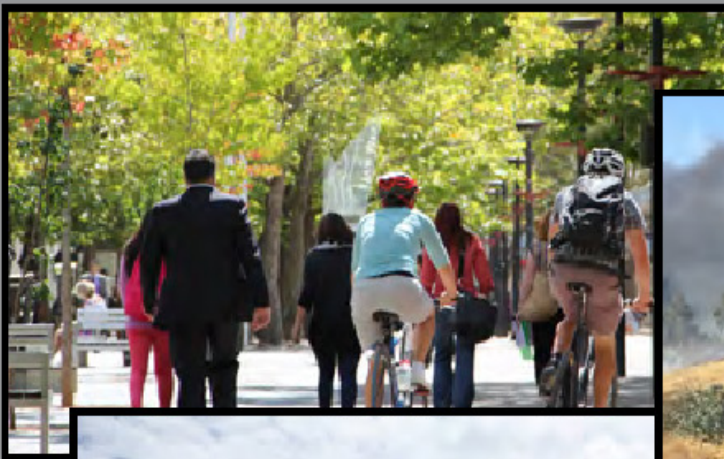




ACT Climate Change Council Annual Report 2013-14



Providing climate change advice to the Minister for the Environment



Letter of Transmittal

Mr Simon Corbell MLA
Minister for the Environment
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

It is my pleasure to present to you the Annual Report of the ACT Climate Change Council for the year ended 30 June 2014.

The Climate Change Council was established under Section 16 of the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* (the Act) to advise the Minister on matters relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and addressing and adapting to climate change. The Climate Change Council was formally established on 20 October 2011.

This Report has been prepared pursuant to section 19 of the Act, and outlines the Council's activities during 2013-14, the advice given and recommendations made to you as Minister. Subsection 19(3) of the Act provides that, within 21 days after receiving this report, it must be presented to the Legislative Assembly.

In presenting this Annual Report, I thank my colleagues in the Council for their continued professionalism and dedication in advancing the interests of the ACT by providing credible advice on climate change matters and engaging with the community and business sector throughout the year.

Yours sincerely



Professor Barbara Norman
Chair
ACT Climate Change Council

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Mission

The Climate Change Council (the Council) is an advisory body for the Minister for the Environment. Their main function is to provide advice on matters relating to climate change, particularly mitigation actions (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation measures for the ACT. The Council also plays a crucial role in engaging with business and the community to raise awareness of climate change risks, influence community views and attitudes, and encourage everyone to take action so the ACT can become more resilient to changes in the global climate.

Overview of 2013-2014

During the 2013-14 financial year the Council held four formal meetings: 20 August 2013, 20 November 2013, 17 February 2014 and 21 May 2014. The agreed focus for the Council was on 'mainstreaming climate change'.

The meeting format usually includes presentations on issues from the ACT Government Directorates, Council deliberation and providing verbal advice to the Minister for the Environment (when he can attend).

From 1 January 2014 two new members joined the Council, including an ACT expert in renewable energy Toby Roxburgh, and a representative of the public sector Dorte Ekelund, Director-General of the Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD). Dorte Ekelund stood in for David Papps following his resignation from the Council in January 2013.

The Council members undertook a number of engagement activities outside of meetings to increase their presence both in person and on-line. Examples of this were presentations to ACT Community Councils and use of social media with links on the Council web page www.environment.act.gov.au/cc/climate_change_council.

Following the release of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports in March 2014, it was arranged for members of the Council to meet the ACT Government Strategic Board, the Directors-General of all Directorates, to provide an update on ACT climate change issues. This occurred in July 2014.

During 2013-14 the Council generated a work program towards 2015 that focused on mainstreaming climate change in priority sectors. This resulted in detailed consideration of issues surrounding water in the February meeting and transport in the May meeting. Consideration of energy and built environment issues are to follow in the 2014/15 financial year.

Guided by the EPD's community survey in September 2013 on attitudes to climate change, the Council prioritised community engagement and set time and funding aside in support of education and engagement on climate change matters.

Introduction

The ACT Climate Change Council (the Council) was established under Section 16 of the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* (the Act), which was enacted on 5 November 2010. The Minister announced the inaugural membership of the Council on 20 September 2011.

The Council was in operation for the full 2013-14 financial year for which this annual report applies, and consisted of five to seven members, with two new appointments in January 2014. The Council included experts in the energy sector, transport planning, social equity, built environment, environmental management, and climate science, as well as representatives for business and community interests.

The activities undertaken by the Council over the reporting period are consistent with directions set out under the Act. They worked to identify and address barriers to achieving a dynamic and low carbon economy and society, while coordinating discussions and providing advice to Government on the path forward to achieve emissions reduction targets.

ACT residents are welcome to raise an issue with the Council, invite Council members to attend a local event or alert them to recent climate change news or research. The Council can be contacted by email, ClimateChangeCouncilSecretariat@act.gov.au, or alternatively by connecting with the Council on Twitter and Facebook via links on the EPD website.

Statutory obligations

The Council is established under *the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* (the Act). The Act sets out the functions of the Council and outlines how they are to be exercised:

S17 Functions of the Council

- (1) The main function of the Council is to advise the Minister on matters relating to
 - (a) reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 - (b) addressing, and adapting to, climate change.

Subsection 18(4) provides that in exercising its functions the Council must try to consult with representatives from business and the community, including environmental and conservation entities, on matters relating to climate change. The Council must also make efforts to provide information to private entities to encourage action to address, or adapt to, climate change.

