



MINUTES

Climate Change Working Group Meeting

26 September 2022

**MINUTES OF THE KYOGLE COUNCIL
CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP MEETING
HELD AT KYOGLE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KYOGLE
ON MONDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 9.45AM**

Meeting commenced: 9.50 am

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), Dr Terry De Lacy, Kieran Somerville, John Redmayne, Robyn Lucienne, Maree Brennan, Judy Faulks.

1. Apologies

Cr John Burley, Cr Tom Cooper, Cr Robert Cullen (alternate delegate), Dr Arthur Webb, Chris Hoare, Graham Kennett, Matt Sorenson, Scott Antcliff.

Will aim to offer teleconferencing for future meetings for those who cannot attend in person.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The Working Group agreed to confirm the minutes of the Climate Change Working Group meeting held on 25 July 2022. **MOVED:** Robyn Lucienne **SECONDED:** Kieran Somerville

3. Correspondence

3.1 Inwards - Nil

3.2 Outwards

3.2.1 Delegates Report from CCWG (Cr Maggie May) to August Council meeting

May 2022 CCWG minutes provided to Council along with a summary of the May meeting.

4. Update on refinement/alignment of Agriculture Projects (Adapting Agribusiness to Climate Change and Reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions) – Agriculture focus group/ Scott Antcliff

It was proposed at the last CCWG meeting that the Agriculture focus group work with Scott Antcliff to refine their two agricultural projects, identify project components that align, identify manageable actions, identify potential partnerships and develop the project/s into a business case where funding can be sought when future grant funding opportunities arise.

Scott Antcliff has circulated to the Agriculture focus group the project plan for Kyogle Council Agribusiness Resilience Project that had been developed specifically for the Preparing Australian Communities grant to adapt agribusiness to climate change induced natural disasters. The Agriculture focus group's proposal was focussed on reducing GHG emissions through soil carbon sequestration and reducing methane emissions, targeting the cattle industry. The funding application will be used as a template and adjusted to suit future funding opportunities. The Agriculture focus group will continue to work with Scott Antcliff to produce suitable templates that refine and align their projects in order to target future grants (Action 12.1 25/7/2022).

It was felt that Council probably would not be able to progress anything in this regard without funding or a partnership proposal. It was also felt that there is a need to do something with the cattle industry and to develop partnerships with others working in this space including SCU (Terry

Rose) and others like LLS (to measure outputs and soil carbon). Perhaps Council could be the organisation to pull together the experts and to collaborate with SCU, LLS and others. The Agriculture focus group will make initial contact with possible partners including SCU/Regenerative Agriculture Alliance, Norco and others. Need to decide on what is the aim of this partnership? What can be achieved? Is it an educational experience (networking)? John Redmayne noted that products such as biochar and red seaweed (*Asparagopsis toxiformis*), would have to be fed to grass-fed cattle/ruminants, to reduce their methane gas emissions so that the farm's carbon footprint, with cattle/ruminants and trees, becomes zero or better. Terry De Lacy reported that a large amount of work has been done on carbon sequestering but nothing has been done specifically in our area focussing on small holdings with basalt soil types so there is a need for researchers to focus on what we need to do in this region as it was felt that the agricultural (cattle) industry currently doesn't know what to do to reduce GHG emissions. In future funding applications it was thought important to employ a Project Officer to run such a project. After discussion it was decided that the Agriculture focus group will not only explore possible partnerships but produce a targeted document (Briefing Paper) for consideration by the CCWG and then Council on what is being proposed, what will be achieved, why it is needed, what the outcomes will be and what role Council will play in a project to reduce GHG emissions in the cattle industry, specifically designed for the Kyogle region.

Actions:

- (1) Agriculture focus group to explore partnerships and produce a targeted document for Council's further consideration on a possible project aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the cattle industry, specifically designed for the Kyogle region.
- (2) Judy Faulks to invite an agriculture staff member from LLS to the November CCWG meeting to do a presentation on what they are doing within the agriculture/cattle industry specifically relating to greenhouse gas reduction (including soil carbon sequestration and reducing methane emissions).

5. Update on free Lighting and Solar Audits for Businesses – Judy Faulks

Judy Faulks reported that six EOIs were received from businesses in response to the promotion of these free audits. The audits are underway by The Green Guys Group (TGGG) – five lighting audits were completed on site in August and TGGG have completed and sent lighting proposals to these businesses. Whilst on-site, TGGG collected information required for a solar audit at three businesses as these can be completed remotely. TGGG have advised that due to the low consumption level at these sites, these three solar requests have been referred to Smart Energy Answers who specialise in smaller solar systems and cover regional areas.

Will consider another round of seeking further EOIs in 2023 and will work with TGGG to do this. TGGG will provide a summary of the outcome of these audits which can be promoted to the community as a good news story and for future EOIs.

In the future will aim to promote any programs for household lighting/solar/energy efficiency audits to the community, as these audits were for businesses only.

