



MINUTES

Climate Change Working Group Meeting

20 July 2020

**MINUTES OF THE KYOGLE COUNCIL
CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP MEETING
HELD AT KMI HALL SUPPER ROOM, ROXY LANE, KYOGLE
ON MONDAY, 20 JULY 2020 AT 10AM**

Meeting commenced: 10am

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 Kylie Thomas, Robert Drury, Dr Genevieve Larsen, Roger Small, Dr Arthur Webb, Karen Webb, Dr Kym Watling, Graham Kennett, Shane Noon, Suzie Coulston, Maree Brennan, Tony Lickiss, Judy Faulks.

1. Apologies

Cr John Burley, Matt Sorenson, Amanda Clark

2. Introductions

Members of the Working Group were asked to introduce themselves and state what their interest is in being a part of the Climate Change Working Group:

Maggie May - Elected to Kyogle Council in 2016. Has a strong interest in the environment and in creating suitable environment policy at Council. Has skills in research methods.

Kylie Thomas - Elected to Kyogle Council in 2016 and represents Ward A. Is excited about this group and being involved in looking forward into the future and also acting as a conduit back to the community.

Robert Drury - Is a community representative on the Working Group and is a volunteer in Landcare. Believes there is a strong connection between Landcare and climate change and that Landcare has a positive role to play to help Council combat climate change.

Genevieve Larsen - Moved to Kyogle 3 years ago. Has a science background – applied science, applied physics, water chemistry and has worked in consultancies undertaking hydrodynamic modelling. Is currently studying. Would like to use her skills and be useful to the Working Group. Feels that climate change is an emergency.

Roger Small - Has an extensive background in business development, in making business plans and making businesses work. Has skills in analysis.

Arthur Webb - Has been based in Pacific Island region. Is a climate change scientist and has worked in this field for many years. Is a resident in Kyogle LGA.

Karen Webb - Is a resident of Bonalbo. Is concerned about the future for her children and grandchildren.

Kym Watling – Is a musician and scientist - spectro electro chemistry (physical chemistry).

Graham Kennett – Has been with Kyogle Council for 20+yrs, 3yrs as General Manager.

Shane Noon - Urban Services Manager, Kyogle Council. Has an interest in how things progress as will help to implement actions. There is better implementation of actions if he has an understanding of where things have come from.

Suzie Coulston – Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Kyogle Council. Has an interest in environmental matters. Can provide help with getting both Council and community projects off the ground and assist with community engagement.

Maree Brennan- GIS and Project Officer. Has an applied science degree and is interested in environmental issues. Has IT skills, including GIS.

Tony Lickiss- Director Assets and Infrastructure, Kyogle Council. Implements climate change actions.

Judy Faulks – Senior Environmental Services Officer, Kyogle Council. Will provide support to the Working Group.

**3. Role of the Working Group - Terms of Reference (ToR)
- Code of Conduct**

(Chair)

Maggie May went through the Terms of Reference (Item 3) for the Working Group:

- To monitor the implementation of:
 - The Sustainable Councils and Communities Action Plan for Kyogle Council and associated targets adopted in June 2019:
 - (a) *That 25% of Council's electricity demand is met through on-site solar energy generation by 2025*
 - (b) *That 50% of Council's electricity demand is sourced from renewables by 2025*
 - (c) *That 100% of Council's electricity demand is sourced from renewables by 2030.*
 - *Council also encourages and supports the use of renewable energy by the community, particularly in new developments.*
 - The Climate Change Adaptation Risk Assessment report adopted in August 2019.
- To provide advice in accordance to the principals of Ecologically Sustainable Development and relevant federal, state and local government policy and legislation.
- To provide a broader advocacy role that seeks to inform and educate other parts of the community.
- To assist Council incorporate the latest knowledge of climate change impacts into planning policies and instruments.
- To foster opportunities for external funding and joint projects that align with Council's adopted strategies and targets.
- Monitor state and federal government climate change adaptation direction and advise Council on appropriate responses.

Joint projects will rely on external funding so accessing grants will be very important.

Working Group code of conduct highlighted.

4. Presentation on the current status and implementation of plans in ToR by Graham Kennett, General Manager, Kyogle Council

- 'The Kyogle Council Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives'
- 'The Sustainable Councils and Communities – Kyogle Council Action Plan'

Sustainable Councils and Communities Program Officers - Mark Squires, Grant Christopherson and Malcolm Robertson – joined the meeting remotely for this session

Graham Kennett provided a current status report on the implementation of the two plans Council has adopted (as at July 2020).

