

Lighter Footprints

Submissions to Government Inquiries and Reviews

Lighter Footprints is a large climate action group based primarily in the Boroondara and Whitehorse council areas of Victoria. It draws its members from the suburbs of Box Hill, Kew, Hawthorn, Camberwell, Canterbury, Surrey Hill and some parts of Ashburton, Glen Iris and Burwood and encompasses the Federal electorates of Kooyong and parts of Chisholm and Deakin.

This booklet contains submissions that Lighter Footprints has made to reviews and inquiries by Governments at the Federal, State and local levels from July 2018 to July 2019.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor, Lighter Footprints

Website: <http://www.lighterfootprints.org/>
Email: admin@lighterfootprints.org

1. Federal Government

December 2018

Senate Environment and Communications Legislative Committee. Inquiry into the Galilee Basin (Coal Prohibition) Bill 2018

2 Victorian Government

February 2019

Interim Targets Independent Expert Panel. Interim Emissions Reduction Targets for Victoria (2021 – 2030)

Victorian Electoral Commission. Local Council Electoral Representation Review. Boroondara City Council

May 2019

VEC Local Council Electoral Representation Review. Boroondara City Council. Response to VEC's preliminary Report.

July 2019

Local Government Bill 2019: submission to the Victorian Minister for Local Government

Final Report by Interim Targets Independent Expert Panel on Interim Emissions Reduction Targets for Victoria (2021 – 2030)

3. Local Government

May 2019

City of Boroondara Proposed Budget 2019-20

Federal Government

December 2018

**Submission by Lighter Footprints to
The Senate Environment and Communications Legislation
Committee
regarding its inquiry into the
Galilee Basin (Coal Prohibition) Bill 2018**

Thank you to the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee for the opportunity to contribute to your examination of the proposed bill by Senator Larissa Waters which is intended to prohibit constitutional corporations within the meaning of section 51 (xx) of the Constitution from mining for thermal coal within the Galilee Basin in Queensland.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor, Lighter Footprints

Who is Lighter Footprints?

This submission is by Lighter Footprints, a group of concerned residents (now around 2000) from Boroondara and Whitehorse municipalities in Melbourne who came together in 2006 to see what we could do about the serious challenge of climate change. Our community recognises that climate change has been scientifically demonstrated for some years, and the extent of the challenges leads us to be impatient for effective action.

Our position

We support the provisions of the Galilee Basin (Coal Prohibition) Bill 2018. We are of the view that any project to establish and operate a coal mine in this region is totally unacceptable in light of the climate emergency the world is now facing and should not proceed. In the absence of any other legislation that can adequately assess the devastating environmental effects of such activities on climate, we would support it being enacted.

We consider however that this is a very limited attempt to solve a much larger problem and would recommend that the Committee turn its attention to bringing about a comprehensive overhaul of Federal environmental legislation that is legally durable, reflects the urgency with which we must act in response to the growing climate emergency and responds to the widespread

support within the Australian community for action that treats this threat with the gravity it deserves.

Our opposition to coal mining in the Galilee basin and elsewhere

We oppose coal mining in the Galilee Basin (including but not confined to any proposed activity by Adani) and elsewhere. We believe that we are now confronting an emergency as the impacts of climate change become more apparent and extreme every day.

Unless we take immediate, decisive and far-reaching action to limit global warming below 1.5°C, our world will become unrecognisable and incapable of supporting life as it currently exists. Such action includes disallowing any new mining projects and reducing exports of coal. If we do not act now, the world that we hand on to future generations will be very different and significantly more hostile to all forms of life than the one that we have experienced in the past.

Specific factors that drive our concern include the following:

- the recently released IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) that warns that we have only until around 2030 for carbon emissions to peak and begin to decline in order to keep global warming below 1.5°C.

We note that this analysis by the IPCC is challenged by other scientists. We support the assessment that 2030 is too late to allow emissions to peak in order to stay below 1.5° and that we must start the decline in emissions now.

- the stark contradiction that exists between Australia's ratification of the Paris Agreement which aims 'to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change (Art. 2(1))' and actions that include the approval of new coal mining operations and continued coal exports;¹
- the failure by Adani or any other potential operator to establish a business case for such activities and the likelihood that any proposed mine and rail line will become 'stranded assets' due to increasing global constraint on the use of coal;²
- the damage such projects will have on the ecology of this region including its water resources and its indigenous heritage;
- the damage likely to be caused to the Great Barrier Reef by the transport of coal;
- the health impacts on workers and the community caused by the handling and transport of coal and the coal dust generated;

¹ <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/this-is-not-rhetoric-approving-the-adani-coal-mine-will-kill-people-20170518-gw7nv9.html>

² <http://ieefa.org/ieefa-update-increasingly-cursed-australian-coal-project/>

- the falsehoods promulgated by Adani about its contribution to the local economy especially the number of jobs that will be created; and the precarious financial position of the company in India;³
- the misrepresentation of the level of international demand for coal ⁴;

Our perception that we are confronting an emergency is reinforced by IPCC report released in October 2018 which gives a very clear warning that we are rapidly running out of time and capacity to address the impact of climate change on our world. As the report points out,

*Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, with a likely range of 0.8°C to 1.2°C. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.*⁵

The report warns that in order to limit global warming to less than 1.5°C, we have less than 15 years to achieve net zero emissions.

Under emissions in line with current pledges under the Paris Agreement (known as Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs), global warming is expected to surpass 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, even if these pledges are supplemented with very challenging increases in the scale and ambition of mitigation after 2030 (high confidence). This increased action would need to achieve net zero CO₂ emissions in less than 15 years. Even if this is achieved, temperatures would only be expected to remain below the 1.5°C threshold if the actual geophysical response ends up being towards the low end of the currently estimated uncertainty range. Transition challenges as well as identified trade-offs can be reduced if global emissions peak before 2030 and marked emissions reductions compared to today are already achieved by 2030⁶.

We consider the approach encapsulated in the proposed bill is an attempt to overcome the inadequacies in existing environmental legislation. The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 in particular fails to address activities which are so obviously against the interests of future generations of Australians. It also fails to provides any capacity to facilitate a meaningful and proportional response by Australia to the global impact of climate change.

³ <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/gujarat-writes-to-centre-over-electricity-crisis/articleshow/58602110.cms>

⁴ <http://www.livemint.com/Industry/vwT7Kru9jsF0dUEDtLKOrL/Govt-plans-to-cut-coal-imports-for-power-PSUs-to-zero-in-FY1.html>

⁵ www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2018/07/sr15_headline_statements.pdf

⁶ www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2018/11/SR15_Chapter2_Low_Res.pdf

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)

We believe there are major gaps in the EPBC Act that prevent best practice environmental impact assessments and approval decisions especially for projects such as those proposed for the Galilee Basin. These include:

- the lack of recognition of the Paris Convention in the EPBC Act for identifying proposals of National Environmental Significance;
- the reliance of the Commonwealth on assessments done for State Governments by ‘third parties’ and the lack of capacity or authority at the Commonwealth level to independently assess these inputs. The criteria for such assessments are often lacking in rigour and not onerous;⁷
- the capacity of the Federal Environment Minister to impose environmental conditions on a proposal without ensuring that these conditions are adequately monitored. This aspect is particularly relevant with respect to Adani’s access to water resources;
- the failure of the EPBC Act to include atmospheric emissions whether generated in Australia beyond the immediate location or internationally and caused by the subsequent use of the material produced by the assessible activity; and
- restriction on the consideration of damage to local impacts; the failure to take into account damage done to water resources more generally and in combination with other activities, and to items of National Significance outside the immediate area such as the Great Barrier Reef.

The low number of proposals being refused especially in the resources area suggests that development considerations are given priority over the environment in many cases. A Guardian analysis in 2015 of approvals found that:

[Since the inception of the EPBC Act in 2000] ... 96.2% of projects – which include mining, ports and other infrastructure – have been given the green light, with conditions.

A further 1.6% of projects have been approved without conditions, and just 2.2% have been rejected, either at the approval stage or before. This means that only 18 developments have been vetoed, compared with 806 that have been approved.

The figures are made more stark when it comes to decisions involving the resources industry, with just three projects out of 276 having been turned down.⁸

⁷ <http://theconversation.com/why-arent-australias-environment-laws-preventing-widespread-land-clearing-92924>

⁸ www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/aug/12/australia-has-denied-environmental-approval-to-just-11-projects-since-2000

A factor in this is likely to be the wide degree of discretion of the Federal Minister in approving projects.

These weaknesses are demonstrated in the official Environmental Impact Assessment and other assessments already undertaken of the Adani proposal⁹. Specific examples include the assessment of the impact on water resources, the definition of the project study area for the EIS and the limited concept of allowable/disallowable activities that the Minister can identify as part of the approval.

Water Resources

As part of the requirement to assess the impact of a proposal on water resources, the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Adani proposal states:

All run of mine (ROM) coal will be transported by truck and/or overland conveyor to a centralised coal handling facility, where any high-ash (greater than 25 per cent ash) portion will be washed for blending with the bypass coal (un-washed coal). Coal will be stockpiled prior to loading to trains for transportation by rail¹⁰.

The water facility in this case appears to be for washing poor quality coal of high ash content. The proportion of poor quality coal to be washed and blended isn't specified or related to a water balance. Adani appears to rely on a GHD report on water resource as peer reviewed by URS in 2013. At five years old, the report would not include consideration to factors that have become prominent in recent times such as extreme weather events, evidence of spillage and contamination and cross utilization factors such as farming, CSG extraction.

Water licences are a State issue. We consider, however, that the licence granted to Adani has a number of unsatisfactory aspects including:

- the granting of an unlimited 60-year water licence;
- the failure to consider the impact this will have on other users and on the subsequent quality of the water;
- the effect on water pressure in the Great Artesian Basin; and
- the exemption of water license application from public scrutiny.¹¹

The water trigger (Section 131 AB of the EPBC Act) stipulates ongoing rigour including a water management plan. Under this provision, the Commonwealth has the authority to assess large coal mines and coal seam gas developments so that water resources are treated as a matter of

⁹ <https://theconversation.com/latest-twist-in-the-adani-saga-reveals-shortcomings-in-environmental-approvals-91821>

¹⁰ <https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/assessments-and-approvals/carmichael-coal-environmental-impact-statement.html>

¹¹ <http://theconversation.com/why-does-the-carmichael-coal-mine-need-to-use-so-much-water-75923>

national environmental significance, in relation to such developments. Such a plan should cover water mass balance, sensitivity analysis, and periodic risk reviews as well as unfolding factors such as demands and experiences with water in this drought prone area.

The water trigger means projects are assessed by an independent expert scientific committee (IESC). The IESC assessed the Adani project and reported in 2015. The Adani project was approved by Greg Hunt in 2015 with conditions on a range of things including the IESC recommendations on water being taken in to account.

