



MINUTES

Climate Change Working Group Meeting

13 September 2021

**MINUTES OF THE KYOGLE COUNCIL
CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP MEETING
HELD AT KMI HALL SUPPER ROOM, ROXY LANE, KYOGLE
ON MONDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 9.15AM**

Meeting commenced: 9.17am

Acknowledgement of Country

Cr 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 (Co-chair), Dr Arthur Webb, Dr Kym Watling, Dr Genevieve Larsen, Graham Kennett (joined meeting at 10.40am), Shane Noon, Matt Sorenson, Scott Antcliff, Judy Faulks.

1. Apologies

John Redmayne, Jan Menzies, Robert Drury (leave), Suzie Coulston, Cr Kylie Thomas, Maree Brennan, Tony Lickiss.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The Working Group agreed to confirm the minutes of the Climate Change Working Group meeting held on 21 June 2021. **MOVED:** Cr John Burley **SECONDED:** Dr Kym Watling

3. Follow-up of Actions from previous meetings

Action 6.2 Divestment (meeting 21/6/21)

The meeting noted that the draft amended Investment Policy that was recommended to Council for their formal consideration and adoption was adopted by Council at the July 2021 Council meeting.

Action 12.1 Filling positions on CCWG (meeting 26/4/21)

The meeting noted that a motion was passed at July 2021 Council meeting to call for EOIs from interested community members to fill the two vacancies on the CCWG. EOIs close on 24/9/21 and nominees will be confirmed at the October meeting of Council.

4. Review of Kyogle Councils 'Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives, 2019' and 'North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation, 2019' reports to identify gaps and what we need to address with regard to adaptation – Dr Arthur Webb

Dr Webb's review focussed on Kyogle Council's report (July 2019) and a summary of his review was provided and will be distributed with the minutes. Major discussion points from presentation:

- The report is focussed on Council assets and immediate responsibilities and, as such, is more an internal planning document for Council.
- Major issue with report is the gap in considering the scope of impacts and adaption in Kyogle LGA community as a whole.
- There is great potential for a larger, more inclusive and detailed consultative process to consider whole of community perceptions and priorities on this issue. Opportunities for climate change and climate change adaptation e.g. outreach/ education + Q&A, community feedback sessions or opportunities to better frame or articulate the community's perspectives and priorities in respect to this issue.
- Need to lift out actions within the report that have additionality, would assist gaining funding.

- Both water stress and wild fire risk should be major issues. Fire risk is downplayed and not dealt with in the report and should be a higher priority.
- Some tasks/activities would be relatively easy to achieve (e.g. shade tree planting in CBD and elsewhere to mitigate heat island effects, improve aesthetics), but little sign of tangible action.
- The Science – the impact description timeframes of the report are 2030 and 2070. The year 2030 is so close and climate systems so fraught with variability that it is basically indistinguishable from the present so 2030 targets could be re-considered.
- Fundamental oversight in the report is that there is no clear discussion of what projections have been selected and why. These should be stated up front, explained and justified.
- IPCC is the global body where all countries come together to produce the current understanding on climate change science and frame future projections such as the RCP's (Representative Concentration Pathways). The 2014 RCP's were probably used in the plan (via BoM and CSIRO) but it is not stated. Dr Webb noted that RCP's have changed again in 2021.
- We should be making decisions about what scenarios we are using. Science supports tracking in the worst case scenarios so that is what we should be planning for until the science shows otherwise. Coastal adaptation community use IPCC 2014 RCP8.5 (the worst-case scenario) for adaptation planning in the Pacific Islands. Dr Webb recommends using the worst-case scenario for Kyogle for adaptation planning and using 2100 projections.
- Report does not explain climate change impacts in the context of the LGA and does not frame adaptation pathways for the Kyogle LGA in the context of State or National priorities/policies.
- When considering the 2030/2070 targets used in the report – all the science suggests we are accelerating. If talking about targets, need to remember that this is just a point in time (in the continuum). Our expectation should be these targets will likely be exceeded (as has been the trend since 1990's). Trends across all sectors (temp, rainfall, heat waves, fire risk, etc) do not cease or come to a new balance in 2070 – they will almost certainly continue to change and potentially accelerate.
- Consideration should be given to undertaking a much broader assessment for all of the LGA. Climate change impact assessments and/or adaptation plans requires a far more holistic and inclusive approach and are generally the work of a team of sectorial experts that look at:
 - the local context in terms of existing climate, topography, vegetation, habitat, *etc*
 - detailed description of land use, economy and demographics, socio-economic status, *etc*
 - existing infrastructure/services
 - existing climate information thoroughly analysed
 - the very best analysis of specific climate change impacts that can be derived for the LGA
 - detailed explanation of how this interacts with the different sectors (e.g. agriculture and forestry, different species, crops, livestock, etc). Description of temporal/spatial differences for the LGA
 - socio-economics considerations are crucial
 - analysis of adaptation options (based on all of the above).Undertaking such an assessment would address the major gap in considering the scope of impacts and adaption in Kyogle LGA community as a whole.
- Need a more authoritative review of the revised (2021) science, what projections and timeframes are relevant to Kyogle LGA and how this fits within regional/national priorities.