6. Renewable Energy Blueprint for the Northern Rivers

Energy focus group to provide a review of renewable energy blueprint documents, summarising what is relevant for Council, and provide this update to the Working Group. In addition to reports provided at June 2022 meeting, the report - NRJO "Renewable Energy Blueprint for the Northern Rivers – Background Paper" (12 January 2022) - was also provided to the Working Group for inclusion in the review.

Maggie May provided the following overview of NRJOs “Renewable Energy Blueprint for the Northern Rivers” 2022:

3.4 Community and Advocacy Groups (p7) - The Byron Bay-based Enova Community Energy and Enova Energy, its retail electricity arm, no longer exist as they were placed in voluntary administration as of June 2022.

4.3.5 About the Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct (p13) – noted the existence of the Regional Job Precinct Investigation Area locations near Casino in the Richmond Valley where a regional waste-to-energy facility is being considered. Not having social approval for such a facility will be a major obstacle for that development going ahead. The Working Group were referred to the “Burned – are trees the new coal?” movie (a link will be added to Resource Guide).

5.1 A Growing Population with a Growing Energy Demand (p14) – it is expected that the demand for stationary energy, which averages 1.02% increase per annum since 2014, will reach 1,400 gigawatt-hours per annum by 2040. Transitioning to Electric Vehicles (EVs) will further increase electricity demand.

5.2 Strong Electricity Grid Moving Towards 100% Renewables-Ready (p15) – The goal set by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) for the electricity grid to be capable of running on 100% instantaneous renewable energy by 2025 was highlighted as ambitious and unrealistic.

5.3 What are the key renewable energy opportunities in the Northern Rivers? (p15-22) - Large-scale solar and rooftop solar on homes and businesses, offer opportunities to scale up the region’s renewable energy generation significantly, enhanced by growth in EVs, opportunities to develop behind-the-meter microgrid solutions, and by opportunities to accelerate the uptake of battery energy storage at grid, community and small-scale. Bioenergy generation and mid-scale solar farms provide further opportunities for the region. The emerging hydrogen market may also provide opportunities for the regional economy.

Kyogle is considered a good site for large-scale solar. There could be opportunities for Council to partner with others and to identify sites suitable for large-scale solar project/s (5.3.1). Increasing rooftop solar (which is currently generating 20% of the region’s electricity) to generating >50% of future electricity needs (or up to 90%) was identified as an achievable aim (5.3.2). Integrating batteries and EVs to scale solar is highlighted as an opportunity (5.3.3). Bioenergy (5.3.4) – waste methane generation. FOGO (Food and Garden Organics) could potentially end up in a biomass energy generator. Opportunity in hydrogen being examined including viability (5.3.6).

5.4 A goal for 100% renewables or more for the Northern Rivers (p23-24) – provides 2 scenarios of possible generation mixes that could achieve this outcome for the region into the future (i.e. an ambition to generate as much renewable energy locally as is consumed for all stationary and electrified transport needs across the Northern Rivers by 2040). Scenario 1 – 50% large-scale solar, 30% rooftop solar, 20% other generation (including bioenergy 18%, mid-scale solar, and hydro). Scenario 2 – 25% large scale solar, 45% rooftop solar, 30% other generation (including 20% bioenergy, 10% mid-scale solar, and hydro).

6 Unlocking the region’s economic and other benefits from renewables (p25-27).

Robyn Lucienne noted that the CCWG could consider a survey of how many residences have solar and, for those who don’t, finding out why and supporting them to electrify their homes using solar – following the model of Mornington Peninsular Council.

Items for Council consideration:

- Council continue to consider all options recommended in this report, particularly in regards to the renewable energy mixes that could achieve the goal for 100% renewables or more for the Northern Rivers that the region is committed to moving towards.
- Council should consider alternative solutions for hot water supply at Council facilities using heat pumps or other renewable energy source to heat water, other than gas.

Maggie May provided the following overview of **DPIEs “Northern NSW Renewable Energy Blueprint for Local Governments” 2019**:

The content is more suited to councils just starting out with regards to renewable energy projects. The document introduces councils to the steps required to develop a renewable energy strategy (p8-11) – including alignment with their Community Strategic Plan (CSP); adopting goals for renewable or carbon emissions; developing a staged implementation approach (is currently underway for Kyogle Council); embed within delivery and operational plans (Kyogle Council have done this); tell the community about your goals and successes (some communications have occurred but further and continued community education and information is required in Kyogle). The document considers energy efficiency opportunities for councils (e.g. lighting), including onsite, or ‘behind the metre’, renewable energy opportunities (e.g. solar PV, battery energy storage systems, solar hot water) (p12-18). Purchasing renewable energy (p18-21) in order to meet more ambitious targets is outlined.

Case study on heat pumps for hot water (p24) – perhaps is something that Kyogle Council could investigate for some sites (e.g. caravan park, pool). Solar farm ideas are explored.

