the first 6 months to be included in the Cities Power Partnership Pledge that City of Monash will strive to achieve. (Noting that some projects already in the council pipeline could be included towards a council’s pledge). Other commitments to council include:

- Completion of a 6 monthly online survey that provides the Climate Council with basic information on how you are progressing on the 5 pledge items that council has selected.
- Nominate a point of contact within your council that the Climate Council can liaise with on CPP matters, including contact details.
- Confirm that you're willing to be buddied with other local councils to share knowledge.

Evaluation of Actions under the *Cities Power Partnership Program*

The Working Group recommends making pledges for the following 5 actions:

Renewable Energy

- 1) Install renewable energy solar (solar PV and battery storage) on Council buildings, for example childcare facilities, libraries, street lighting, recreational centres, sporting grounds and Council offices

- 2) Council operations buy renewables, directly (with solar PV or wind), or by purchasing GreenPower (from electricity retailers). Set targets to increase the level of renewable power for Council operations over time (currently at 20% GreenPower)

Energy Efficiency

- 3) Adopt best practice energy efficiency measures across all Council buildings, and support community facilities to adopt these measures

Sustainable Transport

- 4) Ensure Council fleet purchases meet strict greenhouse gas emissions requirements and support the uptake of electric vehicles
- 5) Providing for adequate cycle lanes (both space and connectivity) in road design and supporting cyclists through providing parking and end-of-ride facilities (covered, secure bike storage, showers, bicycle maintenance and incentives)

In recommending these pledges, the Working Group took into account the extent to which each pledge:

- aligns with Monash's Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- involves meaningful, but not excessive 'stretch'
- is tangible
- is within Monash Council's control to influence the outcome

To join TAKE 2, Council is required to write to Sustainability Victoria advising of our intent to participate. The above actions can also be reported under TAKE 2.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

By joining and making a public commitment to take on Climate Change initiatives aligns well with the Council priorities in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-26.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Being a member is free for Council for both programs and provides an opportunity to show leadership to our community on Climate Change initiatives. There is no impact to services provided to the community.

CONSULTATION

Internal consultation has been undertaken with the Sustainable Monash team and the findings of the working group were presented and endorsed at the June Environmental Advisory Committee meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no costs associated with joining the Cities Power Partnership and the *TAKE 2* program, but there are some costs and additional reporting requirements for the Covenant of Mayors.

There may be some additional council staff time in finalizing membership and reporting on the initiatives but this would be consistent with other Council reporting requirements.

CONCLUSION

The City of Monash has a stated commitment to integrating best practice climate change thinking into Council's corporate and operational functions, as outlined in the City of Monash Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-2026.

Joining initiatives such as Cities Power Partnership and *TAKE 2* are free for Council and provides a public commitment that we are serious about addressing Climate Change for the benefit of our community.

The EAC Working Group recommends that the Council adopt the following proposals:

- Council participate in the *Cities Power Partnership Program*, in the 5 pledge areas listed
- Council officers initiate discussions with Sustainability Victoria regarding the benefits to Council of participating in *TAKE 2* in its own right, including possible advantages in accessing grant funding and subject to officer support, participate in *TAKE 2*.
- Provides approval for the Mayor to send a letter to Cities Power Partnership to confirm our participation in *Cities Power Partnership Program*, and to Sustainability Victoria for participation in *TAKE 2* program.
- Defer consideration of the ICLEI Covenant of Mayors Program until the benefits and costs are clarified.