



MINUTES

Climate Change Working Group Meeting

19 October 2020

**MINUTES OF THE KYOGLE COUNCIL
CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP MEETING
HELD AT KMI HALL SUPPER ROOM, ROXY LANE, KYOGLE
ON MONDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2020 AT 9.45AM**

Meeting commenced: 9.45am

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), Robert Drury, Roger Small, Dr Kym Watling, Dr Genevieve Larsen, Tony Lickiss, Matt Sorenson, Maree Brennan, Suzie Coulston, Judy Faulks.

1. Apologies

Cr John Burley, Graham Kennett, Karen Webb, Shane Noon, Dr Arthur Webb, Cr Kylie Thomas.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The Working Group agreed to confirm the minutes of the Climate Change Working Group meeting held on 31 August 2020. **MOVED:** Matt Sorenson **SECONDED:** Kym Watling

3. Follow-up of Actions from Meeting held 31 August 2020 – For information/comment

Action 3.1 Malcolm Robertson to advise what target has been set in the Net Zero Plan

Response: The Climate Change Policy Framework and the Net Zero Emissions Plan refer to Net Zero Emissions by 2050. The Net Zero Emissions Plan refers to setting a target of net zero emissions from organic waste by 2030.

Response from Malcolm Robertson noted.

Action 5.1.1 Summary of the demographics of the LGA to be provided to Working Group

Kyogle LGA demographic summary attached to Agenda

Link for further information and data: <https://www.investkyogle.com.au/>

[Note: Click on 'Economic Profile' or 'Community Profile' links under 'Kyogle LGA']

Demographic summary noted. The website (Invest Kyogle) was developed for Kyogle Council and can be used by anyone needing community and economic profile information for Kyogle LGA. The site is interactive. Is a great tool to provide evidence to support funding applications and reports (e.g. Local Strategic Planning Statement).

Action 5.1.4 Kym Watling to investigate whether any Communication and Engagement Strategies and survey/questionnaires were produced by other councils as part of her climate emergency declaration investigation and provide them for distribution to the Group
Summary of correspondence and responses from other councils attached to Agenda.

Kym Watling noted the responses received by other councils and thanked them for this. She was impressed by Tweed Shire Council's response and by their community outreach. It was noted that Ballina Shire Council has produced a Climate Action Strategy (refer 'Ballina Shire Council Climate Action Strategy 2012-2020') and this process commenced in 2011. During the process, Ballina SC undertook community engagement and this is summarised in the Strategy. They are currently working towards a Climate Change Policy. In reviewing the responses from other councils, it was felt that it was a political decision of the various councils to declare a climate emergency and that

the declaration did not come from their communities. It was noted that there was not the same political drive for Kyogle as compared to the coastal councils. Clarence Council was the only council not to respond. It was suggested that the Clarence Valley Council Community Survey (website link and survey questions) and Community Climate Action Strategy once it is developed (website link) could be incorporated into this summary document. The community survey was undertaken to “ascertain community views on climate change, emission targets, actions that can be taken and how Council can help implement actions”.

Further action 5.1.4:

- (1) Include Clarence Valley Council Community Survey (website link and survey questions) and Community Climate Action Strategy once it is developed (website link) into Kym Watling's summary document – for re-distribution to Working Group when finalised.

Action 5.3.2 Maggie May to table minutes (and background information/presentations) from Working Group at September Council meeting

Maggie May to provide feedback on response from Council

The minutes, reports and presentations were tabled at the September 2020 Council meeting and were accepted. General comments included that the Working Group was doing reasonably good work, the Councillors were supportive and they have a general commitment to climate change - particularly where changes have led to demonstrated savings (e.g. converting to solar and making savings in electricity costs).

