

OFFICERS REPORT**CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

Submitting Councillor: Cr Fergeus & Cr Saloumi

MOTION

That Council agrees that we are facing a climate emergency and that urgent action is required by all levels of government.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Following the declaration of a Climate emergency for Monash, a plan to address this emergency would need to be developed and funded. Climate emergency considerations would also need to be considered in Council's emergency management plans and all aspects of our business. This planning would include actions which support the community residents and businesses to reduce their use of energy (to reduce GHG emissions), and also implement strategies to improve resilience to a changing climate. Additional funding would be required to resource this so the community is well prepared.

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

In the declaration of a Climate Emergency, council would need to identify and implement key actions to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate for Council and our Monash community. There would need to be a whole of council evaluation of spend required to integrate mitigation and adaptation actions in all our capital works, maintenance and other services to ensure they suitably address the impact of a Climate emergency.

In addition to this, the response would need to be supported by a community wide education and communication campaign, supported by a range of programs to facilitate community resilience to changes in climate. Additional responses may be required to address this, and a significant internal communications campaign.

It should be considered that many of the actions required to address a Climate Emergency, would not be dissimilar to the approach to meet Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2025, which includes supporting the community to become more resilient to changes in climate, as per the approved motions in the February 2020 council paper.

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

The first objective of the 2017-21 Council Plan acknowledges its role in addressing a changing climate: *A Liveable & Sustainable City - Proactively managing risks from climate change and reducing Council's greenhouse emissions*. The Health and Wellbeing Plan is also required to address the requirements of the Victorian Government's Climate Change Act.

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-26 (ESS) highlights council's strong commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and our environmental impact. Relevant actions include:

Action 3.1.1. To develop and implement a Climate Change Action Plan which recognises a whole of council approach to mitigation, adaptation, risk management, innovation and alternative energy sources

Action 3.2 A strategic approach to reducing Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions is established.

Action 3.3 Increase communities' preparedness for the likely impacts of climate change.

b) Continue to support community and business education programs to increase understanding of the local impacts of climate change and how to be climate ready.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

In February 2020, Council committed to becoming Carbon Neutral by 2025, based on extensive carbon modelling. The Zero Net Carbon Action Plan is currently being prepared to guide Council to meet this achievement.

In addition to delivering Carbon Neutrality by 2025, the Action Plan will include activities to support the reduction of community GHG emissions, increase the use of recycled content material in our operations and invest in local offsets where emissions cannot be avoided, to reduce our impact on the environment, as per the endorsed motion.

In previous work prepared by Iron Bark Sustainability, and previously presented in February 2020 as part of the carbon modelling research, the municipality of Monash is ranked sixth highest in Greater Melbourne for community GHG Emissions, due to being the highest employer outside of the CBD, and significant manufacturing industry.

This Zero Net Carbon action plan is due to be provided to Council for consideration by September 2020, but some actions are already underway including:

- participation in the Local Government Power Purchase Agreement tender to source 100% renewable electricity from July 2021
- facilitating community uptake of solar through Solar Savers
- encouraging businesses to reduce their energy use through Environmental Upgrade Finance., and
- introducing the Food Organics in the Green Bin services in July 2020, avoiding GHG emissions for the community by diverting food waste from landfill.

Monash's response to become carbon neutral is supported through Membership in the Eastern Alliance of Greenhouse Action, support from other Greenhouse Alliances, as well as our participation in the Cities Power Partnership, Take 2 and Council Alliance for the Sustainable Built Environment, will all support our Zero net carbon Plan.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS