



MINUTES

Climate Change Working Group Meeting

31 August 2020

**MINUTES OF THE KYOGLE COUNCIL
CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP MEETING
HELD AT KMI HALL SUPPER ROOM, ROXY LANE, KYOGLE
ON MONDAY, 31 AUGUST 2020 AT 9.45AM**

Meeting commenced: 9.55am

Acknowledgement of Country

Maggie May (Chair) acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional lands of the Bundjalung people and acknowledged Elders past, present and emerging.

Present: Cr Maggie May (Chair), Cr John Burley, Robert Drury, Roger Small, Dr Arthur Webb, Karen Webb, Dr Kym Watling, Graham Kennett, Tony Lickiss, Shane Noon, Matt Sorenson, Joseph Allen, Maree Brennan, Malcolm Robertson (guest speaker – via video conferencing), Judy Faulks.

1. Apologies

Cr Kylie Thomas, Suzie Coulston, Dr Genevieve Larsen, Amanda Clark.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

Kym Watling provided the following additional information to her introduction (Item 2, 20 July 2020):

Kym Watling has a PhD in Physical Chemistry with a background in Raman spectroscopy, electrochemistry, and surface analysis. Projects include studies of thiosulfate as a replacement for cyanide in gold extraction; development of lead-free solder; neutralising capacity of acid sulfate soils; and flotation chemistry for reclamation of oxidised mine waste. Kym is a community representative of the Kyogle CWA Evening Branch.

The Working Group agreed to confirm the minutes of the Climate Change Working Group meeting held on 20 July 2020. MOVED: Maree Brennan.

3. Presentation by Malcolm Robertson, Senior Project Officer - Climate Preparedness, Climate Resilience and Net Zero Emissions Branch, Climate Change and Sustainability Division, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

- 'North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation' report overview
- 'AdaptNSW' website overview
- Summary of what their branch is working on - broader actions at a regional level and support at a state level

Malcolm Robertson joined the meeting via video conferencing to provide an overview of the NSW Government climate policy and programs including (refer to attached presentation):

- 'State of the Climate 2018' report (link to report <http://www.bom.gov.au/state-of-the-climate/>)
- Climate change policy framework that was adopted in 2017 – Net zero emissions by 2050
- Low versus high emissions scenarios (link to World Resources Institute maps and data <http://www.wri.org/resources/>)
- AdaptNSW website (<https://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/>) and the information available, including climate projections for the North Coast (refer report 'North Coast Climate Change Snapshot' and associated mapping), impacts of climate change and adapting to climate change.