As part of the Minister's approval, Adani was required to develop a Groundwater Management and Monitoring Plan (GDMP). They also had to do a number of things such as reinject water in to aquifers when certain levels are reached. This Management and Monitoring Plan is to be approved by the Minister when submitted by Adani and the government will be obligated to monitor and report on approved measures to ensure that conditions are being met.

We note that an independent scientific report commissioned by the Department of Environment from CSIRO has raised serious concerns over Adani's GDMP. The CSIRO report suggests Adani has used unverified data and that the plan in its current state is insufficient to protect a nearby site of natural significance (Doongmabulla Spring).¹²

The CSIRO has told the federal environment department that Adani needs to do more work on its GDMP and to verify its data. On the basis of this report, we believe the Queensland Department of Environment and Science has written to Adani saying it will not look at the company's GDMP again until the concerns raised by the CSIRO are resolved.

The Project Study Area for the Adani EIS

The EIS prepared by GDH for the Queensland Government defines the project study area in very specific terms as follows:

The Project comprises of two major components:

» *The Project (Mine): a greenfield coal mine over EPC1690 and the eastern portion of EPC1080, which includes both open cut and underground mining, on mine infrastructure and associated coal processing facilities (the Mine) and the Mine (offsite) infrastructure including:*

- A workers accommodation village and associated facilities (including: industrial area and rail siding)*
- A permanent airport site*
- Water supply infrastructure*

» *The Project (Rail): greenfield rail lines connecting the Mine to the existing Goonyella and Newlands rail systems; including:*

- Rail (west): a 120 km dual gauge portion from the Mine site running west to east to a junction with proposed lines running south-east to the Goonyella rail system and north-east to the Newlands rail system*

¹² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-17/adani-water-management-plan-criticised-by-csiro/10625228>

- Rail (east): a 69 km narrow gauge portion connecting to the Goonyella rail system south of Moranbah to provide for export of coal via the Port of Hay Point (Dudgeon Point expansion)

The consequence of this definition is that the potential for damage to significant places such as the Great Barrier Reef are downplayed because of their distance from the project and outside the area of immediate consideration. Damage caused by activities other than the immediate construction and operation of project components are consequently ignored as shown from the following extract from the EIS.

World Heritage Properties, National Heritage Places and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

The DSEWPaC Projected Matters Search Tool did not identify any world heritage properties or National Heritage Places of relevance to the Project. The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is located over 300 km north of the Study Area with no direct terrestrial, aquatic or biodiversity links to the Study Area. No influences from the Project are predicted to occur on the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and this area has not been considered further within this assessment. The Tree of Knowledge and curtilage at Barcaldine is the closest National Heritage Place to the Study Area. It is located approximately 200 km south-west of the western extent of the Study Area. No direct or indirect influences on this Place will occur as a consequence of the Project and this Place has, therefore, not been considered further.

The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and the Marine Park, are located over 300 km downstream of the Study Area and although connected aquatically via watercourses, substantial watercourse and overland barriers exist between the ocean and the Study Area, including the Burdekin River dam. Significant controls will be established to manage onsite and offsite water and sediment quality impacts. These measures will mitigate potential for offsite impacts to aquatic values that could affect the downstream reefal environment. The distance from the GBR and the extant barriers would impede site conditions from having an influence on the values for which the reef is protected. Accordingly no impacts to the ecological, cultural or social values which the Great Barrier Reef is recognised will occur as a result of the Project.

The Project will not impact upon any World Heritage Areas, National Heritage Places or the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.¹³

Allowable activities

As part of the Minister's approval, there will be a number of both allowable and disallowable activities that can take place as part of the project. At present, the Act only concerns itself with activities immediately related to the mine and rail line construction and operation.

¹³ <https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/assessments-and-approvals/carmichael-coal-environmental-impact-statement.html>

Supporters of Adani's Carmichael coal mine claim it will improve air quality and lower greenhouse gases because it would supply India with "high quality" Australian coal. This however is in contradiction with other reports that identify the poor quality to be produced by these mines. These reports indicate that the Carmichael coal is only marginally better quality than that sourced in India. As it is likely to be used more widely than the limited supply of Indian coal, it would be increasing rather than reducing emissions and pollution.

Associate Professor Gavin Mudd, from RMIT University, has mapped the quality of coal deposits across Australia. He said:

*"If you look at the Galilee Basin coal, there's a reason why it hasn't been developed — it's poorer quality coal, compared to other places of Australia," Dr Mudd said. "It's certainly not as bad as brown coal from an energy point of view, but from an ash point of view it's almost 10 times more ash content."*¹⁴

His report shows the average energy content of coal at Adani's planned mine is about 18 per cent below benchmark Australian coal. Adani has conceded in court the ash content would be about 26 per cent, roughly double the Australian benchmark.

Recommendations

1. Galilee Basin Act

We support the enactment of the Galilee Basin (Coal Prohibition) Bill 2018 on the grounds that it provides some capability to prevent projects such as that by Adani from proceeding. We are concerned, however that this may not be the most robust or durable way to achieve this outcome.

2. Measures to remedy gaps in the existing EPBC Act

We consider that while the bill put forward by Senator Waters aims to rectify an important deficit in existing environmental legislation and in particular to create capacity to prevent the Adani proposal, it does not remedy the substantial gaps in the existing EPBC Act. We recommend that the Committee extend its reference to examine how these gaps can be remedied.

For example, the possible damage done to the Great Barrier by this project is of deep concern to Australians wherever they live in this country. At present, these fears are not taken into account in the EIS prepared for the Queensland Government.

In particular, we recommend that the following changes to the EPBC Act be investigated

- The inclusion of a national interest criteria that extends the concepts of environmental and social impact or damage beyond the area local to the proposed project to include that experienced by all Australians who value the environmental or heritage worth of that specific area.

¹⁴ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-03/adani-plans-to-export-low-quality-coal-to-india-report-says/8409742>

- The restoration of authority to give the Commonwealth power to undertake its own independent EIS of projects that can be demonstrated to have an impact beyond state borders and with implications under the Paris Convention

3. Water trigger and water management plan

We recommend that the committee investigate ways to ensure that Adani complies fully and transparently with the conditions imposed on it as part of the granting of a 60-year unlimited water licence. This recommendation is crucial as evidence already exists that Adani is not complying with the safeguards established to monitor its water usage¹⁵.

Mechanisms to ensure compliance with these conditions should include

- Parliamentary processes to make sure adequate and appropriate monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place should the project go ahead.
- Measures to ensure unfolding risks are covered off under best practice by risk reviews, adjustment to mitigation measures and in a worst case scenario by abandonment of the project

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor, Lighter Footprints

Joy Mettam and Julian Atchison
Members, Lighter Footprints

20 December 2018

¹⁵ <https://theconversation.com/latest-twist-in-the-adani-saga-reveals-shortcomings-in-environmental-approvals-91821>

Victorian Government
February 2019

**Submission by Lighter Footprints Inc
to the Interim Targets Independent Expert Panel**

**Interim Emissions Reduction Targets for Victoria (2021 –
2030)**

Lighter Footprints is a large climate action group based primarily in the Boroondara and Whitehorse council areas of Victoria. It draws its members from the suburbs of Box Hill, Kew, Hawthorn, Camberwell, Canterbury, Surrey Hill and some parts of Ashburton, Glen Iris and Burwood and encompasses the Federal electorates of Kooyong and parts of Chisholm and Deakin.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor, Lighter Footprints

Our overall position

Lighter Footprints strongly supports the concept of targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a central tool to drive the transition to net zero emissions and thereby address the challenge of climate change. We see climate change as an existential risk to all life on earth which necessarily requires decisive, immediate and consistent responses. In recognition of the size of the task that confronts our community, we support interim targets that facilitate an ambitious program of transition based on early and decisive action to cover the period to 2050.

We note that the Victorian Government intends to announce the first two interim targets after the Panel has submitted its report on 22 February 2019. We regret any delay in this process as the need to take prompt and decisive action is becoming more urgent every day. We request the Panel to highlight this urgency in its recommendations to the State Government.

The Panel's Issues Paper poses a broad range of questions on three areas: targets and trajectories, emissions reduction opportunities and benefits and cost. Lighter Footprints has addressed the 16 specific questions posed by Independent Expert Panel on its website and submitted answers via the online submission proforma.

We welcome the emphasis placed in the Issues Paper on establishing a framework of principles to guide the work of the Panel and to structure its advice to Government. The six principles the Panel has adopted to guide their decisions are environmental effectiveness, economic efficiency, equity, flexibility, investor certainty and policy coherence.

We consider these six principles extremely important. In applying each of these principles, however, we are concerned that the Panel may reach less than optimal conclusions if it fails to recognise the context in which these decisions are being made.

We also note that there may be times when tension arises in the application of the principles. The potential conflict between specific principles may create quite different outcomes depending on which is given the greater weight. In such instances, we believe that the highest priority should always be given to environmental effectiveness.

Contextual Issues we believe the Independent Expert Panel should consider in preparing its advice on the Interim Emissions Reduction Target.

- **The challenge of climate change is one area where we cannot afford to be wrong. It represents a risk that our world will be damaged to such an extent that all life will be irreversibly altered.**

While in most areas of policy making, lessons can be learnt and mistakes can be rectified, climate change is a very different order of problem. If we choose a less than optimal or even wrong path, we will have lost valuable time in addressing the main issues. Any subsequent action will be that much more difficult because we are dealing with very

complex natural interactions about which we have only partial understanding and imperfect knowledge on which to base our measurements and predictions.

Interim emissions reduction targets are essential tools in the management of the risks associated with climate change. The uncertainty of the knowledge and gaps in the information surrounding the progress of climate change requires the use of a precautionary principle as the basis on which decisions are made. It is essential, therefore that we retain the flexibility that interim targets will provide.

It is on these grounds that we support the Panel recommending the most ambitious targets in line with what the climate science says and to take stringent action immediately as opportunities arise rather than build up slowly to a long-term target.

- **Our existing political institutions are struggling to deal with such an immense and complex problem.**

Climate change is significantly more complex than any other problem that has yet faced humankind and is beyond the capacity of most people to imagine. It is the consequence of a complicated array of interactions, insidious, difficult to recognise and involving a time frame that is immensely greater than any other problem we have had to address to date. Our current political processes are designed to solve much simpler problems that can generally be articulated in terms of two competing world visions and over a time period that usually has a well-defined end date to which people can relate.

Climate change will affect all areas of Federal, State and Local Governments. Each level will need to find solutions to the problems that fall within their areas of responsibilities. In most cases, local government will be the first responder in dealing with the emergencies arising from the devastating impact of extreme weather events on the community and on local infrastructure. Councils will be responsible for repairing roads, bridges, storm water systems damaged by such events or allocating funds to prepare community assets to withstand such threats.

