



MINUTES

Climate Change Working Group Meeting

30 May 2022

**MINUTES OF THE KYOGLE COUNCIL
CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP MEETING
HELD AT KMI HALL SUPPER ROOM, ROXY LANE, KYOGLE
ON MONDAY, 30 MAY 2022 AT 9.45AM**

Meeting commenced: 9.47am

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, Robert Drury, Dr Terry De Lacy, Kieran Somerville, John Redmayne, Robyn Lucienne, Maree Brennan, Scott Antcliff, Judy Faulks.

1. Apologies

Cr Tom Cooper, Cr Robert Cullen (alternate delegate), Dr Arthur Webb, Christopher Hoare, Graham Kennett, Matt Sorenson, Suzie Coulston.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The Working Group agreed to confirm the minutes of the Climate Change Working Group meeting held on 22 November 2021. **MOVED:** John Burley **SECONDED:** Robert Drury

3. Welcome to New Members

At the January Extraordinary Council Meeting, Cr Maggie May, Cr John Burley and Cr Tom Cooper were appointed as delegates to the CCWG, with Cr Maggie May as Chair and Cr Robert Cullen as an alternative delegate. At the February Council Meeting, two appointments to fill the community member vacancies on the CCWG, from EOIs submitted in September 2021, were endorsed. Introduction and welcome to Cr Tom Cooper (absent) and the two new community representatives – John Redmayne and Robyn Lucienne.

4. Correspondence

4.1 Inwards

4.1.1 NE Waste Annual Report 2021 – Noted

4.1.2 Local Government Climate Emergency Toolkit

Toolkit was developed by Dale Martin after serving 4 years as Councillor in the City of Moreland, Victoria, in consultation with industry experts, current and former councillors and council employees, community groups and campaigners. Also refer to website (<https://www.lgcet.com/>). Agenda item for next meeting - Review of Toolkit to identify potential actions that could be implemented or adapted for implementation.

4.1.3 Koala friendly carbon farming brochure

Opportunity available to landowners within Kyogle LGA to combine carbon farming with the creation of Koala habitat (30-200ha). WWF Australia will provide trees, labour, ongoing maintenance for 3 years and undertake koala monitoring.

4.1.4 Letter from Kyogle Environment Group (KEG) (16/2/22)

In their letter, KEG raised concerns regarding gas usage and the impacts of gas on the environment and on climate change and the role local government can play in transitioning away from gas

towards electrification using renewable energy by: (1) Transitioning all gas appliances in Council facilities at their end of useful life with renewable powered electric appliances; (2) Drafting a planning scheme amendment to ban new gas connections across the LGA; and (3) Write to the State Energy Minister requesting a rapid transition from gas state wide, the equitable planned retirement of the gas network and an expansion of the energy upgrade program.

Discussion: Is Kyogle Council able to amend the planning scheme to include a requirement that all new houses OR new houses in/adjacent to urban areas where they have grid-connected power available to them are not allowed to connect to gas (to assist with transitioning towards electrification using renewable energy and away from gas)? Is there an option to implement a gas/no gas requirement in new developments? Is this permissible under the current NSW planning regulations? Is this something that is suitable for Kyogle LGA? Second step in this process could be to assist homes to transition to being carbon neutral.

Action:

- (1) Seek advice from Planning on whether it is feasible/possible to amend the planning scheme to disallow gas connections for all new houses OR new houses in/adjacent to urban areas where they have grid-connected power available.

4.1.5 Draft Bellingen Shire Community Climate Action Plan

Terry De Lacy advised that in April 2022 Bellingen Shire released a draft Community Climate Action Plan for public exhibition and noted that the Plan may be useful for this Working Group. The Plan summarises actions developed by the community to reduce emissions, support adaptation and mitigate the impact of a changing climate. Prior to this Plan, Bellingen Shire Council declared a climate emergency in March 2019, developed a Climate Emergency Response Framework (CERF) and Corporate Carbon Plan. The CERF made a strong commitment to work in partnership with the community to develop a plan to reduce carbon emissions and to support climate adaptation actions. A survey of residents on the impacts of climate change and workshops with community/environmental groups across the Bellingen Shire formed the basis of this community-led action Plan. A copy of the draft Plan to be provided to the Working Group for review and further discussion at an upcoming meeting.

4.2 Outwards**4.2.1 Delegates Report from CCWG (Cr Maggie May) to February Council meeting - Noted****4.2.2 Email response to Kyogle Environment Group – Noted (further discussion under 4.1.4)****4.2.3 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) submission from CCWG community representatives**

Compiled comments from CCWG community representatives (including those associated with focus areas Ecological Heath and Agriculture along with a further 4 individual responses from community representatives) were provided on the CSP. Maggie May reported that the compiled comments from the CCWG community representatives and KEG were the only two groups who made written submissions on the CSP. The timeline for the CSP – as the CSP needs to be finalised by 30th June 2022, the final plan will be presented at the Council Meeting on 14th June for adoption.

5. Focus areas within the CCWG

It was agreed to add 'Social Justice and Equity in Transition' as a new focus area (MOVED: Robyn Lucienne SECONDED: Scott Antcliff).