- Climate change planning – Emission pathways - how does Council reduce emissions (current actions identified in 'Kyogle Council Action Plan' 2019)? How does the community reduce emissions? Adaptation pathways – Local governments to identify risks and vulnerability and undertake adaptation planning. Kyogle Council completed a risk assessment in 2019 ('Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives') but need to also know what the community vulnerability assessment and adaptations are.
- 'Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030' outlines four priorities of the NSW Government to reduce emissions: 1. Drive uptake of proven emissions reduction technologies that grow the economy, create new jobs or reduce the cost of living; 2. Empower consumers and businesses to make sustainable choices; 3. Invest in the next wave of emissions reduction innovation to ensure economic prosperity from decarbonisation beyond 2030; and 4. Ensure the NSW Government leads by example (link to Net Zero Plan <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/climate-change/net-zero-plan>)
- Current state: NSW emissions by emissions source (2017 figures) with highest contributor being electricity generation followed by transport and agriculture.
- Helping councils plan for a low emissions future (refer report 'Net Zero Emissions Guidance for NSW Councils')
- Kyogle 2018 Municipal Emissions Snapshot (link <https://snapshotclimate.com.au/>) – Agriculture 46%, Transport 29%, Electricity 24%, Waste 1% and Gas 0%.
- Climate change risk assessment (refer report 'Guide to Climate Change Risk Assessment for NSW Local Government'). Kyogle Council has an up-to-date risk assessment – 'Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation initiatives' (2019) – which focuses on climate change risk to Council assets, operations and services.
- Funding opportunities – building a community of adaptation practice in NSW – 5 grant rounds under 'Building Resilience to Climate Change' (BRCC) and 'Increasing Resilience to Climate Change' (IRCC). Round 3 of the IRCC grants will open in September for Councils to increase their resilience and respond to identified climate risks and vulnerabilities in their region. An up-to-date risk assessment will be the eligibility criteria for this funding.
- Enabling regional adaptation (refer report 'North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation'). The report addresses what needs to change in the North Coast region with regard to nine regional systems that were identified as being vulnerable (cultural heritage, emergency management, energy, resilient communities, tourism, settlements and land use planning, infrastructure and water, food and agriculture, and biodiversity). Over a number of workshops, participants looked at how each of the systems operated now and identified what the future transformed system should look like. Pathways to transform a particular system (i.e. 'transition pathways') were identified. Each pathway has a series of adaptation options in order to develop a transformed system. The transition pathways need to be embedded into the system.
- 'Get Ready' (link <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/getready>) contains information for individual, councils, community service organisations and businesses to become disaster ready.
- Transition North Coast – there is a regional leadership team (Transition North Coast Working Group) who are supporting implementation.

Responses to questions:

- Kyogle 2018 municipal emissions snapshot – transport for all sectors are included under transport.
- Transition North Coast Working Group – does contain a representative from Northern Rivers Joint Organisation.

- Local government surveys – data is not collected specifically on the cultural shift in the demand for what people want, the demand towards change and the expectations from the community. Perhaps a community survey would be worthwhile with regard to community expectations.
- Net Zero Plan – Renewable energy and reducing emissions have been part of previous programs but the Net Zero Plan is the first report specific to reaching the targets. Malcolm to advise what the target is in the Net Zero Plan.
- Sea level rise – will have more of a direct impact on coastal councils. Indirect impacts – flow of movement into areas like Kyogle because seen as safer, and possible relocation of inland communities as heat waves increase. Funding will be spent on defending coastal communities which may lead to less funding being available for non-coastal areas, like Kyogle.
- Impacts of agriculture on climate change as agriculture provides an important economic base for Kyogle – DPI is conducting research – link to DPI’s Climate Change Research Strategy: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/climate-change-research-strategy>
- Impact assessment for Kyogle LGA has used broader regional scale models but more specific studies and models relevant to LGA required to make adaptation work here. Malcolm reported that it is intended to re-do the modelling into the future to down scale it. Some areas being modelled at 1:1km grid scale – being released in 2022 to provide more granular models.

Malcolm Robertson’s presentation and the following reports to be provided to the Working Group:

State of the Climate 2018 (BOM & CSIRO)

North Coast Climate Change Snapshot (AdaptNSW)

Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 (DPIE)

Net Zero Emissions Guidance for NSW Councils (DPIE)

Kyogle 2018 (and 2017) Municipal Emissions Snapshot

Guide to Climate Change Risk Assessment for NSW Local Government

NSW Primary Industries Climate Change Research Strategy

Actions:

- (1) Malcolm Robertson to advise what target has been set in the Net Zero Plan
- (2) Provide presentation from Malcolm Robertson and associated reports to Working Group

4. Brief Overview of Local Government Responses to Climate Emergency Declaration – Dr Kym Watling

To assist the Working Group to investigate the implications of making a climate emergency declaration, a brief overview of local councils that have declared, and what the declaration has meant for them and their communities was presented by Dr Kym Watling (refer to attached presentation).

Major issues and points from discussion:

- What would be achieved that isn’t already being achieved by declaring?
- What would the additional workload and reporting be for Council? There are two components to making a climate emergency declaration – making the declaration and then doing something about it. Reporting is involved once a declaration is made.
- How would the community react to the declaration and to the Working Group if they decided to make the declaration?
- Is making the declaration the role of the Working Group or is the Working Group’s role to e.g. come up with opportunities that the community can benefit from that address climate change and to provide education for the community?

- Should the decision of whether or not to make a declaration belong with the Working Group or with Council? Should the role of the Working Group in this instance be to provide information back to Council who then make the decision as elected members on behalf of the community?

The Working Group agreed on the following approach with regard to making a declaration:

- Present Council with a summary of Kym Watling's presentation, including additional information on what a declaration would specifically mean for the Council
- Look at whether making a climate emergency declaration is raised through the community engagement process to inform a decision as to whether to bring it as a motion to Council at a later date.
- Present information back to Council regarding making a climate emergency declaration for Council to make the decision, based upon results of the community survey.

Actions:

- (1) Distribute Kym Watling's presentation to the Working Group
- (2) Present summary of Kym Watling's presentation to Council, including additional information on what a declaration would specifically mean for Kyogle Council
- (3) Monitor whether making a climate emergency declaration is raised by the community through the community engagement process to inform a decision as to whether to bring the declaration as a motion to Council at a later date
- (4) Present information back to Council regarding making a climate emergency declaration for Council to make the decision, based upon results of the community survey

5. Engagement Process with the Community

5.1 When and how do we engage with the community and what will the messaging be?

Major issues and points from the discussion:

- Do we need a strategy for community engagement? The community needs to know about the Working Group and what its' role will be before conducting any surveys.
- Opportunities to engage with the community - through the monthly Community Newsletter; community satisfaction surveys conducted by Kyogle Council every few years; running a regular competition (with a prize) e.g. whose electricity bill is getting lower with the associated messaging as to why we are doing this i.e. because Kyogle has the highest per capita residential electricity consumption of all North Coast Councils during 2011-2016; face-to-face events in the community, including outreach events; through schools; field days; having 'community champions' deliver messages.
- Primary production and the agricultural sector is a major industry in Kyogle LGA as well as being a big contributor to emissions. The sector will be impacted upon by climate change but can make a good contribution to change. Examples of change in the agricultural sector – bio-organic farmers, soil care groups (e.g. building soil carbon, improving soil condition), regenerative agriculture (now a degree at Southern Cross University). It was noted that there is a podcast, produced by the Regenerative Agriculture Alliance at SCU and featuring Dr Charles Massey, which discusses resilient farming practices in the face of climate change and drought. Does the agricultural industry in Kyogle LGA understand the impacts they will face regarding climate change? Do our farmers believe in climate change? What is the level of knowledge regarding climate change? Fears facing farmers include losing their stock and not being able to use fossil fuels to run vehicles. What is the best way to provide primary producers

with information? On-ground learning and demonstrations by other farmers ('champions' of the industry) who have made positive changes to deal with climate change thought appropriate.

- The demographic on the different sectors, including agriculture, would be useful. Maree Brennan reported that Council does have a statistical package regarding demographics for the LGA and she could organise for a summary to be provided for distribution to the Working Group.
- The Working Group needs to engage with all the community and not just one sector.
- Flood studies by Kyogle Council – Matt Sorenson reported that the community engagement process as part of these flood studies may assist the Working Group. A 1-2 page document containing background information on the studies has been produced and will be distributed to all ratepayers in the LGA (cost effective method). The information contains a website link for participants to complete an online survey. A reply-paid envelope and hardcopy survey will also be provided for those who prefer to do a written survey. The Working Group could adapt this community engagement process by producing a similar background document (would need to decide on content but it could include some of the background information provided by Malcolm Robertson) along with a hardcopy survey (or a link to an online survey). The role of the Working Group would be outlined in the background document.
- The Working Group queried whether there was a budget from Council available for community engagement. Graham Kennett advised that there would be no costs associated with providing articles for newsletters and conducting surveys (if Survey Monkey used). Funding for community engagement could be identified in a Communication and Engagement Strategy.

