15th July 2016

Tasmanian Climate Change Office
GPO Box 123
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Sir/Madam

REVIEW OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE (STATE ACTION) ACT 2008

At its July 11th 2016 meeting Council resolved to make a submission regarding the review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008.

Councillors were mindful of the importance of the Act in directing the State Government's response to the critical issues of climate change mitigation and adaptation for the next 4 years. Kingborough Council has made an unequivocal commitment to action on climate change so there was no doubt in the chamber that having input into the review of the Act was essential.

The submission that Council wishes to make is based on 7 key issues.

1. The need for a commitment for Tasmania to achieve zero net emissions by 2050;
2. The need for a commitment to making Tasmania's electric supply 100% renewable;
3. The need to set emissions reduction targets that reflect Tasmania's responsibilities and potential;
4. The need to reinstate the Tasmanian Climate Action Council or equivalent;
5. The need for a commitment to implementing policies to enshrine climate change governance throughout all levels and activities of government in Tasmania;
6. The need for a commitment to a Climate Change Action Plan process; and
7. The need for a commitment to a system that enforces climate change risk management and adaptation planning across all government agencies.

In the report presented to Council the commentary on these key issues was as follows:

1. The need for a commitment for Tasmania to achieve zero net emissions by 2050
Discussion:

Tasmania is very well placed to make and fulfil such a pledge. This has occurred recently in Victoria through the State Government’s “Victoria’s climate change pledge – Take-2”.

2. The need for a commitment to making Tasmania’s electric supply 100% renewable

Discussion:

Tasmania needs to reduce any degree of reliance of externally sourced power and reinforce its environmental and future economic advantage in the renewable energy sector.

3. The need to set emissions reduction targets that:
   - accord with the climate targets enshrined in the 2016 Paris agreement;
   - are based on actual emissions reduction actions eg. rather than a sleight of hand via changes to forestry management;
   - are backed up by sectoral targets and emissions auditing methodologies;
   - are backed by a system that facilitates the obtaining of operational, sectoral and local government pledges;
   - emphasises and commits to action on the quantification and reduction of community energy usage.

Discussion:

In the review specifications document it is identified that: “The Act establishes a target to reduce Tasmania’s emissions to at least 60 percent below 1990 levels by 31 December 2050. In 2012-13, Tasmania’s total greenhouse gas emissions were 1.7 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, representing a decrease in emissions of 90 percent since 1990 and means that Tasmania has met its legislated target. The majority of the reduction can be attributed to changes in reporting rules and forestry management practices.”

It is important that new targets be set that reflect the latest commitments world-wide and that emphasise the capabilities of Tasmania to pull its weight as well as demonstrate its green credentials and marketing advantage.

4. The need to reinstate the Tasmanian Climate Action Council or equivalent

Discussion:

This body was scrapped and the Act amended to remove reference to it in June 2014 under the guise of the Liberal government “delivering on its commitment to cut the number of boards and committees”. Part of the statutory mandate of the Tasmanian Climate Action Council in the Act was that it was “to provide the Minister with independent advice on climate change issues as they affect Tasmania”.

In South Australia the Premier’s Climate Change Council currently undertakes this function.

For a state such as Tasmania where climate science and adaptation planning research, data and expertise is readily available it is hard to understand why the Minister would not have a mechanism to avail himself of independent advice on issues critical to the state’s future.
5. The need for a commitment to implementing policies to enshrine climate change governance throughout all levels and activities of government in Tasmania

Discussion:

Kingborough is well placed to make this suggestion. As a council it acknowledged the critical importance of climate governance and responded through it’s Climate Change Adaptation Policy as well as the number of key risk management projects it has undertaken such as at Kingston Beach.

6. The need for a commitment to a Climate Change Action Plan process that:

- Occurs every 5 years with action progress reported annually;
- Is underpinned by a framework contained within the Act.

Discussion:

It is essential that structured action on climate change has a legitimate head of power as well as continuity not eroded by electoral cycles and potential changes of government.

7. The need for a commitment to a system that enforces climate change risk management and adaptation planning across all government agencies

Discussion:

The complexities and confusion over coastal protection works and development approvals being experienced by local government is a demonstration of the critical need for urgent and ongoing action in this regard.

If further information would be of assistance please contact the undersigned on (03) 6211 8297 or at jdoole@kingborough.tas.gov.au

Yours faithfully

JON DOOLE
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