Final member nominations of 2-4 focus areas each are shown in Table below.

Focus area	Member/s
1. Waste – recycling, organics/green waste, waste to energy, <i>etc</i>	Robyn, Maggie, Judy
2. Energy – solar, battery storage, EVs, <i>etc</i>	Robyn, Maggie, Matt
3. Agriculture – regenerative agriculture, carbon storage/projects, biochar, <i>etc</i>	Kieran, Terry, John B, John R
4. Adverse events – fire (including cultural burning), extreme heat, drought, water supply to wider community, flooding, mental health.	Arthur, Terry, John R, Scott
5. Water supply and sewer	Robyn, Matt, Graham
6. Ecological health – pollution, Landcare, <i>etc</i>	Kieran, John R, Judy
7. Communication and advocacy	John B, Maggie, Robyn, Suzie
8. Social Justice and Equity in Transition	Chris, Maggie, Robyn

5.1 Current actions from focus group areas

Focus group areas to put forward proposals (including proposal summary, possible funding sources, costings, benefits, *etc*) to the whole Working Group for further discussion. Consideration of each proposal will then take place and consideration given to possible submission to Council (as an agreed motion). Current proposals/recommendations identified include:

Focus group area 2 – Energy

Fleet vehicles, heavy plant and equipment - Council are progressing EV charging stations and investigating own fleet with the view to transitioning to hybrid or EV (refer Item 7 – 22/11/21), except heavy plant as not yet available. Recommendation to be put to Council: Council commit to replacing fleet vehicles, heavy plant and equipment with alternative renewable fuel, hybrid and EV as they become available. Need to look at feasible targets for each class of vehicle and plant.

Small plant and equipment - Recommendation to be put to Council to replace at end of life small plant and equipment with a suitable battery powered version / rechargeable option. This refers to chainsaws, brush cutters, whipper shippers, mowers, *etc*.

Microgrid – Motion to be put to Council recommending a feasibility study/pilot project for a microgrid within the Kyogle LGA to take advantage of current available funding. Would be particularly suitable for villages west of the range e.g. Old Bonalbo. The current regulatory/viability barriers previously identified (refer Item 4 30/11/20 and Item 5 26/4/21) can be investigated as part of the pilot project.

Focus group area 3 - Agriculture

Will develop a proposal and motion for consideration by Council on soil sequestration and methane reduction – to support the Agricultural focus group exploring a joint partnership with external parties to investigate projects/pilot on how the local beef and dairy industry can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Draft motion: “Council supports an information and education project to assist local beef and dairy farmers reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. This would involve collaborating with government agencies (e.g. North Coast Local Land Services), research centres (e.g. Southern Cross University), and ethical private organisations (e.g. Carbon trading bodies; Agricultural carbon farming consultancies). This collaboration would establish, develop and promote trials, field days, workshops, media *etc* to assist local cattle producers increase carbon soil sequestration and/or reduce methane emissions from their livestock. The aim would be to move to carbon neutral beef and milk production and/or receive income from selling carbon credits.”

Actions (Recommendations/motions to Council):

- (1) Fleet vehicles, heavy plant and equipment recommendation to Council: Council commit to replacing fleet vehicles, heavy plant and equipment with alternative renewable fuel, hybrid and EV as they become available. Need to look at feasible targets for each class of vehicle and plant.
- (2) Small plant and equipment recommendation to Council: to replace at end of life small plant and equipment with a suitable battery powered version / rechargeable option.
- (3) Microgrid proposal for consideration by Council (June 2022): for a feasibility study/pilot project for a microgrid within the Kyogle LGA.
- (4) Soil sequestration and methane reduction project proposal for consideration by Council: to support an information and education project to assist local beef and dairy farmers reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (project to be developed by CCWG Agricultural focus group).

5.2 Possible current flood funding to support focus group actions

Scott Antcliff reported that Kyogle Council has received \$1M Cat D Council support grant funding to provide funding for the extension of the Community Resilience Officer role (\$250K) for two years, provide 250K Community Resilience Grant funding (\$125K per year x 2 years), provide \$250K to resource Community Managed Evacuation Centres, and to repair community assets (\$250K). Kyogle Council also obtained a further \$2.3M in NSW Severe Weather and Flooding Council Support grants. There may be an opportunity for the CCWG to identify projects to be funded from this \$2.3M. Approximately 30% of Kyogle population were impacted by the floods (315 homes in Kyogle, 5 in Bonalbo and 1 in Mallanganee were flooded). The worst flooding event on record impacted the Kyogle LGA in February and March 2022 with 2 sq. km flooded (0.1% of the LGA) including 1 sq. km of agricultural land and 0.24 sq. km of residential land. Disaster relieve and recovery applications received to date includes 2,878, with applications received from individual community members, primary producers and business. Total relief payments paid up to April 2022 is estimated to be \$8.55M, increasing exponentially as the scale of the 2022 flood event is realised over time (NRRRA, 2022). The Recovery Centre in Kyogle will continue to offer services up to the end of June 2022. A Flood Recovery Officer will be funded through Resilience NSW under the 2022 Storm and Flood Recovery package, Community Resilience Officers. Funding is being sought under the Disaster Risk Reduction Grant Fund in a collaborative project with Richmond Valley Council (RVC) – “Agricultural Resilience Project in Kyogle LGA”. RVC are lodging this grant application.

