

Lighter Footprints

Submission on the City of Boroondara Draft Climate Action Plan

July 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the City of Boroondara's draft Climate Action Plan ("CAP"). This response is made by Lighter Footprints, a volunteer community organisation with a supporter base of over 2,600 people, most of whom reside in Boroondara.

We want to start by congratulating Council for the stand taken in the CAP, in particular the establishment of strong community emission reduction targets. Those targets represent a major step forward for all of us who live in Boroondara and achieving them will see our city make a significant and worthwhile contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions needed to address the climate crisis we face.

Because we see the achievement of the community targets as being of such critical importance, the remainder of our response deals with that subject.

1) Targets

Council has set three aspirational targets for Boroondara – a reduction in community emissions of 30% from 2020 levels by 2030, to be net carbon neutral by 2035 and then a 100% reduction in emissions by 2040. Our comments concerning these targets are –

- The task of moving from a 30% reduction by 2030 to net carbon neutrality in 2035 is substantial. While we welcome net carbon neutrality by 2035 we are concerned that too much of the heavy lifting is left to the five years from 2030 to 2035 and suggest that the 2030 target should be strengthened.
- We recommend that Boroondara establishes a system for accurately measuring emissions and CAP outcomes. The Snapshot tool, developed by Ironbark Sustainability, and used in the CAP to identify the sources and quantum of community emissions has significant limitations. It uses aggregated emissions results, often only available at a state level, and then allocates them down to Council level using a variety of metrics. As a consequence the results shown for a Council are blended outcomes not reflective of specific activity in a reported area.
- We acknowledge that when a Council establishes targets for community emission reductions they are of necessity aspirational as Council lacks the power, in many areas, to mandate community behaviour. However, we think that by labelling the target as aspirational Council risks sending the message that it is less than committed to achieving it. We suggest that the word aspirational be removed from the CAP but that the explanation of Council's limitations be retained.

2) Resources

Council has taken on a substantial challenge in setting ambitious but essential targets for community emission reductions. However, at present the resources allocated to the CAP in both the current year budget and forward estimates are not supportive of the targets, with far

more expenditure being required to enable Council and the community to achieve the carbon reductions necessary.

As with any organisation embarking on a new and significant long term business venture it will be necessary for Council to progressively scale up its community carbon reduction activities in a considered but substantial way.

To continue the business analogy, in this case it is essential that Council gets “to market” with haste. The climate can’t wait and urgency is critical. We understand that Council is seriously considering adding an extra \$1m to the 2021/22 funds devoted to the CAP at its budget review in September. While welcome, more is required.

We believe Council has capacity within 2021/22 to devote more resources but if that does not occur it is essential that additional and significant funding is added in subsequent years. Without a step increase in resources it is our view that the CAP’s targets will not be met.

3) Actions

The CAP offers a high-level picture of the types of actions required to meet the targets set and is not sufficiently detailed to stand alone. The approach described in the CAP of setting 2-year Implementation Plans and then reporting and reviewing performance annually provides the structure needed to enable Council to achieve their targets and is therefore strongly endorsed.

Currently the first Implementation Plan is in development and we encourage Council to –

- In year 1 Include high profile “off the shelf” actions that have been implemented successfully elsewhere such as bulk buys, energy audits and community education programs. This will allow the plan to start with energy and enthusiasm at relatively low cost.
- Increase the staff available within Council to support this long term program
- Closely examine the [list of suggested actions](#) that was provided by the Kooyong Climate Change Alliance delegation as it offers a comprehensive survey of pathways to zero community emissions
- Establish a community consultative group to assist Council in ensuring community engagement in all aspects of this change program

We also encourage Council to declare a climate emergency as an essential act of leadership that will signal to the community the urgency and importance of responding to the climate crisis we face.

Summary

We again want to congratulate Council on what we see as a major step forward for our city. We look forward to working with the City of Boroondara as this urgent and essential work is progressed.

Yours sincerely,

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