- The Sustainable Councils and Communities – Kyogle Council Action Plan (2019)

Adopts the following targets:

- (a) That 25% of Council's electricity demand is met through on-site solar energy generation by 2025
- (b) That 50% of Council's electricity demand is sourced from renewables by 2025
- (c) That 100% of Council's electricity demand is sourced from renewables by 2030.

New addition - Encourage and support the use of renewable energy by the community, particularly in new developments.

Targets (a) and (b) are deliverable. Target (c) is an aspirational target and will be a challenge to meet.

Mark Squires, Senior Team Leader, Sustainable Councils and Communities Program addressed the Working Group:

Mark has been in this role for 11yrs. In 2018, the Sustainable Councils and Communities Program was commenced with the aim of assisting smaller councils like Kyogle. They were looking at quick returns and the initial focus was on helping Kyogle Council to reduce energy costs and emissions. Solar and lighting options were investigated. As a result, the Action Plan for Kyogle Council was developed where short, medium and long-term projects were identified. They provided Council with the expertise to undertake the actions. They are keen to know how else they can assist Council and the Working Group.

Graham Kennett noted that the Action Plan contains a series of short, medium and long-term actions and opportunities, as well as providing a business case for further investment in solar PV opportunities and lighting energy efficiency improvements in Council's facilities. The main areas of focus in the actions and opportunities are:

- i. Electricity purchasing and procurement
- ii. Solar PV installations
- iii. Lighting and appliances energy efficiencies
- iv. Water and sewerage energy efficiency improvements
- v. Investigation of water supply micro-hydro opportunities.

- i. Electricity purchasing and procurement – Council went to market. Three different procurement pathways were established through Procurement Australia for:
- Street lighting energy retain tenders.
 - 315 MWh/year total usage
 - \$44,000/year savings over 2019/20 figures
 - Was available for residential lighting only at that stage
 - No green power options available
 - Currently working with Essential Energy to develop options for retrofitting of existing luminaires with LEDs, with Council setting aside \$140,000 in its Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) to fund the selected initiative. Will bring options back through Council and this Working Group.
 - Contestable sites
 - Bonalbo Water Treatment Plant (WTP) site and Kyogle WTP
 - 314 MWh/year total usage
 - \$22,000/year savings over 2019/20
 - Negotiated a contract and 50% green power included
 - All small sites
 - 580 MWh/year total usage
 - \$40,000/year in savings over 2019/20 figures
 - Negotiated 50% green power

Total savings - \$106,000/year

Total renewable energy – 302 MWh/year out of a total 1,209 MWh/year or 25%

- ii. Solar PV installations
- Funding of \$400,000 committed through the Drought Communities Extension Program
 - Will allow for installation of all solar PV opportunities identified in Table 8 of the Action Plan plus some additional capacity at some sites
 - Includes lighting energy efficiency improvements in Table 9 as well
 - Tenders called and accepted by Council as a panel of providers, installations to roll out from August 2020
- v. Investigation of water supply micro-hydro opportunities
- Feasibility study and business case development undertaken by Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation in 2019/20
 - No feasible micro-hydro solutions or options were able to be identified
 - Rous CC have bought the rights for hydro off Toonumbar dam.

Total savings - \$60,000/year

Total renewable energy – 321 MWh/year (79 existing + 242 new) out of a total 1,209 MWh/year or 26%

Meeting of targets:

With the roll out of these actions and completion of the solar PV and lighting installations, Council will be able to meet its 2025 targets in 2021/22 with 25% solar PV and 25% of grid power purchased being green power. It was noted that these were the easier targets to address.

Ongoing cost savings have not been fully incorporated into the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), leaving additional capacity in the budgets to provide funding for new initiatives based on feasibility and business case development to help meet the 2030 target of 100% renewables. Council are looking for this Working Group to help provide input on recommendations for future priorities from this Action Plan.

Kym Watling provided the Sustainable Councils and Communities Program Officers and Working Group with a link to the 'Net Zero Momentum Tracker – Local Government Sector' (2020) report by Monash University, Monash Sustainable Development Institute and Climate Works Australia:

<https://www.climateworksaustralia.org/resource/net-zero-momentum-tracker-local-government-report/>

- Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives (2019)

Malcolm Robertson, Senior Project Officer, Climate Preparedness, Climate Resilience and Net Zero Emissions Branch addressed the Working Group:

Malcolm is based in Coffs Harbour. He has been involved in state and regional vulnerability assessments. His role in the team is on adaptations to climate change – to make NSW more resilient to a changing climate and linking this back into the policy framework.