And yet, many Municipal Councils are unprepared or unwilling to accept their role in adapting to or mitigating the effects of climate change. The State Government should ensure local government understands its role and has the necessary authority and expertise to manage this task effectively and efficiently.

A good step in this direction is the inclusion in the recently released Exposure Draft of the Victorian State Local Government Bill of a number of Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles that a Council '*... must in performance of its role give effect to ...*'. These principles included a requirement that '*... the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted*'.¹⁶

¹⁶ https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/91138/Local-Government-Bill-Exposure-Draft.pdf Part 2, Division 1, Section 8(2)(c)

We believe the emissions targets should be central to a coordinated suite of policies directed at addressing climate challenge and the transition our economy and our communities will need to go through. An example at the State level would be to include emissions reduction targets in the regular review of the licences for coal fired power stations.

It is preferable that all levels of government, Federal, State and local work together and adopt targets that are consistent and equally ambitious. Unfortunately, this is unachievable at present because the Commonwealth has proposed a very modest Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Furthermore, the target it has proposed for electricity under the National Energy Guarantee is also totally inadequate and will leave the bulk of emissions reduction to other sectors of the economy where savings are harder to find.

To have any genuine impact, much of the heavy lifting will be left to State Governments. Each State will need to adopt ambitious targets for all industry sectors and commit to early implementation so that emissions reductions are timely, cost-effective and lessen environmental risk.

- **At present, climate science is the only area of intellectual pursuit that is capable of giving any meaningful analysis of climate change and its consequences.**

For many years now, climate scientists have fought to inform society and its decision makers of the problem that they have identified through their observations and research. We accept the validity of their work and, subject to the proviso mentioned below regarding 1.5°, support the proposition in the Issues Paper that

...the recommended targets and trajectories should be informed by up-to-date climate science and ensure that Victoria achieves its objective of net zero emissions by 2050 in a way that is consistent with keeping global temperature rise this century to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels'.¹⁷

It is unfortunate, however that other fields of intellectual pursuit have not kept pace with climate scientists in contributing to an understanding of this issue. Economists, philosophers, geographers and creative artists are among the many areas of study that could provide important insights into the challenge of climate change and its impacts on human society. Yet they have failed to engage in any meaningful way or to give much guidance on how to communicate the message, unravel the complexities or to suggest potential solutions.

- **Any effective response to climate change will require significant transformation to most aspects of our lives. The transition to new ways of organising our society and economy will bring substantial risks as well as opportunities. However, without government intervention, certain parts of our community will be affected more negatively than others.**

¹⁷ https://engage.vic.gov.au/application/files/8715/2228/9280/Interim_Targets_Issues_Paper.pdf pp5

Much of the world is reluctantly facing the reality that they must undergo a radical transition away from an industrialised economy based on coal fired power generation to one powered by clean sources of energy. There needs to be recognition that this is likely to create winners and losers unless governments act to ensure the costs of the transition are shared more equally.

The task of responding to climate change is so large that governments are the only institutions with the capacity to manage this transition and prevent unnecessary pain and dislocation. Emissions reduction targets must be seen as only one part of the total package. Governments at all levels have a duty and a role to put in place measures to ensure that no part of the community is unfairly disadvantaged.

The concept of a 'just transition' is well reflected in the work the Victorian State Government did at the time of the closure of the Hazelwood power station. Consultations with the local community, councils and unions, the provision of funding to diversify and strengthen the local economy and measures to facilitate the relocation of displaced workers have all contributed to sharing the burden and helping the recovery following the closure.

Targets and Trajectories

Lighter Footprints believe the Victorian targets should be broadly in accordance with the recommendations by the Climate Change Authority and directed at making a significant contribution to meeting Australia's obligations under the Paris Agreement.

We consider that interim targets should be determined on the basis of what climate science says is necessary to keep warming global below 2° on pre-industrial levels. We understand that this will require setting our goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050. In the absence of any clear guidance on the goal of 1.5°, we recognise that this will require more aggressive action to reduce emissions.

On this basis, targets will need to be ambitious and with much of the work being done up front rather than delayed to a later period.

Using 2005 as the starting point, we advocate adopting:

- The Climate Change Authority target of reducing annual emissions by 36% below 2005 levels by 2025; and
- The most ambitious boundary of the Climate Change Authority range of emissions reduction targets defined by 63% below 2005 levels by 2030.

What factors should be taken into account in calculating the level and trajectories of the interim targets?

In determining the level and trajectory of the interim targets, important considerations will include:

- **The policy failure at the Commonwealth level which has seen emissions continue to rise**

We are concerned that Australia has demonstrated so little ambition in the targets it has already adopted and has failed to acknowledge its obligation as a wealthy country to share the burden of reducing emissions. There is a lack of any clear and unambiguous agreement at the Commonwealth level on the action needed to achieve even the modest commitments that Australia has offered up as a signatory to the Paris Agreement.

In its NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution) Australia has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28% below 2005 levels by 2030. That Australia's emissions continue to rise is a cause for shame considering Australia is already one of the highest per capita emitters of greenhouse gases globally.

- **The trajectory should be driven by considerations of intergenerational equity.**

This is a problem that has been created by industrialisation based on the use of fossil fuels over the last 200 years and especially since the 1950s when Australia along with other major developed countries moved away from an agriculture-based economy to one based on manufacturing. Those who have been part of and benefitted from this transition are under an obligation to up-coming and future generations to share the burden that this has created and to contribute to the solution.

- **The prospect that Victoria will benefit from the economic and investment opportunities and leadership kudos over and above other administrations by adopting a consistent and integrated suite of policy measures based on an ambitious set of targets**

Why early and decisive action is necessary

Lighter Footprints believes that early action has many advantages including:

- Mitigation of cumulative effect of emissions – e.g. delayed action means more greenhouse gas in the early transition phase and a greater adjustment to temperature excesses later;
- Cost - delay is recognised as the high cost option in that the transition is compressed and opportunities missed;
- Victoria stands to gain advantages in traditional areas of strength – education, technology and advanced manufacturing.

At the same time, there are significant disadvantages associated with delayed action including:

- The intergeneration impost of deferring the task to our children and grandchildren with a distinct possibility of the situation becoming irreversible at any time. We have already created something that would qualify as an emergency.

- Delay is inexcusable given Victoria’s access to substantial renewable resources to achieve net zero before 2050.
- Australia will be over reliant on aging fossil fuel power stations to meet demand over the short term. This will likely involve increased intermittency arising from forced outages as plant is operated well past its intended ‘use by’ date. Furthermore, upgrade and retrofits for ageing fossil fuel power stations have proven overly ambitious, problematic and with limited output in reference cases such as Muja in WA;
- Open cut mines are likely to become increasingly susceptible to catching fire with the heightened risk of bush fire as a consequence of climate change warming. This will limit output, elevate pollution, and carry implicit risk of spreading to the power station infeed.

How should the targets and trajectories be calculated?

We support the use of the concept of an emissions budget as an analytical tool to determine targets. Lighter Footprints has taken currently available information about greenhouse gas emissions for Victoria and used these figures in conjunction with Climate Change Authority recommendations to track Victoria’s fair share of emissions and emission reduction targets between 2013 and 2050. Our calculations and conclusions are contained in Attachment A.

Emissions Reduction Opportunities

Lighter Footprints considers that decarbonization of the electricity sector offers the quickest and most cost-effective path to reducing carbon emissions in the time frame remaining. As such, we advocate that targets and related measures to achieve this goal be given priority.

The electricity sector

The electricity sector is generally expected to be able to reduce emissions at a much lower cost than other sectors due to the existence of many abatement options. In particular, there are many ways to produce electricity with low emissions.

The question of the contribution of the electricity sector to emissions reduction was examined in modelling undertaken for the Climate Change Authority by Jacobs Group Australia Pty Ltd¹⁸ in February 2017. The objective of the modelling was to compare seven alternative policies to meet a common emissions reduction target. They included an explicit carbon price via a carbon tax, an emissions intensity target, three ‘technology pull’ policies, a regulated closure, and the use of absolute baselines. Amongst other things, they concluded

- Achieving the emissions constraint requires a transformation of the electricity supply sector, with a shift from predominantly coal fired generation to a mix of low emission technologies.

¹⁸

<http://climatechangeauthority.gov.au/sites/prod.climatechangeauthority.gov.au/files/files/170217%20Jacobs%20Final%20Report%28revised%29.pdf>

- All policies met, or came close to meeting, the demanding emissions constraint, with the exception of the regulated closure policy
- Emissions pricing policies (carbon pricing and the emission intensity target) have the lowest resource cost.
- To achieve the emissions constraint, each policy had to encourage a high level of investment in low emission technologies, as well as change the pattern of dispatch away from high emissions to low emission sources.

Various industry sectors will undertake changes to their processes and improve their energy efficiency but these will very likely come at much higher cost, with a longer timeframe and with more disruption than in the electricity sector.

The potential for emissions savings are most evident in electricity generation. However, we also consider there are many opportunities in other areas that should not be neglected. In some cases, this involves building on and expanding initiatives already in place and in other instances, it will require new measures. Two areas which we think will yield good outcomes are in the built environment and in transport.

Opportunities for emissions reduction in the built environment

The Victorian *Planning & Environment Act 1987* establishes a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria. It sets out the procedures for preparing and amending the Victorian Planning Provisions and planning schemes. It also sets out the process for obtaining permits under planning schemes and enforcing compliance with such schemes and permits and other administrative procedures.

Planning schemes regulate the use and development of land. One way they do this is by requiring that certain types of use or development can only be carried out if a planning permit is granted. A planning permit is a legal document that allows a certain use or development to proceed on a specified parcel of land.

Lighter Footprints regards the current planning regime as inadequate to address the challenges of climate change. We consider the concepts underlying this process need to be updated to recognise that climate change is an urgent problem requiring an immediate and decisive response and that the built environment can make a significant contribution to adapting to or mitigating its effects.

As part of this failure to give proper recognition to climate change, we have become aware also of criticism directed at failings in the nature and application of the controls.

- Current planning and building controls reflect an outmoded view of environmental policy as being concerned with the need to control pollution, reduce waste and improve energy efficiency.
- The narrow definition and/or application of concepts such as sustainability, sustainable use, ecological processes and genetic diversity results in specific and measurable outcomes that do little to address the broader causes of climate change.

- An apparent desire by State and Federal Governments to 'cut red tape' is a misguided attempt to lighten the so-called regulatory burden on business and improve productivity. In fact, it has led to a vaguer and less precise statement of the control provisions and a poorer outcome for neighbourhoods.

The Planning and Environment Act and the associated regulations and local laws should make stronger recognition of the role planning can play in responding to this challenge and link this to emissions reduction targets. We recommend that the Expert Panel investigate how the scope of the Act can be extended to go beyond a concern over conservation, sustainability and heritage to provide governments at the State and local level the authority and capacity to address climate change in the use and development of land.