4 Renewable Energy in the Community (p27) - There is a focus in this document not only on developing renewable energy opportunities in council operations but on the role council can play in aiding or facilitating renewable energy in the community. 4.1 Education and information (p27) – one of the main ways in which councils can help and encourage their communities to act to reduce their emissions and save money is through the range of education and information programs they run in their communities. 4.1.2 (p28) lists some initiatives that councils can run to facilitate change and uptake of renewables and abatement action in the community – including information campaigns and web-based resources, workshops, expos, audit and information programs, sustainability audits and advice to businesses, school education, access to energy advice, partnering with not-for-profits or community energy groups to provide information about energy efficiency or renewables.

Working Group felt that more needs to be done in regards to community education and information. Avenues for Kyogle Council to get information out to the community include Community Newsletter, Council website and Facebook, local newspaper (unless information is sent directly to stakeholder groups). It may be worthwhile to provide a link to the Resource Guide in a Community Newsletter article. All focus areas encouraged to provide information for articles for the Community Newsletter.

CCWG support the idea of an email subscription of a digital Community Newsletter that LGA ratepayers can subscribe to and that has links to further information. **MOVED:** Robyn Lucienne **SECONDED:** Terry De Lacy. All agree.

4.4 Community energy projects (p30) are renewable energy projects initiated and developed by the community to deliver broad benefits to the local community. Delivery and financing of these community energy projects was explored and case studies provided (e.g. 4.4.4 Lismore City Council’s 99kW solar on GSAC building and another 99kW floating solar at a Sewerage Treatment Plant).

4.5 Microgrids are seen as part of the solution (p33) and can help communities with transitioning to renewables cost effectively and can provide local, reliable and affordable energy security.

Action:

- (1) Maggie May to provide a summary of her review of the renewable energy blueprint documents to Council, highlighting particular items for Council's consideration.

7. Update on Microgrid Feasibility Study – Matt Sorenson

Summary document provided to Working Group on the information and quotation received from 100% Renewables to undertake a preliminary market review and needs assessment for Kyogle Council for a microgrid within the LGA. The CCWG reviewed the information provided and made the decision to recommend to Council that they consider funding this body of work as outlined by 100% Renewables. Matt Sorenson to explore with 100% Renewables whether their microgrid proposal includes (or can include) community batteries (e.g. Woodenbong would perhaps be a good location). Maggie May to submit the recommendation with her next delegate's report to Council once it is confirmed whether community batteries included the proposal as it stands or can be included.

Action:

- (1) CCWG to recommend to Council that they consider funding the preliminary market review and needs assessment for a microgrid within the LGA as outlined by 100% Renewables in their proposal.

8. Draft Bellingen Shire Community Climate Action Plan

A copy of the Plan previously provided for review and further discussion.

It was agreed that this Action Plan provides a good basis and reference document if we move to producing our own Community Climate Change Action Plan and will be used for this purpose.

9. Draft Kyogle Council Climate Change Action Plan – Robyn Lucienne

Robyn Lucienne reported that she has looked at the various Renewable Energy Blueprints and Kyogle Council's climate change plans and, as a result, has come up with a draft Kyogle Council Climate Change Action Plan that can be used as a background document and resource. She noted that the Bellingen Shire Community Climate Action Plan should also inform this draft document. There is a need to get businesses on board with climate change. The draft document requires targeted/priority actions, inclusion of various background information including tables/graphs produced by Matt Sorenson and information from Genevieve Larsen's previous presentations (Judy Faulks to include Genevieve's presentation on Google Drive for inclusion in this draft document).

The draft document to be provided to Judy Faulks for circulation to the Working Group for members to review, provide input into and comment on. Once this occurs, the document could then go to Council as a guide/background/draft with a recommendation that it be used by the Consultant appointed by Council to produce the final Kyogle Council Climate Change Action Plan for this purpose.

Terry De Lacy noted that there are two things the Working Group can get out of this: (i) major engagement (process is important), and (ii) a list of key things we can and want to do – which the CCWG could do.

Action:

- (1) Draft Kyogle Council Climate Change Action Plan to be circulated to Working Group to review, provide input into and comment on. Document to be used as a background document for the final Plan.

10. Action Plan – Status (copy provided)

Full listing of actions since Working Group commenced – available on Google Drive.
Outstanding and In Progress actions – shown in Action Plan provided.

11. Climate Change Resource Guide

Working Group members to continue to forward any additional documents for inclusion in the Climate Change Resource Guide. Quarterly updates will be carried out. Next update to include:

- “Burned – Are trees the new coal?” movie

12. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Overview of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report “Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability” – Dr Arthur Webb
- Presentation by LLS on what they are doing within the agriculture/cattle industry specifically relating to greenhouse gas reduction (including soil carbon sequestration and reducing methane emissions)
- Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations – Matt Sorenson/Graham Kennett
Overview of the grant application that will be submitted in November under ‘Destination Charging’ to be provided
- Update on action 5.1 13/9/21 – discussions with Sustainable Councils – Climate change adaptation risk assessment and action plan for LGA (to strengthen community resilience)

13. Close of Meeting 12.15 pm**14. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 28 November 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 (if available).

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Climate Change Working Group Meeting held on 28 November 2022.

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MAGGIE MAY, CHAIRPERSON