Malcolm outlined the following resources that would be useful for the Working Group to look at:

- 'AdaptNSW' website (containing information and mapping for North Coast):
<https://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/>
- 'North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation' report :
<https://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/Adapting-to-climate-change/Regional-vulnerability-and-assessment/North-Coast>

Malcolm has been working with local government for over 10 years. Regular surveys have reported greater impacts being seen by local councils since 2018. Another survey is planned for 2021. His role is to support councils around guidance – net zero emissions for a low emission future and supporting councils to undertake risk assessments. Kyogle Council completed their risk assessment in 2019. Actions are prioritised based on these risk assessments (also refer AdaptNSW website). Malcolm is also working on a grant program – 3 funding rounds. The next funding round will be available to councils shortly and the funding is linked to the risk assessments. The 'North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation' report addresses what needs to change in the North Coast region with regard to 9 regional systems that were identified as being vulnerable (settlements and land-use planning, resilient communities, cultural heritage, biodiversity, emergency management, food and agriculture, infrastructure and water, energy, tourism); transition models for these key regional systems; vulnerability of the North Coast to climate change; and the Enabling Regional Adaptation process (system drivers, transition pathways, barriers and enablers). Malcolm can provide more information to the Working Group at a future meeting.

Graham Kennett reported that the initial 'Review of Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives' report was prepared in 2013. Process was initiated by Council's insurers, the Statewide Mutual Liability Scheme and undertaken by their consulting arm Echelon. The 2019 report was a review of the 2013 plan (page 14) and an update to the risk assessment process to develop an updated Initiatives Plan (Appendix 4). Between 2013 and 2019 changes in risk could be seen. The basis of the risk assessment is scientific data available through:

- NSW CSIRO
- Australian Bureau of Meteorology

- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)
- The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC)

The Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives report then uses this data to assess the impact and adaptation requirements against four scenarios: temperature, hot days, rainfall and fire weather.

Actions completed since adoption:

- Development of Open Spaces Design Guide and draft plans of management for key sites
- Consultants engaged to undertake a review of Kyogle town centre master plan
- Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy Issues Paper completed January 2020
- Drinking Water Quality Management Plan review undertaken in 2019
- Input provided to the draft Regional Water Strategy development by the NSW DPIE expected to be released in August 2020
- Drought emergency water supply works for Bonalbo and the Urbenville, Muli Muli, Woodenbong water supplies in progress
- Local Strategic Planning Statement adopted by Council in June 2020
- Tabulam Floodplain Risk Management Plan adopted in December 2020
- Bonalbo and Woodenbong flood studies to commence in 2020, consultants engaged in June 2020.

The projects listed in the action plan from the Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives are covered across a number of budget areas and are summarised as follows:

- Provision of shade and lighting in public open spaces (Parks and Gardens budget)
- Improvements to community buildings such as air conditioning and water supplies (Community Buildings budget)
- Improvements to water supplies, drought security and provision of new water supply at Tabulam (Water Supply budget)
- Sewerage treatment system improvements and inflow and infiltration controls (Sewerage budget)
- Urban stormwater system upgrades and flood studies and plans (Stormwater and Flood Management budget).

The provisions made in these various budgets will allow for gradual implementation of these actions. Once the LTFP is adopted, there will be a need to compile a list of priority projects and develop a detailed delivery program for these works. Council are now looking for this Working Group to help provide input on recommendations for future priorities from the 'Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives' report.

Grant Christopherson, Regional Co-ordinator, Sustainable Councils and Communities addressed the Working Group – Grant applauded Council for taking action on climate change and for the community interest on the Working Group. He noted that green energy is cheaper than fossil fuel and with technology changes, can create this within the LGA rather than import it.

Actions:

- (1) Working Group to familiarise themselves with AdaptNSW website and 'North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation' report (webpage links and report to be provided to members)
- (2) Add AdaptNSW to Kyogle Councils' Climate Change and Energy webpage
- (3) Invite Malcolm Robertson to the next meeting to provide information on the above report, website and what they are working on
- (4) Working Group to provide input on recommendations for future priorities from 'Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives' and 'Kyogle Council Action Plan'.