Major points from general discussion:

- Most likely report based on Adapt NSW data (which has likely filtered down from 2014 IPCC data) but only mean scenarios provided (and not minimum or maximum). Therefore, risk assessment was based on these mean scenarios.
- There is a need for a broader community plan. Would need to be a decision of Council.

- The report was a Council based plan. Perhaps ends up as an action plan for Council attached to a community based plan.
- Challenge will be to find the resources to fill the identified gaps and complete a community plan.
- There is a need to get more up-to-date scenarios. Perhaps a proposal is required to seek funding for this.
- Regarding trees in CBD - there is an Open Space Design Guide and a main street upgrade proposal.

5. General discussion regarding CCWG members' review of Council's reports:

- (i) **'Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives, 2019'**
- (ii) **Current advocacy brief – 'Climate Change Adaption – Limiting Community Impacts'**
- (iii) **'Sustainable Councils and Communities Action Plan, 2019'**

'Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives, 2019'

Scenarios used in the adaptation risk assessment are mean scenarios (2014 data) as this is what Adapt NSW provides. Council is working within the confines of what NSW is providing. Scenarios considered in the adaptation risk assessment:

- Temperature: +0.7°C by 2030, +2.1°C by 2070, 10-20 fewer cold nights by 2030, 30 fewer cold nights by 2070
- Hot days: hot days to increase from 10 to 13 per year by 2030 and to 19 by 2070
- Rainfall: increase in rainfall in 2070
- Fire weather: slight increase in severe fire weather by 2030, with more of increase by 2070.

If there is a need to plan for worst case scenarios (or different levels of planning scenarios) and use these to update Council's report (which focusses on Council's assets) and to produce a broader LGA-wide community adaptation plan, there may be an opportunity to explore partnerships with educational institutes (e.g. SCU, University of NSW) or scientific bodies to do this. Latest available data is 2014 and next data will be provided in 2024. Australian scientists could have downscaled this information to a finer scale that would be suitable for Kyogle LGA. An informed impact assessment could be taken to the communities. Industry bodies could be approached to see what planning scenarios they are using in their forward adaptation planning. The adaptation report is a Council action plan which could be based on different planning scenarios.

Agreed recommendation to go to Council: Recommendation from CCWG that Council seek a report from relevant scientific bodies for a science informed LGA-wide impacts and adaptation assessment (based on appropriate 2021 projections for climate change).

Water security: Level 4 – water restrictions have been reached in Bonalbo and Woodenbong. Council does not provide water for out of town communities. This needs to be addressed in any community adaptation plan.

'Sustainable Councils and Communities Action Plan, 2019'

This Action Plan addresses solar and lighting and Council have a plan for this. Council is working with Sustainable Communities Group to look at other items – heavy plant, EVs, etc. Ideas being discussed with this group who provide funding.

New targets should be set to address other items – heavy plant using diesel fuel.

Council supporting EV charging points.

There are also community programs operating, some supported by NSW Government (e.g. Accredited Power – offering unlimited LED replacements - refer attached brochure). Part of carbon trading.

Action:

- (1) Recommendation from CCWG that Council seek a report from relevant scientific bodies for a science informed LGA-wide impacts and adaptation assessment (based on appropriate 2021 projections for climate change).

6. Report on Rural Adaptation Seminar – Dr Genevieve Larsen

The *Rising Strong: Rural Adaptation Seminar* was held in Kyogle in June 2021. An overview of the speakers was provided (refer handout). Also refer to 'Other resources and recommended readings' outlined in handout (p14). *Rising Strong* is a collaborative initiative of Tweed Landcare, Brunswick Valley Landcare, Richmond Landcare, Border Ranges Richmond Valley Landcare and Upper Clarence Combined Landcare, Rising Strong and is delivered by North Coast Regional Landcare Network.