Action:

- (1) Scott Antcliff to provide a summary of the collaborative project with Richmond Valley Council – “Agricultural Resilience Project in Kyogle LGA” - where funding is currently being sought to implement the project.

6. Border Ranges – Richmond Valley Landcare Network (BRRVLN) - What BRRVLN does and how BRRVLN can support the CCWG – Presentation by Rob Drury

Traditional view of Landcare has changed. BRRVLN is more than just a volunteer group. It covers east of the range within the LGA. It has funding for 13.5 hrs/week to employ a Landcare Coordinator (currently Emma Stone) to work with the various Landcare Groups. The network is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors and has an Executive Officer, professional officers and field officers.

That arm of BRRVLN is funded through grants, where an administrative component is written into the grant application to fund the running of BRRVLN.

What do BRRVLN do? Fits in with focus group area - ecological health. They undertake on-the-ground activities on farms, *etc* to improve ecological health; riparian restoration and rehabilitation; invasive weed control (as Rous County Council only deals with high priority weeds so BRRVLN is the only community group dealing with those identified as 'asset protection' and 'containment' weeds); pest animal control (e.g. cane toads, deer, Indian myna); sustainable agricultural (delivered by a Professional Officer); nest box installation after fires; and koala habitat restoration. Strengths – have established networks and contacts with industry groups (e.g. dairy industry, agricultural suppliers, NPWS, Conservation Volunteers Australia, *etc*). BRRVLN office is open Tuesday and Thursday 10am – 2pm. CCWG encouraged to approach BRRVLN regarding ecological health and communication/awareness matters.

A major issue with regards to ecological health is the impact that invasive weeds (identified as 'containment' and 'asset protection' weeds in Regional Weed Strategy) are having on the environment and how best to address this issue as their control falls outside of the current Weed Control Authority (i.e. Rous County Council). An option to address this issue would be for Rous County Council to station a dedicated team at BRRVLN to work on weed control dealing with 'containment' and 'asset protection' weeds. Working Group could further explore this issue and suggested option.

7. Climate Change Resource Guide – Robyn Lucienne

Robyn Lucienne reported that she has put together a Climate Change Resource Guide – which summarises background resources, references, educational information, links to websites, *etc*.

Action:

- (1) CCWG to send items to Robyn Lucienne for inclusion in the Climate Change Resource Guide which can then be linked to from Council's webpage and stored in Google Drive.

8. Action Plan – Status (attached)

Full listing of actions since Working Group commenced is available on Google Drive.

Meeting 19/10/20 – Further action 5.1.4 – Working Group advised that this action has now been completed and the summary document has been updated with information regarding Clarence Valley Council's Climate Change Policy, Draft Clarence Valley Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Strategy and Clarence Valley Community Survey questions. Available on Google Drive.

Outstanding actions @ 26 May 2022 – there are currently 6 outstanding actions.

26/4/21 Action 5.1 'Genevieve Larsen to examine solar hydrogen battery storage and report back' – removed from Action Plan.

13/9/21 Action 5.1 '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)' – Motion to Council for June 2022 meeting reworded following discussion to: 'That Council commission a report on current and projected climate change impacts relevant to the LGA from a qualified body using the most up to date data. This report will inform the development of a plan to strengthen community resilience to the projected impacts of climate change.'

Final motion put to Council in June 2022:

That Council:

1. Seek proposals for a report on current and projected climate change impacts relevant to the Kyogle LGA from a qualified body using the most up to date data and IPCC modelling.
- 2.. Seek proposals for the development of a climate change adaptation risk assessment and action plan to strengthen community resilience to the projected impacts of climate change.

Community Resilience Plan (draft) - Scott Antcliff is preparing a Community Resilience Plan and not a climate change resilience plan. Scott will bring a draft Community Resilience Plan back to CCWG in November 2022. The goal of a Community Resilience Plan is to assist community to plan, prepare, respond and recover from natural disasters through community-led initiatives. The date for delivery of the Plan has been pushed back to accommodate and include flood recovery learnings and due to reduced capacity while the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator is on leave.

9. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- 2022 IPCC Report "Impacts, Adaptation & Vulnerability" – Arthur Webb
- Local Government Climate Emergency Toolkit - to identify potential actions that could be implemented or adapted for implementation
- Collaborative project with Richmond Valley Council "Agricultural Resilience Project in Kyogle LGA" where funding is being sought under the Disaster Risk Reduction Grant Fund – Scott Antcliff
- Update on Council renewable source energy profile – Matt Sorenson
- Update on Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Charging Stations - Matt Sorenson
- Draft Bellingen Shire Community Climate Action Plan (if time permits)

10. Close of Meeting 12.25pm

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 25 July 2022 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 25 July 2022.



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MAGGIE MAY, CHAIRPERSON