4. 'Final Report of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry' (31 July 2020). Link to report:

<https://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/assets/dpc-nsw-gov-au/publications/NSW-Bushfire-Inquiry-1630/Final-Report-of-the-NSW-Bushfire-Inquiry.pdf>

Recommendation 20: That Government, noting that hazard reduction targeted in proximity to assets is on balance more likely to provide help than hinder, should:

a) support local councils and partner agencies to implement more comprehensive hazard reduction at a local level around towns/cities, communities and local infrastructure assets, and provide incentives for communities to organise themselves to prioritise and implement local hazard reduction initiatives. This will involve a suite of hazard reduction techniques depending on the landscape including prescribed burning, clearing, mowing, and mechanical treatments, and easy disposal of green waste into processors turning it into bioenergy or biofuels

Background information:

- (i) 'Forest-based Bioenergy, Sustainability and Climate Change' - part of a Strategic Impact Assessment report prepared by Genevieve Larsen (2020) attached to Agenda for background information.
- (ii) Kyogle Council accepts green waste at the waste facilities. The green waste is processed at the Kyogle Landfill Facility. Mulch has to meet the requirements outlined in the EPA's 'Pasteurised Garden Organics Order' 2016 if Council wishes to recycle the mulch, for example, by selling back to the community, or use it in parks and gardens. Material that is too bulky (e.g. tree trucks and branches etc.) is processed by a company called MI Organics based in Coffs Harbour. They also take the green waste that can't meet the Order so it doesn't end up in Landfill and turn it into landscape supplies for sale back to the community.

Does the Working Group wish to contribute to the development of a hazard reduction plan with respect to disposal of green waste as described in recommendation 20?

Recommendation 20 from the 'Final Report of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry' (2020) discussed. Major issues/points from the discussion:

- Hazard reduction needs to occur. Removing firewood is a method of hazard reduction. Should firewood be removed and taken to a central location for community use?
- Creating biochar (charcoal) – Roger Small has experience and background knowledge in creating biochar and shared this with the group. Needs large pieces of timber. Wood is burnt at a high temperature (not in the ground as this creates smoke). Process could be scaled down so that individuals could create biochar in 44 gallon drums (~150L) rather than 10,000L lots as he has produced. Being more small scale would mean that the process would be less expensive. Some end products for biochar – BBQ charcoal, horticultural industry (in potting mix), animal nutrition. The process sequesters carbon (captures carbon and stores it long term). Creating biochar is considered to be a carbon neutral process. Is it an accepted practice in agriculture to use biochar in soils or is it an emerging science? It was agreed that creating biochar would be a good topic for a future workshop/s – for inclusion in the Community Engagement Plan being developed. Possibly is something that funding could be sought for. Roger Small agreed that he could run a workshop/s on creating biochar.
- As there is an ecological impact of removing logs from the environment, where material is sourced from for firewood or to create biochar needs to be considered. It was thought that material would be sourced from State Forests.
From NSW Forestry Corporation website and pamphlet 'Forest Facts – Collecting firewood from State forests' 2018: In order to help protect the forest environment, Forestry Corporation of NSW controls the amount of firewood and other products collected from State forests and where it is collected from. A permit is required to collect firewood and other timber from State forests for personal use. Permit holders must adhere to some basic conditions attached to the permit (e.g. may only take fallen timber, must have a valid permit, must adhere to limits on what may be taken so as to protect habitat and the forest environment, may only collect firewood from the area shown on the map attached to permit).
- Large incinerators – are required to produce extremely hot fires. In some instances, large incinerators are being used to burn toxic substances (e.g. tyres) resulting in toxic fumes.
- Green waste accepted at waste facilities (at a cost). It was thought that pickups for green waste would be useful.

Action:

- (1) Include 'creating biochar' as a future workshop topic (by Roger Small) – for inclusion in the Community Engagement Plan being developed.

5. Kyogle 2018 January – December municipal emissions snapshot

Link: <https://snapshotclimate.com.au/locality/australia/new-south-wales/kyogle/>

- (i) **Issue:** Lack of inclusion of gas in the energy mix. Data only includes grid energy/gas and does not include the entire market of LPG supplied in cylinders. This would suggest an undercount of emissions in regional areas as large permanent cylinders are the primary household gas supply, with a smaller cohort of small BBQ type cylinders used by people in temporary dwellings or camp-style accommodation. Not sure if there are many LPG vehicles any more, and if they are included via transport.

Is Kyogle Council able to access the following records for gas usage in the Kyogle LGA in order to inform an estimate of the significance of domestic gas emissions:

- a) total annual supplier records for fixed domestic cylinder use
- b) service stations for an estimate of annual small bottle refills?