5. Council Resolutions

5.1 October 2019 Meeting – *That Council refer the matter of declaring a climate emergency to the Climate Change Working Group.*

Maggie May reported that Council made a decision to refer this matter to the Working Group because there was not the level of confidence that they could make such a declaration. The Working Group is to provide Council with information and understanding of whether it is necessary or beneficial to declare a climate emergency.

Major issues/points from discussion:

- IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) useful resource that the group could refer to for information
- Using the word “emergency” in the declaration is a polarising statement and may have implications and cause disagreements
- Advocacy statement and not an operational statement?
- Do we use this as a policy platform?
- The term “urgent” has relevance but “emergency” means it needs to be dealt with immediately and can be alarming for the community
- Other councils have declared a climate emergency – but what has it meant for them and what has it resulted in? What would be relevant for our Council? What have they had to change and act upon? What are the implications? Are there any benefits to Council? What would Council have to do that it isn't doing now? How did they consider the community and what it means?
- Such a declaration has implications for not only Council but the community. What changes does this put onto the community? Are we taking action for the community to change or are we taking action for the higher levels of government? Social mitigation/benefits? What can the community handle at this point in time? What is the community currently doing with regard to tackling climate change? What does the community want to see happen? What do we want to know from the community? Would a community survey be useful and what questions would we ask?
- Engagement with the community – When and how do we engage with the community? What will our messaging be? A well-planned communication style is required to bring the message across to the community.

Actions:

- (1) Working Group to investigate the implications of making a climate emergency declaration as a first step. Review 'Climate Emergency Declaration' website <https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/> to investigate which other councils have made the declaration and gather information on what the declaration has meant for them and their communities, and what would be relevant to our Council.
- (2) Agenda item for next meeting - Engagement process with the community – When and how do we engage with the community and what will the messaging be? Would a community survey be useful and what questions would be appropriate?

5.2 March 2020 Meeting – *That Council lobby both state and federal government to recognise the importance of preparing communities for the impacts of climate change and to establish suitable funding programs to assist local government in delivering on Climate Change Adaptation Action Plans.*

Attachment 1 (under separate cover) – Kyogle Council – ‘Climate Change Adaption’ – existing advocacy brief (content pre-dates current Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Plan)

Council's existing advocacy brief ‘Climate Change Adaption – Limiting Community Impacts’ (as Attachment 1) is a 4-page document with the last page providing a brief summary of identified risks and future adaptation plans. Graham Kennett noted that the brief needs to be updated with input on priorities. The content currently pre-dates the latest ‘Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives’ report. He noted that the focus of Natural Disaster Declaration funding should be on resilience and prevention rather than recovery only.

The role of the Working Group and how they could contribute to this was discussed. The major points from the discussion:

- This is an ongoing action in which the Working Group can play a role with prioritising and ranking projects; coming up with innovative ideas; making recommendations on how to tackle more complex actions to meet targets; coming up with innovative ideas at a community level; building actions into business cases that funding can be sought for; recommending high level advocacy and policy changes; encouraging the community and businesses in energy saving measures and emission reductions.
- Increase the offsetting target of 1,209 MWh/year (which is being used now) to 1,500 MWh/year (future use).
- Need to look at adaption and resilience into the future as well as mitigation. Adaption – lowering our footprint and becoming more sustainable. Mitigation – having a biodiversity layer for LEP; looking at actions from the ‘North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation’ report; implementing any actions from plans/frameworks to deliver improved river health outcomes in the Richmond River catchment as we are in the headwaters (e.g. Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative, Richmond River Governance Framework, Richmond River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan).
- Currently it is a difficult regulatory environment to work within. High level policy changes at both the state and federal government level needed in regard to the current regulatory approach (e.g. to allow ‘Waste to Energy’ plants that divert landfill and create energy that is being investigated by Richmond Valley Council; the need to become own energy provider for large solar PV projects ≥ 100 kW).
- Adaptation Plan is strategic and not as broad and aspirational as some others.

6. Meeting Frequency

Mondays are suitable for members. Initially will hold meetings more regularly and then to review later once group established. ToR state that the Working Group will aim to meet two times per year or on an as needs basis. Working on actions via email in between meetings can be utilised.

7. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 31 August 2020 at 9.30am (for morning tea) with the meeting commencing at 9.45am in the KMI Hall Supper Room, Roxy Lane, Kyogle.

Guest speaker:

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.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Climate Change Working Group Meeting held on 31 August 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above a dotted line.

CHAIRPERSON