Planning Permits

A major weakness in the current provisions for planning permits is that they cover only a very limited range of building developments. Applications to the municipal council for a planning permit to construct a single dwelling are only required for sites with a heritage overlay; are subject to flooding, landscape or environmental overlays; or have a land area of less than 500 square metres. Such cases are assessed on the basis of their compliance with the municipal Planning Scheme whereby a local government area is divided into zones of preferred land use.

The criteria for assessing planning permits also ignore many issues that could enhance the capacity of the built environment to respond to the impact of climate change. These include the massive footprint of many new buildings and poor internal design which contribute to high energy consumption and water usage; the way a new dwelling together with its huge associated underground structures and cramped surrounds interferes with the capacity of rainwater to seep into the water table and increases flows into the storm water system; and the lack of external space to grow trees or other vegetation to ameliorate climate change.

We recommend that the Expert Panel investigate ways to expand the criteria for assessing applications for planning permits that

Building Permits

Building permits are different to planning permits. They are issued under the Victoria Building Regulations and generally relate only to the constructional aspects of a building or other development. These Regulations are made under the Building Act 1993.

Local government does not set building regulations but administers them in accordance with the Building Code and planning and building by-laws. The Building Code of Australia (BCA) is a uniform set of technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings and other structures throughout Australia. The BCA together with the Plumbing Code of Australia forms the National Construction Code (NCC) and is produced and maintained by

the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB). It is reviewed and amended each year to include various technical and regulatory changes.

Lighter Footprints considers that the building permits process should play a stronger role in encouraging building design and construction techniques and materials that contribute to meeting the challenge of climate change.

This could be done in a number of ways. For example:

- with an amendment of the Building Act 1993 that acknowledges as part of the purposes of the Act the existence and reality of climate change and the role that the built environment plays in mitigating and adapting to climate change. In describing the purposes of the Act;
- by advocating change to the Building Code of Australia as part of the annual review and amendment of the code to ensure that it embodies appropriate recognition of climate change.
- by encouraging local governments to take a more active role in promoting better design and construction of residential and other buildings.

We recommend that:

- a further purpose be added to the Building Act 1993 that requires the State Government to establish mechanisms which monitor the impact of climate change on the built environment and require municipal councils to base approvals on the capacity of a building to respond effectively to the demands of that change.
- Victoria work with other State governments to ensure the concept of climate change in the Building Code is not limited to the principles of environmentally sustainable development but is expressed in terms that reflect the urgency of the challenge we are facing and is linked to ambitious and stringent emissions reduction targets.

Opportunities for emissions reduction in transport

Some of the more effective policy levers available to reduce emissions in the transport sector are the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. These include emissions standards for light vehicles and for a common recharging plug for electric vehicles; and fuel excise taxes. The Victorian State Government needs to work closely with other State Governments to bring pressure to bear on the Commonwealth and get such measures implemented or changed.

There are however, a range of other initiatives that the State Government could implement as part of a coordinated suite of policy measures around an emissions reduction target. We support the comment in the Issues Paper that low emission vehicles may present one of the most significant opportunities for emissions reduction in the transport sector.

Measures to encourage the uptake of low emissions vehicles include the replacement of the government fleet of vehicles with electric and hybrid vehicles; incentives such as

vehicle registration discounts; appropriate infrastructure such as provision of electric vehicle charging stations; and the expansion of public transport.

Local Government can play a large role in reducing emissions in the transport sector. It is essential that State Government harness this capacity by working side by side with municipal councils implementing coordinated programs or through legislative direction to ensure that the State Government targets are reflected in the policies, laws and actions of local government.

Things that local government can do include the facilitation of community energy initiatives, the replacement of its vehicle fleet with low emissions vehicles, provision of infrastructure and parking incentives for electric vehicles; initiatives that encourage the use of public transport such as the provision of shading and better access for stops.

Electric Vehicles

Australians purchased 701 plug-in hybrid electric vehicles and 668 fully electric vehicles in 2016, making up 0.1 per cent of the total Australian market. In 2015, a total of 1771 were purchased. This low level contrasts sharply with what is happening elsewhere.

Sales of electric vehicles world wide reached 3 million in November 2017. Norway has the world's largest plug-in segment market share of new car sales with 39.2% in 2017; as of December 2017, China had the largest stock of highway legal light-duty plug-ins with over 1.2 million domestically built passenger cars. China's plug-in electric bus stock reached 343,500 units in 2016, out of global stock of about 345,000 vehicles

There are a number of factors mitigating against the purchase of electric vehicles in Australia. These include a lack of supporting government policies, such as vehicle emissions standards and policies to reduce EV costs; anxiety over the lack of a fast charging network especially on long trips outside cities; and the unavailability of cheaper vehicles.

A report by the Electric Vehicle Council suggests that around 50 per cent of Australian consumers would, if in the market for a new car, consider buying an electric vehicle and that this number could increase to almost 70 per cent with the correct policy support.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Lighter Footprints welcomes the requirement under the Climate Change Act 2017 that the Government seek independent and expert advice to identify emissions reduction targets. We believe that governments at all levels must respond urgently and in a decisive way to keep global warming below 2° on pre-industrial levels with the goal of net zero emissions by 2050. We see interim and final emissions reduction targets as indispensable tools in achieving this goal.

We recommend that the Panel's advice to the State Government should take into account the following points:

- The interim emissions reduction targets should be determined on the basis of what climate science says is necessary to keep warming global below 2° on pre-industrial levels and that the goal should be to reach net zero emissions by 2050.
- In recognition of the necessary urgency surrounding any response to climate change, the Panel should give priority to the principle of environmental effectiveness over and above the other principles it has identified.
- Governments at all levels need to accept that they have a unique role to play in responding to climate change. In particular, governments have a duty to ensure that the burden of transition is shared equitably.
- Targets should be ambitious and structured so that stringent action is taken immediately as opportunities arise rather than build up slowly to a long-term target. Interim targets for the period 2021 to 2025 should be 36%; for 2026 to 2030 the target should be 63%.
- To identify Victoria's fair share of emissions reductions, calculation of targets and trajectories should be based on an allocation of the national emissions budget that reflects population size. This calculation should also influence the relative contributions the various industry sectors should be expected to make to meeting these targets.
- At the same time, it should be recognised that the electricity sector will be able to reduce emissions at a much lower cost than other sectors due to the existence of many abatement options.
- The built environment provides a range of opportunities for reducing emissions. The Expert Panel should investigate how climate change and emissions reduction targets can be reflected in the legislation and regulation that applies to planning processes and building permits at both the State and local government levels.
- The transport sector is another area where significant reductions in emissions can be achieved. The Panel should investigate how to incorporate the concepts of climate change and targets in measures that would encourage the uptake of electric vehicles, the replacement of existing fleets of government vehicles and increased use of public transport.

John Gare, Joy Mettam, David O'Neill

February 2019

Victorian Electoral Commission. Local Council Electoral Representation Review. Boroondara City Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the regular electoral representation review of the City of Boroondara that the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is required to conduct under the Victorian Local Government Act 1989.

This submission is by Lighter Footprints, a group of concerned residents (now around 2000) from Boroondara and Whitehorse municipalities who came together in 2006 to see what we could do about the serious challenge of climate change. Our community recognises that climate change has been scientifically demonstrated for some years, and the extent of the challenges leads us to be impatient for effective action.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor, Lighter Footprints

Our position

Lighter Footprints supports the implementation of multi members wards and proportional representation as a means to elect councillors in the City of Boroondara.

Our principal reasons for this stance are that multi member wards will:

- contribute to a more democratic council by enabling the representation of a wider range of views and facilitating a richer debate in council deliberations.
- meet the urgent need to attract a more diverse range of councillors with a wider range of skills and expertise.

We believe this approach would lead to higher quality decision making that better reflects the views of the community; and would enhance the Council's capability to deal with the increasingly complex matters that fall within its responsibilities.

We have adopted this position because we are aware that local government is becoming a significant player in the global response to climate change:

- Municipal councils such as Boroondara are being required to adopt the role of first responder to deal with the impacts of extreme weather on local communities and infrastructure. This role will have a significant impact on council budgets and resources.
- Councils also have a range of levers they can use to adapt to and mitigate the effect of climate change. These include facilitating changes in transport away from fossil fuel towards electric vehicles, bicycles and public transport; better management of parklands and increased planting of trees and other vegetation; better management of water including storm water, filtration and wetlands; land planning and building approvals.

Current councillors in the City of Boroondara have not shown a strong awareness of their potential role in this area nor a willingness to provide leadership in developing an adequate response to climate change. We believe that multi member wards and proportional representation would attract candidates who would be able to fill this gap in the Council's capability.

The Review

As specified in Section 219D of the Local Government Act 1989, the purpose of an electoral representation review is to achieve "fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council."

We note that, in undertaking this task, the VEC proceeds on the basis of three main principles:

1. to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality
2. to take a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors
3. to ensure that communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible

It is the application of this third principle that we are most concerned with in our support for multi-member wards in the City of Boroondara. Discussed below are the various reasons why we support multi member wards. Our principal reason is that, as a climate advocacy group, we believe multi-member wards would give the growing community of people who want action on climate change a place at the table and a voice in decision making.

Background to the current structure

In its 2008 review¹, VEC recommended that single councillor wards be retained despite its initial assessment that multi members wards would better reflect Boroondara's communities of interest. We consider that this recommendation gave too great a weight to the status quo and insufficient attention to the distinctive features of this municipality. The case for multi member wards was severely hampered by the strong advocacy role that the Council adopted for single member wards.

The following extracts from the 2008 review demonstrate the thinking behind VEC's recommendation at that time:

¹ <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/resources/boroondaraFinalReport2008.PDF>

The VEC's preliminary view was that multi-councillor wards would better reflect Boroondara's communities of interest. Submitters had raised a number of issues that affect people on a wider scale than single-councillor wards ... rather than being localised to particular areas (such as the concerns of families with children or environmental issues). ... there may be opposing views or different interests within any one ward and that having multiple councillors may better represent this diversity on the Council.

The VEC acknowledged the distinct senses of place across the municipality, and that people do identify with their local area. However, the VEC noted that these areas are not necessarily so different that it would be impossible for a councillor from one area to understand the issues of another area, and that single-councillor wards do not necessarily reflect the local areas with which people identify, due to some areas being larger and some being smaller than the current and proposed single-councillor wards.

Ultimately, VEC recommended single councillor wards:

Overall, the VEC considers that the single-councillor ward structure is a fundamental feature of the governance and representation processes that the Council has established since 1997. ...

Given these considerations, the VEC believes that single-councillor wards can provide fair and equitable representation for the voters of Boroondara and that there are appropriate governance and management processes in place to represent both the local and broader communities of interest within the municipality.