Background information:

Council has no regulatory function when it comes to gas installation or use, other than (on new builds) to ensure the plumbing complies with the Australian Standard and Plumbing Code, and compliance with the commitments made on the BASIX certificate which accompanies the development application.

Council have no information on the number of houses using gas or their consumption.

Lack of inclusion of domestic gas usage in the emissions snapshots for the Kyogle LGA discussed. It was suggested that Supagas, the major company who supplies gas, may have some information on the volume of gas delivered to Kyogle LGA and if this information is required, this could be followed up with them.

- (ii) **Is Net Zero Emissions team aware of the omission of cylinder gas emissions in this and other regional snapshots?**

Response: Malcolm Robertson has referred the query regarding domestic gas emissions to the Net Zero Emissions team to seek a response and will forward the response through to the Working Group once received.

Response from Malcolm Robertson noted. Awaiting a response.

Action:

- (1) Table response from Net Zero Emissions team regarding the omission of domestic gas emissions in the regional snapshot.

6. Q&A from the webinar, "Opportunities for NSW land managers and primary producers under the NSW Government's Net Zero Plan" - 1 September 2020

Link to webinar recording: <https://youtu.be/c7iZcpW8cQA>

Webinar was attended by Kym Watling on behalf of KCCCWG. Q&A Number 10 for information of the Working Group:

Q. How can farmers using long-established methods be convinced that change is necessary, and how can they gain a benefit from changes?

A. The NSW government recognises that the right mix between de-risking change in management practice and incentivising change will be important. Ideally, opportunities for emissions reduction and sequestration will be integrated into existing management practices. Net zero initiatives for primary producers will contain a significant element of capacity building, helping farmers and land managers to understand the costs and benefits of carbon projects, including benefits to productivity and profitability where applicable.

Q&A from webinar, "Opportunities for NSW land managers and primary producers under the NSW Government's Net Zero Plan" (Sept, 2020) noted by the group. The statement provides no specific advice on how to achieve this. Comes down to helping farmers to help themselves.

7. Update from Council on Solar Installations

An update of the solar PV installations that either have been installed recently or are to be installed in the coming months was provided by Tony Lickiss and Matt Sorenson. These works include:

- Kyogle Pool – new 20kW system
- Kyogle Water Treatment Plant – new 35kW system
- Kyogle Library – new 15kW system
- Kyogle Memorial Hall – new 30kW system
- Kyogle Visitor Information Centre – new 10kW system
- Kyogle Caravan Park – new 15kW system
- Kyogle Museum – new 15kW system
- Bonalbo Water Treatment Plant – new 95kW system
- Woodenbong Sewerage Treatment Plant – new 10kW system

The Solar PV installations were funded through the Drought Communities Extension Program where Council received \$400,000. The process involved going out to tender to create a panel of providers (i.e. contractors) within 100km of Kyogle LGA. From this tendering process, the top 5 contractors were selected. The solar PV systems are capped at 99kW per site. Are not able to create a Microgrid because of these restrictions (which are purely administrative but act as a barrier). Lobbying required to change the National Energy Policy. Alternative is a Virtual Power Plant but this is in the trial phase. Requires energy being produced (via solar panels) and stored (via batteries) and allows for the buying and selling of power. It was suggested that the Working Group could invite someone like Enova to speak to the group (<https://www.enovaenergy.com.au/>). Peer-to-peer power and feedback into the grid, issues with solar fluctuations due to brown outs (i.e. power surges) and ways to 'clean' power (e.g. via a battery) were discussed. Genevieve Larsen agreed to investigate Virtual Power Plants and Microgrids to assist with explaining what the different systems are and provide a summary for the next meeting. Maggie May is available to take any resolutions back to Council.

Action:

- (1) Genevieve Larsen to investigate Virtual Power Plants and Microgrids to assist with explaining what the different systems are and provide a summary for the November meeting.

8. Workshop to develop a Community Engagement Plan for the Working Group

Background Information

Kyogle Council has an adopted Community Engagement Strategy (attached to Agenda). The strategy is reviewed at least once during the term of the incumbent elected Council prior to any review of Council's Community Strategic Plan by the elected Council.

