

Brief Overview of Local Government Responses to Climate Emergency Declaration

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A brief overview of the declaration process to investigate the implications of making a climate emergency declaration.

History of Declaration process

- First Declaration - 2016 *Darebin Council*, Melbourne.
- Started global *Climate Emergency Declaration* movement.
- 1769 jurisdictions in 30 countries, 96 in Australia.
- Declared Northern Rivers Councils:
Byron Shire, Clarence Valley Shire, Lismore City, Tweed Shire, Ballina Shire.
- Declaration means moving a motion and registering with the Climate Emergency Declaration organisation.

What does Declaration require?

The Declaration process is a motion containing at least the following two resolutions:

1. Acknowledge a state of Climate Emergency requiring urgent action by all levels of government.
2. Implementation a Climate Emergency Plan (already have 100% Renewables)

Example: Byron Shire Council

Council resolved at the Ordinary meeting held October, 2018 the following:

18-680

- *To declare that we are in a State of Climate Emergency that requires urgent action by all levels of government, including by local councils.*
- *To develop a Shire-wide Community Climate Emergency Plan to further enhance resilience and reduce climate impacts in a timeframe that is as fast as practicably possible.*

After declaration need to register the following with the Climate Emergency Declaration website:

- Name of council
- Date of council meeting passing motion
- Link to motion in minutes
- Link to any news articles or council announcement

What else can motion include?

- Recognise evidence & precedents, sources include:
 - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
 - Australian Government emissions data, CSIRO, BOM
 - Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA)
 - National Farmers Federation (NFF)
 - Insurance companies
 - Investment Fund divestments e.g. BlackRock

- Encourage all levels of government
 - Letters to State & Federal Members, Parliamentary Secretary for Northern NSW, State and Federal Environment Ministers advising of resolution and requesting action
 - Call upon State and Federal Governments to declare a climate emergency backed with legislation to meet the lower Paris Agreement.
 - Encourage neighbouring local governments to act

- Include engagement with community
 - Emergency services - RFS, SES, Red Cross
 - CWA, service groups
 - Youth groups
 - Local Environment & Agricultural groups

- Acknowledge risks
 - Heatwaves, bushfire, drought
 - Sea level rise, changed rainfall, floods
 - Economic shock
 - Agriculture

- Acknowledge Benefits
 - Cost savings from energy efficiency and solar
 - Protecting council assets
 - Resilience and preparedness
 - Potential for jobs
 - Improved agricultural outputs

Should council declare a climate emergency?

Positives

- Support from some sectors of community
- Visible environmental credentials
- Access to Local Government award schemes
- May make a difference

Negatives

- Possible social disruption and loss of potential collaboration
- Administrative reporting load increased
- No guarantee of influencing Federal or State policy

Either way

- Risks have been recognised and plans are in place to reduce emissions and build resilience.
- Most emissions come from the community so will need their support

What does the community think?

Council represents the community so any declaration would need to reflect community opinion.

The next step would be to develop a strategy of community engagement to find out if residents support a Declaration before going any further.

The Working Group is aware that this has the possibility to cause community tension. We will work with the goal of avoiding further social division on what is well-known to be a trigger issue in our community.

The next step of KCCCWG will be to research the best way to ensure that ALL members of the community are able to provide their input to enable the Council to make this decision.

Strategies will need to conform to distancing constraints of COVID-19, so traditional methods involving gatherings, presentations, and debates will be limited. We will need to find safe and appropriate ways to make sure that everyone can be heard.