We consider that, in reaching this conclusion, the Commission gave too much weight to the arguments made to it by various City Councillors. We believe that the comments made at the time by the Councillors reflected a narrow and parochial understanding of the Boroondara community and a desire to protect their own reputation:

The Mayor explained that she believed that Boroondara is the best municipality in Victoria. ... The VEC was reminded by other councillors that the Boroondara City Council is a strong advocate for its community and that the community is well serviced because of the Council's strong focus on local issues and good governance, and this situation would be put at risk by a different structure.

We believe VEC was conscious of this but was hampered in adopting a stronger case for multi councillor wards by the low number and quality of submissions setting out an alternative position:

the number of submissions supporting ten single councillor wards may also have been elevated by the Council's campaign... a "Fact Sheet" about the preliminary options distributed by the Council described the preliminary preferred and first and second alternative options respectively as "detrimental to effective local

representation”, “equally inappropriate” and as having “ward boundaries [that] are quite arbitrary, in order to justify an unnecessary eleventh councillor”.

While not disputing the Council’s right to publicise its point of view on the options, the VEC notes that these materials may not have encouraged submitters to approach all of the VEC’s preliminary options with an open mind

The case for multi member wards in 2019

We believe that the case for multi member wards in 2019 is even stronger than it was in 2008. Developments since then that strengthen the case include the following:

- **Boroondara is only one of three metropolitan councils still retaining single member wards. The others are Banyule and Knox.**

All adjoining councils to Boroondara, (Whitehorse, Stonnington, Monash, Manningham, Yarra, and Darebin) except Banyule have multi councillor wards. Banyule has 7 single councillor wards. Without undertaking a detailed analysis, we cannot identify any specific feature that would make Boroondara so different to all these other councils that it requires a different type of representation.

- **The role of local government has changed substantially in recent years and is no longer confined to local issues such as local infrastructure and local services.**

Local Government is becoming a significantly more important layer of government than in the past and much of its work is done in partnership with State and Federal Governments. Many local issues are now being subsumed into programs developed and funded by other levels of government with local government assuming the delivery responsibility. People who have issues with such programs are required to deal more frequently with the agency responsible for developing the policy and authorising the funding rather than the level that does the delivery.

- **Not only is the role of local government expanding into new areas, it is also becoming considerably more complex and demanding**

Lighter Footprints would like to see Council served by representatives with interest, and readiness or commitment to deal with the challenges of larger issues such as climate change, the area of our primary concern.

Lighter Footprints is concerned that our current local councillors lack the knowledge, expertise or awareness to deal with these larger challenges especially climate change. Our experience within our community also suggests that the local population wants all levels of government including local government to act on these matters.

Multi members wards would provide the opportunity for the community of interest that has grown up amongst people wanting action on climate change to be represented in Council proceedings and to participate in decision making on such matters.

Since it was established in 2006, Lighter Footprints has become a large and influential community of interest in the City of Boroondara. It has grown in size and influence to become a widely respected and authoritative voice on climate change both locally and further afield. It has a membership and following of over 2000 local residents and its monthly events attract prominent speakers and audiences of between 50 to 80 people. Our regular forums in the Hawthorn Arts Centre and other community centres are hugely successful with audiences of over 400 people. The voting trends in the Hawthorn electorate during the recent State election suggest that the forum we held then had a role in energising local people to vote on climate change issues and influencing the upset result.

The City of Boroondara has a number of initiatives in place which it claims demonstrates its commitment to responding to climate change. We remain sceptical as to the level of Councillors' commitment to this cause and the degree to which these various activities influence day to day decision making in Boroondara. Many of the initiatives arise from obligations imposed by State Government; on the basis of anecdotal evidence, it would appear that participation and application is observed more in the letter than in the spirit. Most other metropolitan councils have gone much further and adopted much more ambitious actions than Boroondara in their responses. In general, Councillors favour positions that involve little substantial change. Their decisions generally favour the status quo or have the effect of favouring property interests above wider community interest and reflect an extremely cautious approach to protecting the organisation's budgetary interests.

- [The challenges of communicating with your local member are becoming much easier with the development of information and communications technologies.](#)

Demographically, Boroondara is a highly educated and professionally qualified population. As such, most are quite capable of articulating their problems and communicating with the Councillor they consider most responsive to their specific problem.

At the same time, Boroondara proudly proclaims the systems it has put in place to consult with its constituency. These processes should be made more accessible and directed to assist those members of the local community that may be less skilled in communicating with their local member. Attention should be paid to those who are less familiar with electronic communication and increased opportunities provided for more traditional methods of communication such as regular ward meetings.

- [Multi member electorates could lead to more open discussion of](#)

policies and proposals at council meetings.

At present, council meetings that are open to the public are rather sedate affairs with little discussion of the agenda items. When councillors ask questions, they do not appear designed to seek out information but to highlight reasons why the proposal should be supported. In other words, questions often take the form of a 'Dorothy Dixier'.

Questions from the public are heavily controlled and limited and answers from council officers are often fail to acknowledge or elucidate the questioner's concerns. Most motions are passed unanimously without debate, seemingly as though councillors had already caucused before the meeting and reached agreement on the outcome they desire.

Enormous weight appears to given by councillors to the agenda papers that council officials have prepared beforehand and only on very rare occasions is a different line taken to that recommended by the official.

A particularly telling example of this problem is the proposal for a new Kew Recreation Centre that was foreshadowed in Draft Council Plan 2017-21 and adopted in the Council's 2018-2019 Budget. This proposal involves the demolition of the old centre and the construction of a new facility costing \$58 million over four years. The item appeared in the Council Budget without any supporting justification, cost-benefit analysis or evidence of community consultation on the need for such a building.

Subsequent community consultation is being conducted around users' requirements. This will be a spectacular facility and is located in the wealthiest part of the whole city and yet the cost will be borne by all ratepayers in the City of Boroondara including areas significantly less well-off and less well-endowed than Kew

Conclusion

We recommend that the Victorian Electoral Commission use this review to recommend that the City of Boroondara adopt multi member wards with proportional representation.

We believe that this approach would result in a more democratic representation of the community of interest that has grown up in this municipality around the need to act on climate change. We also believe that this issue will become an increasingly more important part of the work of the Council and that multi member wards will contribute to improving the capacity of the Council to respond.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor
Lighter Footprints

May 2019

Victorian Electoral Commission. Local Council Electoral Representation Review. Boroondara City Council.

Response to VEC's Preliminary Report

Lighter Footprints welcomes the release on 10 April 2019 by The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) of its Preliminary Report as part of its regular electoral representation review of the City of Boroondara; and appreciates the further opportunity to comment on this matter.

Lighter Footprints is a growing and influential group of concerned residents (now around 2000) from the Boroondara and Whitehorse municipalities who came together in 2006 to see what we could do about the serious challenge of climate change. Our community recognises that climate change has been scientifically demonstrated for some years, and the extent of the challenges leads us to be impatient for effective action.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor, Lighter Footprints

Our position

We note that three options are being considered by the VEC:

- Option A (preferred option) Boroondara City Council consist of eleven councillors elected from four wards (three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward).
- Option B (alternative option) Boroondara City Council consist of eleven councillors elected from five wards (four two-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward).
- Option C (alternative option) Boroondara City Council consist of eleven councillors elected from eleven single-councillor wards.

We support VEC's preferred option (Option A) on the grounds that this option would:

- provide greater representation for the large community of interest that exists within the City of Boroondara on the need for action to address climate change at all levels of government including local government;
- address the democratic deficit that currently exists in Boroondara around participation by the local community in the choose of its representatives and involvement in the decision making by the Council at the councillor and official level; and
- expand the capacity of our local representatives to make high quality decisions on the increasingly complex matters being considered at the local government level.

While we prefer Option A, Option B would be acceptable. We consider Option A better because it would be more durable over the longer term in response to shifts in population and demographics.

We oppose Option C on the grounds that this approach is no longer adequate to handle the complex matters now confronting local government. Single member wards may have been sufficient in the days when Council was primarily concerned with local matters such as roads, bridges and rubbish collections and their major source of funds was property rates. These days are long past and councils are now dealing with matters that have implications way beyond the bounds of their local area and with huge budgets where rates are only one of a number of funding sources.

Community of Interest

Lighter Footprints was established in 2006 and since then has grown to become a well recognised and respected organisation in the Boroondara area and beyond. It is a non-partisan group that attracts members from all political persuasions as well as age, gender and economic background. It conducts regular monthly meetings which attract an audience of more than 50 people to hear speakers who are leaders in the intellectual and economic aspects of this topic. It also conducts large regular forums to foster the debate around climate change amongst the general public and is able to fill the Hawthorn Arts Centre with capacity crowds of more than 600 people.

We see the development of Lighter Footprints as an indicator of how important the issue of climate change is to the people of Boroondara. Lighter Footprints has brought people together to share their concerns and to find ways to encourage governments at all levels to take the challenge of climate change seriously.

Under the current single member ward arrangement which focuses on geographical identity, there is little opportunity to stand candidates who reflect this broader community of interest.

Making Boroondara more democratic

Being the level of government closest to where people live and dealing with issues that affect their everyday lives, it would seem that there should be many opportunities for residents to participate more consistently and effectively in the decision making that occurs in Council. And yet this does not apply in Boroondara.

At present, elections in Boroondara are very mild-mannered affairs where there is virtually no clash of ideas or approach. As a consequence, we end up with a council populated to a large degree with people from quite similar backgrounds and with conservative attitudes who have little willingness to explore new ways to address problems and a desire to conserve the status quo. This has meant that property owners and developers and powerful interests such as the private schools and professional sporting bodies get a much more sympathetic hearing than those seeking a less commercially oriented solution.

Council meetings in Boroondara are generally not well attended by the public unless there is a specific issue affecting a particular neighbourhood or where an individual has an interest in council affairs. The conduct of business at council meetings is quite perfunctory with little debate and there is a heavy reliance on agenda papers prepared by officials. Motions are often passed by unanimous vote suggesting a high degree of caucusing amongst councillors prior to the meeting. Public questions are strictly limited to matters on the agenda, for which the questioner has already had contact with the Council and are restricted to no more than 11 in any 12-month period.

Ward meetings are never or very rarely held and it is the very unusual councillor that actually becomes involved in activities in their particular ward or approaches their constituents to determine their views. Special interest groups of residents sponsored by the Council around specific topics seem to have disappeared altogether.

We welcome recent initiatives by the Council to keep the local community better informed of its activities. These include distribution of the Boroondara Newsletter by email and making it available on its website. This newsletter, however, is generally an insubstantial document full of photographs and feel good items. It does little to stimulate participation by the community in discussion about the matters that are being decided by Council.