When a matter is considered significant and community engagement is necessary, Council will formulate a specific Community Engagement Plan which includes:

- identifying the nature of the engagement
- specific engagement methodologies to be applied
- objectives of the engagement
- time frames
- roles and responsibilities of the parties involved

- limitations and scope of public participation (including community input that is expected to influence final decisions and outcomes).

To develop the Kyogle Council Climate Change Working Group Community Engagement Plan we will workshop:

- What we need to tell the community
- What we expect the community will do with the information we share with them
- What we need to find out from the community and
- What we want to work with the community on

As part of this process we will determine who we will engage with, why we want to engage, how we will engage and when.

Workshop

The following examples of Community Engagement Strategies (attached to Agenda) were discussed:

- 'Kyogle Council - Community Engagement Strategy' – October 2017
- 'Ballina Shire Council Climate Action Strategy 2012-2020' – in particular pages 13 & 17
- 'Climate Change Community Engagement Strategy (Draft)' – March 2018, Mornington Peninsula Shire

It was noted that Ballina Shire Council undertook some very useful community engagement and that the Mornington Peninsular Strategy was driven by the community.

The objectives of the engagement will link back to the Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Working Group. As we are talking about community engagement, we need to understand the purpose we have for engaging with these people/groups. The Working Group can: tell people things; ask people things; help to drive behaviour change in the community that we want to see (through education, providing easy processes and pathways to follow); use the information we collect from the community to inform the Group, help the Group to work out what the community is working on or thinks, and could help the Group to understand what the community wants to work on by themselves, what they need our assistance with or what they expect the Group to do.

Three exercises were workshopped by the Working Group – with individual responses being discussed by the group as a whole. The Group was asked not to be constrained by resources or a lack of them as how to resource the ideas will be dealt with later (i.e. what needs funding and what can be achieved).

Exercise # 1 – Who are we engaging with?

The exercise canvassed the following: Who is it the group wants to engage with and why? How do we engage with them? Where do we find these people/groups? Where do these people look to find out what's going on? Where do they get their information from? Who do they give their opinions to? When do we engage with them? Whether members had any existing links with any of these groups and could engage with them was also explored.

Exercise # 2 – What do you feel we need to tell the community?

The exercise canvassed the following: What do you feel we need to tell the community? Why do we need to tell them about this? Who in the community could we tell (pick one target group – who are they? What method could we use and when would we do it?). What do you expect the community will do with this information?

Exercise # 3 – What do you feel we need to ask the community?

The exercise explored what we wanted our community to tell us? Why we want to know? How we will ask them and what are we going to do with the information we collect from our community?

The exercise canvassed the following specific questions: What do you feel we need to ask the community about? Why do we need to ask them about this? How will we ask them (pick a target group – Who are we asking? What method are we using and when?). What do you expect we will do with the information we collect?

The three worksheets will be forwarded to all members of the Working Group so that members who are absent can provide their ideas for input into the Community Engagement Plan and members who are present can include any additional ideas.

The workshopped material and additional worksheets will feed into a draft Community Engagement Plan for the Working Group which will be distributed prior to the November meeting, for discussion at this meeting.

A timeframe for the Plan was discussed. The Working Group would like to start some engagement in the new year. It was proposed that the first stage be completed by July 2021 and the second stage to commence after the Council election next year. The Working Group could feed into Kyogle Council's Community Engagement Strategy if the timeframe works.

Action:

- (1) Forward worksheets to all members of the Working Group for completion by absent members and for any additional ideas by other members present for inclusion in the draft Community Engagement Plan. Members to return completed worksheets by 15 November 2020.
- (2) Forward draft Community Engagement Plan to Working Group members prior to November meeting, for discussion at the meeting.

9. Action Plan – Status (attached)

10. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Response from Net Zero Emissions team regarding the omission of domestic gas emissions in the regional snapshot.

Summary on Virtual Power Plants and Microgrids by Genevieve Larsen.

Draft Community Engagement Plan.

11. Close of Meeting 12.30pm

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 30 November 2020 at 9.30am (for morning tea) with the meeting to commence at 9.45am – 12.30pm 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 30 November 2020


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MAGGIE MAY, CHAIRPERSON