Climate-ready vegetation (speaker JoJo Jackson). Guide - how to find out how well the current species will do against future climate predictions, identifies which plant species will be sustainable into the future. The species information will be entered into Atlas of Living Australia, and an online tool can be used to map the current distribution of each species, apply the climate projection and it will re-map each species. Recommended reading – Climate-ready vegetation. Good for broad-scale revegetation projects. **Suggestion made to provide this information to the community via e.g. community newsletter, website.**

Refugia and Fire Management (Dr Robert Kooyman, Botanist/Ecologist, Macquarie University). Refugia are habitats some species can retreat to, persist in, and potentially expand from, under changing environmental conditions such as climate change or bushfires. Refugia need to be incorporated as part of global biodiversity protection strategies.

- Indigenous controlled burn methods more suited to preserving refugia.
- The burning of wet sclerophyll results in weed infestation and soil issues making it difficult for ecosystems to re-establish.

In order to protect biodiversity, target refugia areas should be identified, buffer zones and corridor connections implemented, and translocation of target species into safe and climate ready areas or future refugia should be undertaken.

Lelia Kamphorst (LLS) – Discussed managing water on farms, harvestable rights and licensing, flood and drought adaptation. Information available to make dams more ecosystem friendly.

Landscape Rehydration Works (leaky weirs) – efforts to streamline process for constructing leaky weirs as development approval is complex and covers several regulatory areas. See videos from Mulloon Institute: <https://vimeo.com/441217468>, <https://vimeo.com/441218323>

In summary, the aim (of the Mulloon Institute) is to make landscape rehydration works a complying development that can be determined through a fast-track assessment by a council or an accredited certifier, where works are approved if

- They are not a water taking which requires a license
- Design steps satisfy controlled activity approval

- The amount of vegetation being removed is only what is absolutely necessary and there will be revegetation after construction
- And, no doubt, other requirements.

Landholder Opportunities:

- Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements – voluntary financial incentives (part of the biodiversity offset scheme)
- Soil Carbon Trading – must be at least 400 hectares

7. Community Resilience Progress Update – Scott Antcliff

Scott Antcliff provided an update on the Community Resilience Project (also refer to his presentation that will be distributed with the minutes). The goal of the Community Resilience Officer is to develop Community Resilience Plans with communities of the eight major villages within Kyogle LGA. Community Resilience Teams have been established in these villages and supported by key community members. The Plans are underway and are due for completion July/Nov 2022. Raw data has been summarised from the 24 meetings and workshops and will go to Council. The plans will identify vulnerable groups, community member skill sets and resources to assist their communities during disaster events. Some of the villages are developing Facebook pages as this is the preferred method of communication for them.

The project administers a community grants program to support implementation of local resilience/recovery plan (applications close on 14 October 2021).

The communities/plans are identifying inhouse training requirements, disaster recovery processes (e.g. Get Ready Days, evacuation kits for households, evacuation centres in the villages), raising awareness of the risks of future disasters, mitigation practices for risks and threats for business and not-for-profit organisations, how to increase volunteerism to boost community's ability to respond before, during and after disaster events.

An overview was provided of what community resilience could cover under the banner of economics, social/cultural, environment and assets (refer slide 12).

Major points from general discussion:

- Is there scope for providing future training and leadership to villages on forecast scenarios linked to climate change? If things are presented to the community in economic returns, felt there was acceptance regarding forecasts around rainfall, temperature, fire weather, *etc.*
- Engaging with agricultural sector on adaptation, soil carbon, emissions, *etc* – Community Resilience Officer organising training days linked to regenerative agriculture. Group to leave engagement with agricultural section with the Community Resilience Officer.
- Progressing cultural burning initiatives (e.g. Bush Fire Consortium) as part of this project.
- The Regional Water Strategy has been developed. Will this deal with issues with rural properties accessing water in times of level 4 restrictions? Subsidies for rainwater tanks for rural landholders? Raise awareness with rural communities about resilience and preparedness for drought times.
- Waste management – regional initiatives are being progressed.

8. Action Plan – Status (attached). The actions were noted.

9. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

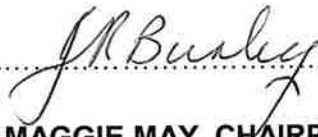
- Overview of waste management, waste data/audits, opportunities, education/awareness – Kyogle Council
- NE Waste – regional perspective on waste management, programs and initiatives
- Establishing focus areas within the CCWG – can feedback to the group as a whole.

10. Close of Meeting 12.30pm

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 22 November 2021 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 22 November 2021.


.....
MAGGIE MAY, CHAIRPERSON
JOHN BURLEY, CO-CHAIRPERSON