Another initiative is the greater accessibility to the previous meeting minutes as part of the publication of the agenda papers for the current meeting on the website. The minutes, however, are limited and give no indication of whether any debate occurred or who voted for or opposed specific motions. Such information would be useful in identifying the particular approach of any one councillor as well elucidating the issues affecting the decision taken.

The consultation exercise the Council undertook in late 2016 and early 2017 on the Community Plan for the next 10 years indicated a substantial degree of enthusiasm within the local community to become involved in discussions on council activities. As part of the consultation that the Council outsourced to a private agency, there were 11,845 responses throughout the various stages and in the different forums of the project. The puzzling question is where has all this enthusiasm and involvement disappeared to and why it has not been possible to capture even a small proportion of this energy on a continuing basis.

We consider that a good place to start addressing this democratic deficit would be to introduce multi member wards with proportional representation. Multi member elections would attract a wider, more diverse range of candidates and encourage a more active involvement by voters in choosing the candidate who best represents their interests. This approach would also encourage voters to identify more strongly with their representative and to maintain a continuing interest in the way they fulfill their responsibilities when in office. The greater diversity of representation created by this

approach would also lead to more lively debates within Council and ensure greater transparency in decision making.

Capacity to address the increased complexity of local government

Single member wards may have been adequate in times when the main responsibilities of council were the provision of local infrastructure such as roads and footpaths and services such as rubbish collections and baby health centres and council budgets were much smaller. In more recent times, this approach no longer ensures that councillors have the capability to deal with the growing significance of local government, the increasing interdependency of the three layers of government, the broader remit of municipal responsibilities and the size of council operations.

The increased complexity of local government requires higher quality decision making than that needed when local councils were dealing with much less important matters and much smaller budgets:

- Local government has become an important layer of legislative authority within our community.
- Boroondara has an operating budget and a workforce equivalent to a medium sized to large company.
- Unless councillors are drawn from a wider range of people with a more diverse range of skills and interests, there is the risk that decision making will be influenced unduly by vested interests or left to council officials.

More diverse representation and response to climate change

We believe that local government has become a significant player in the global response to climate change:

- Municipal councils such as Boroondara are being required to adopt the role of first responder to deal with the impacts of extreme weather on local communities and infrastructure. This role will have a significant impact on council budgets and resources.
- Councils also have a range of levers they can use to adapt to and mitigate the effect of climate change. These include facilitating changes in transport away from fossil fuel towards electric vehicles, bicycles and public transport; better management of parklands and increased planting of trees and other vegetation; better management of water including storm water, filtration and wetlands; land planning and building approvals.

We support Option A in particular because we consider it provides the best opportunity to elect councillors that represent the growing community of interest in Boroondara of people concerned with the threat of climate change.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor
Lighter Footprints

July 2019

Local Government Bill 2019: submission to the Victorian Minister for Local Government

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Local Government Bill 2019 that your government is planning to table in Parliament in the near future. This bill is the successor of the Local Government Bill 2018 which lapsed following the recent Victorian State elections.

The 2019 version of this bill contains a number of changes which are reportedly the consequence of a '*... high-level review of the Local Government Bill 2018... that .. has provided the opportunity to include some additional reforms designed to further improve and strengthen the 2018 Bill.*'¹

Who is making this submission?

This submission is being made on behalf of both Lighter Footprints and the Kooyong Climate Change Alliance.

Lighter Footprints is an environmental group comprising members and supporters primarily from the City of Boroondara. It has over 2000 people belonging to or supporting the group and its aim is to influence Australians (including decision-makers) to take the action that is needed to meet the challenge of climate change as a matter of urgency,

The Kooyong Climate Change Alliance is a non-partisan co-operative arrangement between environmental groups working in the Kooyong electorate to promote community action on climate change. It includes Lighter Footprints, ACF Boroondara, GetUp! Kooyong & Higgins and StopAdani Kooyong.

Our position

We are particularly opposed to the proposal to standardise the format of local government electoral systems by mandating single member wards for most municipalities and for the removal of the option for councils to be constituted as multi-member wards.

We believe that single member wards are a significant impediment to democracy in local government. Our experience as residents of the City of Boroondara confirms our assessment that this form of representation leads to a major reduction in the capacity of our elected representatives to reflect the diversity of our community and to generate policy that can respond to the increasingly complex issues that confront local government.

¹ <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/council-governance/local-government-act-review>

We support the inclusion of climate change as an overarching governance principle as we are confronting a climate emergency. This existential threat requires all levels of government to act promptly and decisively and to use all sources of authority available to them to adapt to and mitigate the impact of climate change.

We believe the level of penalties proposed in the 2018 version of this bill continues to be an inadequate enforcement tool across a significant range of local government activity. In particular, the current maximum penalty of 20 penalty units fails to deter the illegal removal of canopy trees on private property with significant attendant environmental loss. We recommend that the maximum penalty be increased to \$100,000 to be indexed regularly.

We are concerned about the absence of any independent and effective accountability mechanism with the duty to report back and provide the local community with meaningful information based on high quality analysis on how well their Council fulfils its responsibilities and maintains good governance.

Electoral systems for local government

We are strongly in favour of multi member proportional representation as the basis for the electoral systems of all local councils. Accordingly, we oppose the changes mooted by the Minister for Local Government in his consultation paper for the 2019 bill to make single member wards the primary basis for local council electoral systems.

This major change in approach should be subjected to significantly more consultation and review in line with that previously undertaken for the 2018 Bill

We question the basis for this new provision. No evidence has been presented to indicate that this change reflects the views of residents, stakeholder organisations; or local government bodies especially those currently using a multi-councillor system.

This lack of community consultation and review contrasts markedly to the process that commenced in 2015 and culminated in the Local Government Bill of 2018. We are puzzled as to why support for the abolition of multi-councillor electoral systems was not identified during this time of consultation despite it being comprehensive, in depth and involving all affected interests:

- The discussion paper in 2015 attracted 324 submissions plus 10 community forums in regional and metropolitan areas; six technical working groups; and meetings with peak council and ratepayers associations.
- The Directions Paper released in June 2016 resulted in 333 submissions and 18 community forums in regional and metropolitan Victoria between July and September 2016.
- Consultation and review continued throughout 2017 with seven technical working groups and meetings with peak ratepayer groups, key stakeholders, council peak organisations and newly elected councillors.

This change to electoral systems will have significant impact on the current structure of local government in Victoria. It deserves to be considered thoroughly and not to be the result of ministerial discretion.

At present, we calculate that of the 31 metropolitan councils, there are 25 that are comprised of multi-councillor wards elected by proportional representation. Boroondara, the municipality that we live in is one of the few remaining councils which is elected from single councillor wards.

We dispute the claims by the Minister on the democratic and other benefits of single councillor wards.

This change to electoral systems will not make councils more democratic or ensure councillors are more accountable to their local community or ensure more direct representation. The claimed virtue of consistency is of such minor consequence as to be insignificant.

The single member, first past the post system disadvantages minority views by aligning representation to dominant opinion. This acts to stifle advancement of positive reforms, and creates inertia when dealing with contemporary challenges.

The justification that single member wards will "make councils more accountable" runs contrary to the idea of representative democracy. We believe multi-councillor wards with proportional representation provide diverse views in councils, with richer experiences and skills feeding those views. They facilitate advocacy for significant groups that would not otherwise be represented. Conversely, single councillor wards amplify the views of the most vocal groups or of those with the narrowest of majorities.

In Boroondara, census statistics show that one in three residents are overseas born, and three quarters of residents consider multiculturalism benefits our lives. Yet the elected council seems, by contrast, to be strongly monocultural. This diversity in demographic composition combined with a significant diversity in other forms of community interest is not reflected in the members sitting around the council table at Boroondara.

Boroondara has had single councillor wards since its inception in 1994. Prior to that, the constituent councils were based on a multi-councillor system. Over the intervening years, there has been a steady decline in the respect for democracy and its practice here, This is evidenced by the way Public Questions to Council meeting are structured to limit the number and nature of questions; the reluctance of councillors to engage with their electors in ward meetings and other forums; the obscurity, imprecision, attempts to mislead or unavailability of much of the documentation regarding council activities; the abolition of advisory committees to engage interested community members and so on.

We believe multi-councillor wards contributes to greater democracy and better decision making by Council

Our reasons for supporting multi-councillor electoral systems include the following:

- Multi-council wards promote diversity and representation from minority groups.
- Large multi-Councillor wards are more reflective of how communities engage across a number of communities of interest or activity hubs.
- Multi-councillor wards enhance the quality of ward representation. In a system of single councillor wards there is the ever-present prospect that particular ward interests may be left unrepresented in consultations and decision-making.
- Multi-councillor wards, by distributing work, can cover more issues and more deeply, so that the decisions that need to be made are otherwise informed and better able to balance many competing needs with available resources.

The concept of the councillor as a representative of his or her electors is a complex and uncertain. Within each area, there will always be people of many different backgrounds, interests, values and philosophies which suggests that a representative cannot easily align themselves with this diversity of factors. The need to declare a conflict of interest is appropriate when the councillor has allegiances or interests that that would benefit from a positive decision on a matter before Council. However, the consequence of this declaration will be that the Councillor will absent themselves from the room and not participate in the decision making process.

We see the Councillor having a role to ensure that all considerations are taken into account when Councils conduct consultations or make decisions that affects the electors in their ward. They are not there to advocate for one position over another but to ensure all reasonable voices are heard as part of any process to reach a decision. This is despite whether they agree or not to the divergent views held by people in that ward.

We encourage our councillors to continue to declare all conflicts of interest they may have. We are concerned, however, that this may leave large numbers of electors unrepresented when their Councillor leaves the room. The multi-councillor system would provide an effective counter to this problem by providing a number of representatives who are unlikely to have similar conflicts.

We are concerned that this proposal usurps the role of the Victorian Electoral Commission.

The Local Government of 1989 provides for regular reviews of the electoral representation systems of all local councils. The nominated reviewer in that Act is the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC). This provision has been dropped from the Local Government Bill of 2018 and the functions of VEC appear to be limited to administrative tasks related to the maintenance of the electoral roll and conduct of elections.

We believe that VEC plays a central role in ensuring local government conducts its activities in a democratic, transparent and accountable manner. VEC is the appropriate body to investigate what is the best system for a particular region and to tailor

responses that reflect the circumstances of that region. This should not be over-ridden by the Minister without proper review.

This use of ministerial discretion suggests a trend of further concentration of power, and the rights of community members to engage in local government affairs.

VEC's most recent review of Boroondara which it has just completed resulted in the recommendation that our council adopt a multi-councillor electoral system. About three-quarters of those persons who made response submissions to the review supported the VEC's final recommendations to the Minister for Local Government.

