



Item 4.3 Request for Council to declare a Climate Emergency

A Joint Letter containing 4 signatures, was received from a City of Port Phillip resident.

The Joint Letter states the following:-

To the Mayor and Councillors of the Port Phillip City Council,

The intention of this joint letter is to draw your attention to the accelerating rise of Climate Emergency Declaration by jurisdictions around Victoria, Australia and the world. The Climate Emergency Declaration is a public signal indicating that the Council, their residents and its resources will be mobilised in emergency mode until the emergency of climate change passes.

The science is in and the facts are dire. According to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we have less than 12 years to halt pollution before the greenhouse gases trapped in the polar ice will be released at a rate we will not be able to slow, stall or stop. This is our emergency.

In Australia, there are 35 local councils who have actively declared a Climate Emergency at the time of writing this letter, which represents over 3.7 million Australian citizens—or 15% of the population. These councils reach into every state and territory and include the Cities of Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Darwin, Fremantle, Hobart and the ACT, as well as our neighbours in Stonnington, Mornington Peninsula and Yarra. Knowing Port Phillip and its citizens for so long, I was surprised that the City of Port Phillip is one of the remaining few in Greater Melbourne who have not yet taken this action. But this decision is popular, it's feasible and will be highly effective for our fair city.

Worldwide, 960 governments from jurisdictions spanning 18 countries have declared a Climate Emergency, accounting for over 212 million citizens. In May, the UK became the world's first country to declare a Climate Emergency. Canada, France and Ireland soon followed, as did the City of New York.

Industries and businesses are banding together at an extraordinary rate to declare emergency. Architects Declare Australia amassed 30 elite firms nationwide to acknowledge that "the twin crises of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss are the most serious issues of our time." From this, they have committed to implementing design and building practices that both reduce waste and power use, but also promote sustainable long-term living and recyclability at the end of the projects' life.

We know this kind of change is achievable at the Council level because we have seen it done here in Melbourne. Adjoined to this letter is a copy of the City of Darebin Climate Emergency Plan, which was shared publicly to prove that Declaration is viable, practical and necessary, while also serving a strong, symbolic, social purpose.

An Emergency Declaration is a powerful first step towards decisive and effective action to curb climate change, restore hope for the future of our children, rescue our native species and save the world.

So we ask simply that the Port Phillip Council use its power to get on the front foot and join the growing movement of governments nation-wide by publicly declaring a Climate Emergency.



OFFICER COMMENT

We welcome and appreciate the views of the City of Port Phillip residents who prepared the joint letter and their commitment to raising awareness of the challenges posed by climate change.

Council is committed to addressing the challenges and mitigating the impacts of climate change and supporting our community to improve sustainability as outlined in Strategic Direction 3 – ‘We have smart solutions for a sustainable future’ of the *Council Plan (2017-27)*. Council has committed to delivering five priority outcomes by 2027:

- A greener, cooler and more liveable City
- A City with lower carbon emissions
- A City that is adapting and resilient to climate change
- A water sensitive City
- A sustained reduction in waste

Current endorsed strategies that outline the actions Council will take to achieve these outcomes include the *Act and Adapt: Sustainable Environment Strategy (2017-27)* and *Don't Waste It!: Waste Management Strategy (2018-28)*. These strategies demonstrate Council's long-term commitment to ensuring that as a community we can adapt to the pressing challenge of climate change and make every effort to reduce our contribution to global warming.

We are aware that some other Victorian councils have declared a Climate Emergency. The aim of declaring a Climate Emergency is usually for the intent of:

- acknowledging the impact of Climate Change on liveability and wellbeing
- emphasising what councils are doing to address the risks to the community
- strengthening the advocacy position to other levels of government.

Declaring a climate emergency will not require a change to our current endorsed Strategies which already acknowledge the impact of Climate Change and include actions to address these challenges. The strategies recognise the need to work with our community, local and Victorian Government partners, research organisations and private industry to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. A number of actions in the strategies already relate to advocacy for improved sustainability outcomes. Many actions will be delivered in conjunction with our partners.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- Receives and notes the Petition.
- Acknowledges the views and genuine concerns of the signatories.
- Continues to implement strategies and initiatives to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change as outlined in the Council Plan (2017-2027).
- Continue to implement the Act and Adapt: Sustainable Environment Strategy (2017-27) and Don't Waste It!: Waste Management Strategy (2018-28).
- Continues to advocate to the Victorian and Australian Government to develop and deliver Policies and services that improve environmental sustainability outcomes.

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ATTACHMENTS Nil