Summary of community engagement opportunities that were identified:

1. Face-to-face – community events/engagement activities, community meetings, outreach, field days, having 'community champions' deliver messages, through schools.
2. Written – using existing avenues (e.g. Community Newsletter) to provide regular articles – e.g. snapshot article, running competitions.
3. Information sheet with a survey attached (or a link to an online survey) – to do at a little later.

The Working Group agreed that in order to properly identify when and how they engaged with the community and what the messaging should be that the Group should develop a Communication and Engagement Strategy. The Strategy can identify what funding would be required by the Group for community engagement. A framework for a Communication and Engagement Strategy and examples of other similar strategies to be provided to the Working Group before the next meeting. The Group to workshop the Strategy at the next meeting.

Kym Watling to investigate whether any Communication and Engagement Strategies and surveys/questionnaires were produced by other councils as part of her investigation into the climate emergency declaration.

Actions:

- (1) Maree Brennan to provide a summary of the demographics of the LGA for distribution
- (2) Suzie Coulston and Judy Faulks to provide examples of Communication and Engagement Strategies to the Working Group prior to October meeting
- (3) Suzie Coulston to provide a framework for a Communication and Engagement Strategy to the Working Group prior to October meeting (for workshopping at the meeting)
- (4) Kym Watling to investigate whether any Communication and Engagement Strategies and surveys/questionnaires were produced by other councils as part of her climate emergency declaration investigation and provide them for distribution to the Group

5.2 Would a community survey be useful and what questions would be appropriate?

The Working Group agreed that a community survey would be useful once a Communication and Engagement Strategy has been developed by the Group (refer 5.1). The survey could be along the lines of the engagement process used for the flood studies – i.e. An information sheet with a survey attached (or a link to an online survey). Malcolm Robertson could provide some appropriate background information and questions to ask the community. The survey could include a question about making a climate emergency declaration.

It was noted that Clarence Valley Council currently have a community online survey on their website (link <https://www.clarenceconversations.com.au/>) to ascertain community views on climate change, emission targets, actions that can be taken and how Council can help implement actions. From website: The survey is part of a project between Clarence Valley Council and the NSW Government Sustainable Councils and Communities Program to develop a community climate action strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The project follows on from Council's decision to acknowledge a climate emergency and to establish a target to reduce Councils operational emissions by 50% before 2030 and to be net zero by 2050.

Actions:

- (1) Working Group to develop an information sheet with a community survey attached (or a link to an online survey) at a later date

5.3 Communications from other stakeholder groups – Request from Kyogle Environment Group (attached)

The request from Kyogle Environment Group was discussed. The Working Group agreed on the following process regarding communication from other stakeholder groups:

- Maggie May, as Chair of the Working Group, is happy to have her details made available to the various stakeholder groups
- All correspondence from stakeholder groups to come through Judy Faulks who will bring them to the Working Group
- Once the minutes of the Climate Change Working Group are endorsed by the Group, Maggie May will table the minutes at the next available Council meeting
- The Climate Change Working Group minutes will then be made available on Council's 'Climate Change and Energy' webpage.

Actions:

- (1) Judy Faulks to respond to Kyogle Environment Group outlining the agreed process regarding communication from stakeholder groups
- (2) Maggie May to table the minutes from the Climate Change Working Group at the upcoming Council meeting
- (3) Judy Faulks to make the Climate Change Working Group minutes available on the Council's webpage

6. Action Plan – Status (attached)

7. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Communication and Engagement Strategy – to be workshopped

8. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 19 October 2020 at 9.30am (for morning tea) with the meeting commencing at 9.45am in the KMI Hall Supper Room, Roxy Lane, Kyogle.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Climate Change Working Group Meeting held on 19 October 2020

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MAGGIE MAY, CHAIRPERSON