This recommendation reflected the strong level of support expressed in submissions to both parts of this review for a multi-councillor ward system. The major opponent to this recommendation was the Council itself which conducted an intense, prejudiced and dishonest campaign to retain the current system and thereby protect vested interests in our community especially around corporate activity and property development.

Section 8 Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

Division 1 Section 8 of the 2018 Bill sets out nine overarching principles that a Council '*... must in performance of its role give effect to ...*' The principle spelt out in 8 (2)(c) is that '*... the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted*'.

We welcome the inclusion of climate change as an important principle that all Councils must take into account in its decision making. We are concerned that, at present our Council sees climate change only through the lens of environmental sustainability as it applies to parks and gardens and matters such as waste management. This terminology does not necessarily capture the full extent of the challenge the local governments will be facing as a consequence of climate change.

Governance that is transparent, accountable, clear in purpose and optimal for efficiency and performance is an essential ingredient of government at all levels. It is particularly essential for local government where opportunities for maladministration, corruption, preferential treatment or favouritism are ever present but often difficult to detect. These opportunities exist when the local community discounts the importance of local governments, does not understand its processes or fails to engage actively in its operation.

The challenge implicit in implementing these principles is to ensure that they are applied with good will and determination. High quality governance in all areas of a council's responsibility and particularly with respect to climate change requires measuring and reporting achievement adequately.

These principles need to be backed up with specific and quantifiable measures that report on how well they are being applied. It is essential that Councils are accountable for implementing these principles and stand by their achievements and failures more

publicly. Consideration should be given to the identification and implementation of appropriate measures and how these can be used to inform the community's knowledge and oversight of their Council in a timely and meaningful way.

Penalties

Division 3 Section 74 Penalties. Subsection 1 proposes a maximum penalty of no more than 20 penalty units for a contravention of a local law, indexed annually according to the Consumer Price Index.

We strongly oppose this subsection particularly as it relates to penalties for the destruction of canopy trees on private land. As currently structured and as proposed, these penalties are inconsequential to a developer who too often is willing to pay such a small amount in light of the significant financial return that will arise from a block substantially denuded of vegetation and particularly of trees perceived to limit the design and footprint of a future building.

We submit that such penalties should be large enough to provide a realistic disincentive for the removal of canopy trees in the built urban environment, which now more than ever is essential for responding to the critical issue of climate change. We propose that this penalty should be \$100, 000, to be indexed to reflect increased prices.

Who monitors the effectiveness of local government?

The proposed Local Government Bill appears to lack any independent and effective accountability mechanisms. Reporting back to the local community and providing them with meaningful information that has been subjected to high quality analysis on how well their Council fulfils its responsibilities and maintains good governance is essential for promoting the democratic values of both accountability and transparency.

Positions such as the Municipal Monitor and the Audit Committee contain no provision or obligation to perform this task. The reports on the Know Your Council website are inadequate. The reports on this website rely heavily on a 'representative random probability survey' using telephone interviews. This would seem to suffer the limitation of encouraging highly subjective and unmoderated responses and consequently are a very shallow method of measuring the effectiveness of a Council. If all that you require from the Council is that they collect your rubbish regularly and without fuss, then you are likely to rate them highly.

There is a need for specific and quantifiable measures that report on how well the overarching governance principles are applied. We also see a similar need to make sure Councils are accountable for all their activities and that measuring and reporting mechanisms exist that are objective, meaningful and provide reports that easily accessible for all residents. Satisfaction surveys are totally inadequate and superficial.

As convenor for Lighter Footprints, I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these issues. I can be contacted by email on admin@lighterfootprints.org or by mobile on 0411 115 186.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor Lighter Footprints

July 2019

Submission by Lighter Footprints Inc.

in response to the Final Report by Interim Targets Independent Expert Panel on Interim Emissions Reduction Targets for Victoria (2021 – 2030)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to inform the Government's decision on targets and consideration of priority actions to reduce Victoria's emissions to inform development of pledges to 2025.

This opportunity arises from the receipt by the Government of the Final Report by the Independent Expert Panel, established by your Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Lily D'Ambrosio to provide advice on the first two sets of interim targets for 2021-25 and 2026-30.

This submission is by Lighter Footprints, a large and active group of concerned residents (now close to 2000) from Boroondara and Whitehorse municipalities. We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our submission with you. Lighter Footprints can be contacted by emailing the Convenor at admin@lighterfootprints.org or by phone at 0411 115 186.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor
Lighter Footprints Inc

Who is Lighter Footprints?

Lighter Footprints is a large community based climate action group located primarily in the Boroondara and Whitehorse council areas of Victoria. It draws its members from the suburbs of Box Hill, Kew, Hawthorn, Camberwell, Canterbury, Surrey Hill and some parts of Ashburton, Glen Iris and Burwood. It has over 2000 people belonging to or supporting the group and its aim is to influence Australians (including decision-makers) to take the action that is needed to meet the challenge of climate change as a matter of urgency,

We support more ambitious targets than those proposed by the Panel

We note that the panel has recommended that the Victorian Government:

- adopts interim emissions reduction targets of 32% to 39% below 2005 levels in 2025;
- adopts interim emissions reduction targets of 45% to 60% below 2005 levels in 2030;
- takes actions now that will increase the potential to reduce emissions more quickly later, given this will be important in pursuit of the Paris goal and for reaching net zero emissions by 2050;
- reviews its 2030 interim target in 2023, taking into account developments in climate science, technology, global action and further progress in reducing Victoria's emissions.

These targets and related measures are designed to ensure that Victoria shares the burden of meeting Australia's obligations under the Paris Agreement to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 consistent with the international commitment to limit global warming to well below 2°C.

We applaud the Panel's recognition that:

...Given the benefits, Victoria should not hesitate to accelerate its transition to a low-emissions future.

We also agree with the Panel's comment that:

...the transition will have real impacts on some individuals, families, communities and businesses. It will be important for the government to build on existing best practice to support impacted individuals and ensure a just transition.²

We regard targets as an effective policy mechanism to bring down greenhouse gas emissions

Lighter Footprints supports the concept of targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a central tool to drive the transition to net zero emissions and thereby address the challenge of climate change in a timely way.

In determining the levels for specific targets, we support:

- the use by the Panel of the Climate Change Authority (CCA) methodology in assessing national and state emissions reductions consistent with fair and equitable contributions to the global carbon budget.
- the application of the CCA methodology to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) global carbon budget for 1.5°C

² https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/420370/Final-Report_Interim-Emissions-Reduction-Targets.pdf pp 3

We also concur with the Panel's assessment that *...Victoria's emissions over the period 2017-2050 will need to remain well below the 2°C budget to be consistent with the Paris Agreement and avoid dangerous climate change*'.

However, while acknowledging the Panel's reasoning in arriving at targets intended to meet this imprecise objective, we advocate instead for the adoption of targets consistent with the 1.5°C budget. Bearing in mind that the IPCC budget for this case is calculated to provide only a 50% chance of limiting global average temperature to 1.5°C, we contend that it must represent a minimum level of ambition.

We believe the Panel's recommendations are insufficiently ambitious

Climate change is an existential risk to humankind that requires urgent, decisive, and consistent responses. Action taken immediately will contribute to reducing the cost and increasing the likelihood of success in the future.

We acknowledge the importance of installing and implementing policy that is effective and durable while building on and extending what is happening already. However, we believe the context for climate change policy is rapidly changing and that this momentum provides a sustainable basis for high targets.

This momentum is the product of a number of factors including the:

- the increasing desire of the majority of the community for action on climate change;
- the rapid changes in related technology and the changing economics accompanying these developments;
- the achievements of other Governments such as South Australia and California.

We recommend that the State Government adopt the most ambitious targets, based on good scientific advice and in response to the growing community demands for urgent action.

In recognition of the size of the task that confronts our world, ambitious targets are essential. Such ambition will facilitate a continuous and effective program of transition to net zero reductions by 2050 and ameliorate the difficulty of meeting this goal in later years.

We recommend that Victoria:

- adopt the highest possible interim targets for 2025 and 2030 as part of a continuous and effective program of transition to net zero reductions by 2050;
- aim for maximum reductions in these earlier years and not rely on increasing activity in later years.

[What specific targets should be adopted and why?](#)

The following reasoning is based on the emissions budgets the Panel derives for Victoria for the period 2017 to 2050:

- a 2°C-consistent budget of 1.85 Gt CO₂-e (1,850 Mt CO₂-e); and
- a 1.5°C-consistent budget of 1.25 Gt CO₂-e (1,250 Mt CO₂-e).

These budgets are for cumulative greenhouse gas emissions over the same period; both start with Victoria's annual emissions for 2017 and end with zero emissions not later than 2050. Figure 5.2 of the Panel's report compares the two budgets.

Assuming cumulative emissions for the years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 of about 416 Mt CO₂-e, the budgets remaining for the period 2021 to 2050 are:

- for 2°C 1,850 – 416 = 1,434 Mt CO₂-e; and
- for 1.5°C 1,250 – 416 = 834 Mt CO₂-e

Cumulative emissions for a 1.5°C-consistent budget are less than 60% of the emissions for a 2°C -consistent budget.

Figure 5.2 of the Panel's report represents the two budgets by straight line graphs. The 1.5°C budget is shown reaching zero emissions about 15 years before the 2°C budget. This is counter-intuitive. The emissions reductions required to limit warming to 1.5°C, being greater, are likely to take longer, not less time, to achieve. We reject the straight line graph as a useful approximation to a budget trajectory when the objective is to optimise emission reductions.

The alternative is to embody larger and less costly reductions ('low hanging fruit') early, while planning for the most efficient way of tackling more costly sectors as time goes on. This will be best represented by a parabolic curve with its steepest part at the beginning. A trajectory can be constructed in this way to subtend an area representative of the total cumulative emissions of the 1.5°C budget over the 2017-2050 period.

Our own trial and error approximations to such a trajectory for the Panel's 1.5°C-consistent budget result in emissions reductions in the order of 57% at 2025 and 75% at 2030. It is these indicative targets we present for consideration for the critical 1.5°C case.

We recommend that more ambitious interim targets than those recommended by the Panel be adopted:

We recommend indicative targets for emissions reductions below 2005 levels of 57 percent for 2025 and 75 percent for 2030.

- The targets adopted for Victoria should be consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C.
- The required trajectory should result in cumulative emissions over the years 2017 to 2050 not exceeding the Victorian budget of 1.25 Gt CO₂-e.

Support for other action by the Victorian Government

We strongly support the Panel's conclusion that:

- the economic benefits for Victoria of avoiding climate change far outweigh the economic costs of reducing emissions;
- the recommended target will create significant changes in the Victorian economy and have real impacts for some people and communities. This will require the Victorian Government to work with affected communities to provide a clear plan and to develop measures to support local economic transition.

Accordingly, we support with one reservation noted below, the additional recommendations by the Panel that the Victorian Government should take decisive action now to provide capacity to reduce emissions more quickly later. This includes:

- creating a stable set of policies for emissions reduction across the economy now and into the future, including transformation in the transport sector;
- supporting measures for emissions that are currently harder to reduce (e.g. in some parts of agriculture, industry and transport). This includes improving resource efficiency; growing the circular economy; and development of agricultural technologies, hydrogen and carbon capture and storage; and
- supporting the development of negative emissions technologies.

We have reservations regarding carbon capture and storage. Despite many years of research and attempts to establish the process, this technology has failed to deliver on the promise that some think it has. An enormous amount of money and time has been expended globally on a process that is both costly and energy intensive and which generates a range of serious air pollutants such as sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. All this has been in the cause of finding some way to forestall the demise of the coal mining sector. The resources that have been directed at finding this elusive solution should be directed to identifying and developing more promising technologies

Drawdown technologies including those identified above represent a promising approach to restoring the carbon balance in the earth's atmosphere. They will also play an important role in facilitating the transition in regional and rural areas by providing new employment opportunities and sources of income for those displaced or affected by the move away from coal mining. Such technologies can, however extend over a long timeframe before having a positive effect. It is essential that there be immediate action to put these approaches in place so that they can contribute over the long term.

The Role of Other Players

We note the Panel's observation that:

The solution to tackling climate change can only be global. Targets can help ensure that Victoria contributes its fair share to the action being taken by the international

*community to limit global warming and therefore avoid the worst impacts of climate change*³

No matter what is done at the State level, truly ambitious change can only come through greater efforts by all levels of government and particularly by the Commonwealth Government. All governments must work together within and outside Australia to contribute to an effective global solution. It should be recognised that:

- Australians currently make a substantially higher contribution to the carbon emissions than all but a few other countries around the world;
- the burden should be shared fairly and in accordance with the capacity of each jurisdiction;
- the Commonwealth has important powers, especially involving network infrastructure provisions and regulations which can make or break success.

We concur with the Panel's finding that Australia's current nationally determined target for 2030 of 26-28% below 2005 levels is incompatible with pursuit of 1.5°C. Figure 5.5 of the report shows that the 1.5°C trajectory has no budget remaining by 2030, even if emissions have been reduced by 45% to that point.

Unfortunately, the Commonwealth Government continues to equivocate in its duty to provide policy certainty and has failed to accept that its policies and targets will not allow it to meet its international obligations under the Paris Agreement.

There are however many actions that Victoria can take that do not rely on Commonwealth action. These include initiatives to encourage greater use of public transport, a switch to electric vehicles, drawdown measures such as soil sequestration and prevention of land clearing.

Local Government also has a significant role in reducing emissions and facilitating drawdown initiatives through measures such as land use planning. Responsiveness to community concern on climate change can be enhanced by attention to the level of democracy that applies in decision making at the local council.

We recommend that:

- The Victorian State Government work in cooperation with other State Governments on specific projects and with the Commonwealth Government through COAG to implement high quality and durable climate change policy.

³ https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.vic-engage.files/4115/5859/1753/Final_Report_Interim_Emissions_Reduction_Targets.pdf

Local Government

May 2019

Cr Jane Addis
Mayor
City of Boroondara

City of Boroondara. Proposed Budget 2019-20

Lighter Footprints welcomes the opportunity to comment on the City of Boroondara's Proposed Budget for 2019-20 which gives insights into the priorities and operations of our Council. We see the invitation as a significant contribution to democracy in local government.

Lighter Footprints values the contribution of local government

Lighter Footprints is a group of concerned residents (now around 2000) from the Boroondara municipality who came together in 2006 to see what we could do about the challenge of climate change. Our members and supporters recognise that climate change has been scientifically demonstrated; that it has become a threat to the future of our world; and that it requires immediate and effective action by all levels of government.

We recognise that local government is a significant player in meeting this challenge. Local councils have a range of levers that they can use to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. As first responders and custodian to much community infrastructure and natural assets, their budgets will be severely impacted by the damage caused by climate change.

We note that Boroondara already undertakes a range of activities to meet its commitments and obligations with respect to the environment and climate change. However, it is impossible to identify these activities and how effective they have been in the current format of the Proposed Budget.

We are also disappointed that the Council has not responded in ways that reflect the urgency of this challenge. The substantial consultation exercise that Boroondara undertook in 2016-17 to develop the 10 year Boroondara Community Plan generated much interest amongst the local community with more than 11, 800 residents contributing to the result. During that exercise, many residents used the various forums to express their concern over climate change and their desire for the Council to take more action to address this threat.

The commitments and obligations that are listed in the Community Plan and various other Council strategy documents need to be treated as integral to all decision making and to give rise to substantial and timely initiatives. The Budget must reflect the priority that the community puts on the environment and their concern that climate change is a significant risk that will affect the health and future of all people especially their children and grandchildren.

The Council must respond to this call for action in ways that go beyond gestures of goodwill. Unless we act more vigorously now, the future cost of measures to mitigate and adapt to this threat will be overwhelming.

Recommendation:

- That greater detail be made available in Budget Papers and other reports of the measures that the Council is already taking or plans to take to meet the Strategic Objectives and Strategies that it identified in the Boroondara Community Plan 2017-2027 especially in response to the theme of The Environment.
- That measures be put in place to ensure that considerations around climate change and the environment are taken into account in all Council decision making.
- That the Council set aside funds to revisit the 10 year Community Plan in the near future to reflect the growing demands amongst Boroondara residents for increased action on climate change.

Local Government as a partner with other organisations in responding to climate change

The Proposed Budget includes a number of expenditure items to cover advocacy for various causes. For example, the Communications Service Category, under the theme Civic Leadership and Governance lists proposed net expenditure of \$3.6 million. We consider that some of these funds should be directed to supporting the work of the Australian Local Government Association and the Municipal Association of Victoria to bolster their advocacy around climate change.

Recommendation:

- That the Council use funds identified for advocacy activities to support the work of the ALGA and the MAV to get more action by both State and Federal Governments on climate change.

Capital Works program

We note that the Capital Works Program in the Proposed Budget contains several large items of expenditure that are currently being implemented or in the planning stage.

These include the following projects:

- Kew Recreation Centre redevelopment (\$61.2 million over four years, completed in 2021-22).

- Canterbury Community Precinct (\$11.7 million over three years, completed in 2020-21).
- Camberwell Community Centre (\$8.1 million over two years, completed in 2020-21).
- Ashburton Seniors Centre (\$7.7 million over two years, completed in 2019-20).
- Balwyn Community Centre (\$8.7 million over two years, completed in 2019-20)

As we pointed out in our submission to the Proposed Budget 2018-19, Lighter Footprints is interested in the opportunities that such projects can offer through their design, construction and operation for adapting to or mitigating the effects of climate change. These include measures to reduce emissions, increase energy efficiency, manage water usage and provide a demonstration of the commitment that our municipality has to addressing the impact of climate change and contributing to solutions.

We again refer you to the 2017 report by Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE) entitled *Rethinking Cement*⁴ which sets out the issues around cement production and the degree to which it contributes to increased carbon emissions and other negative environmental effects. For more information on the use of natural refrigerants which can be used instead of the environmentally destructive but commonly used fluorocarbon refrigerant, we suggest you consult the case study report by The Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air Conditioning and Heating.⁵

Recommendations

- The Council aim to achieve a 6 star Green Star Rating (World Standard) for all of its new or refurbished buildings in compliance with the City's Sustainable Council Building Policy.
- As part of the design and construction of new and refurbished buildings, the Council investigate the use of environmentally sensitive and sustainable construction materials, such as zero emissions cement; and the use of natural refrigerants in the heating and cooling of the building.
- The Council set funds aside to investigate new measures to reduce the carbon emissions, increase the energy efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of all building stock and other infrastructure in the municipality whether public or private.
- The Council examine how it can use the planning system to encourage land use and building design to reduce carbon emissions.

Initiatives to reduce carbon emissions

We are aware that Boroondara has an active campaign to reduce carbon emissions in its buildings and other infrastructure such as street lighting. It also provides funding to maintain our our public parks and gardens and seeks to discourage the loss of trees on private land through its Tree Protection Law. It also conducts activities to educate residents on matters relevant to sustainability. We welcome the new Food Organics

⁴ <http://bze.org.au/rethinking-cement-plan/>

⁵ <http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/38b4f6fc-9232-49d0-9550-68558bd26978/files/refrigerants-guide.pdf>

Green Waste Organic service and see it as a good approach to addressing the waste problem.

We are concerned, however, that these initiatives still see climate change within the paradigm of sustainability. It is becoming increasingly apparent that this is no longer an adequate way to address this massive challenge and that all layers of government need to see it is an emergency which requires urgent action.

We see that these initiatives are often limited in their impact by the level of resources devoted to them. For example, anecdotal evidence suggests that the Tree Protection Local Law has limited success in protecting trees on private land because there are too few officers involved in the implementation of this measure and prosecuting breaches.

Transport and the related infrastructure contribute significantly to the generation of carbon emissions and we would ask the Council to include in its Budget measures that reduce these emissions. This would include:

- measures to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles such as the provision of publicly available charging stations, preferential treatment of electric vehicles in car parks, and updating the Council fleet of cars and other vehicles with electric models;
- measures to encourage greater use of public transport such as the provision of shading at tram stops;
- enhancement of tree care and renewal programs to increase the level of shading in public places and over roads and pavements to increase cooling and reduce the heat island effect of bitumen and other heat reflecting surfaces and where buildings cover much of the plot of land.

Proposed Review and Update of the Council's Climate Change Risk Assessment

We regard with interest the initiative listed in the Proposed Budget to spend \$50, 000 in 2019-20 on for a review and update of the Council's Climate Change Risk Assessment (Attachment C of the Proposed Budget papers)⁶. We presume that this proposal derives from recommendations by the Audit Committee in its report of 28 November 2018⁷.

We think the review and update should be opened to public consultation before the Risk Management Assessment Plan is presented to the Audit Committee in May 2020. This will provide an opportunity for the community to express its views on the risks surrounding climate change and how these should be reflected in actions the Council takes to fulfil the objectives and strategies listed in Boroondara's Community Plan under the theme of The Environment.

Recommendation

⁶ <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-04/proposed-budget-2019-2020.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/7.1-Recommendations-of-the-Audit-Committee-Meeting-held-on-28-November-2018.pdf>

- That further information be made available within the context of approving the Budget about the proposed review and update of the Council's Climate Change Risk Assessment.
- That this proposed review and update be opened up to public consultation and that Council officers with expertise in climate change matters be available to assist in advising the community on the factors affecting this assessment and its application.

We thank you for facilitating community consultation on the Budget and would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these matters with Councillors and Council officers.

Carolyn Ingvarson
Convenor
Lighter Footprints Inc