Section 19 of the Act requires that the Council provide an annual report about the Council's activities during the financial year, including any advice or recommendations made to the Minister. The Council must give the report to the Minister within three months after the end of the financial year.

Administration

Remuneration

Remuneration for the Council is set by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal and reviewed annually. The Tribunal determined per diem remuneration of \$475 for the Chair and \$400 for the other members, effective from 1 November 2013. The attendance of members at Council meetings and official events conducted during the reporting period is provided in Appendix A. A summary of Council expenditures is at Appendix B.

Gender report

The gender balance of the Council is taken into consideration when members are appointed. In July 2013, the Council consisted of three female members and two male members, then in January 2014, with the appointment of Dorte Ekelund and Toby Roxburgh, the Council expanded to a total of seven with four female and three male Councillors.

Freedom of information

No freedom of information applications concerning Council business were received during the reporting period.

Accountability and secretariat

The Climate Change section within the EPD provides the secretariat for the Council. Staff from this team attends meetings to provide support and record discussion points. The records of Council meetings are publicly available at www.environment.act.gov.au/cc/climate_change_council.



Photo of Council at meeting of 17 February 2014

Left to right: Maria Efkarpidis, Toby Roxburgh, Lynne Harwood, Barbara Norman, Minister Simon Corbell, Dorte Ekelund, Will Steffen and Frank Jotzo.

Membership

In line with the Act, the Council must consist of at least five, but not more than nine, members appointed by the Minister. The Minister must, to greatest extent practical, ensure that the council includes people with a broad range of skills and knowledge relating to addressing or adapting to climate change.

On 20 October 2011 the Minister announced the Council appointments, for a term of three years, with members including: Professor Barbara Norman, Ms Lynne Harwood, Ms Maria Efkarpidis, Dr Frank Jotzo, and Professor Will Steffen. In alignment with section 21 of the Act, the Minister appointed Professor Barbara Norman to be the Chair of the Council, and at the first Council meeting Ms Lynne Harwood was elected unanimously as Deputy Chair.

Continuing Council members for 2013-14



Professor Barbara Norman (ACT Climate Change Council Chair) is the Foundation Chair of Urban and Regional Planning in the Faculty of Business, Government and Law, University of Canberra. Barbara is Director of Canberra Urban and Regional Futures and an Adjunct Professor with the Australian National University (ANU). She is Deputy Chair of Regional Development Australia (ACT), a Life Fellow and past National President of the Planning Institute of Australia and a Life Honorary Fellow of the Royal Town Planning Institute (UK).

Barbara advises public and private sectors in Australia and has strong international linkages within Asia, Europe and the United States. She was a contributing author to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) Working Group 2 (WGII) "Impacts", 2014, and was awarded an Australian Centenary Medal for her contribution to the community through urban and regional planning.



Lynne Harwood (ACT Climate Change Council Deputy Chair) is Chief Executive Officer of Communities@Work, one of the largest community service organisations in the ACT. With extensive experience in the not-for-profit sector, Lynne was previously CEO of Galilee Inc, an organisation supporting disadvantaged children and youth, and CEO of Home Help Services ACT Inc, which provided in-home support to 3,500 elderly and disabled clients.

Lynne has a Bachelor of Commerce Degree and is a Certified Practising Accountant. In her early career, she worked as a taxation and business services accountant for several accounting firms - in three different states - over a fourteen year period.

Lynne has strong skills in strategic leadership, organisational capability and business acumen. In particular, she understands the importance of striking a balance between business fundamentals and empathy in ensuring the success of not-for-profit endeavours.



Dr Frank Jotzo is an Associate Professor at ANU, Director of the Centre for Climate Economics and Policy at Crawford School of Public Policy and an ANU Public Policy Fellow. Frank has research expertise in the economics and policy of climate change (including mechanisms and policy design for greenhouse gas control), policy frameworks for adaptation to climate change and international climate policy, as well as energy policy and land-use change policy.

Frank has published a widely, has advised governments and consulted for international organisations. He was an advisor to the Garnaut Climate Change Review, advisor to Indonesia's Ministry of Finance, consultant to international organisations and was a Lead Author of Chapter 3 and the Technical Summary of the AR5 by the IPCC. He is a frequent contributor to the public and policy debate on climate change in Australia and internationally.



Maria Efkarpidis is Marketing Director of Rock Development Group, a business that specialises in building sustainable developments in Canberra. The Belconnen Fresh Food Markets redevelopment project managed by Rock Development Group will be one of the first projects to pilot the Green Building Council of Australia's (GBCA) Green Star Communities tool.

The Rock Development Group has installed Canberra's first electric car charging station and plans to develop a \$130 million green precinct. By 2015 it hopes to have built a further six office and retail buildings that utilise geothermal heating and cooling and installed rainwater tanks and energy-saving technologies, while also providing community rooftop gardens. Maria was the Business Ambassador for the 2011 Earth Hour.



Professor Will Steffen is a Councillor on the publicly-funded Climate Council of Australia that delivers independent expert information about climate change and is a global change researcher at the ANU, Canberra. He is the sustainability theme leader of Canberra Urban and Regional Futures (CURF). Previously Will served as the Science Adviser to the Australian Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

Professor Steffen has served as Executive Director of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, an international network of scientists studying global environmental change based in Stockholm, Sweden and is currently a guest researcher at the Stockholm Resilience Centre. His research interests span a broad range within the fields of climate and Earth System science, with an emphasis on incorporation of human processes in Earth System modelling and analysis; and on sustainability and climate change, with an emphasis on urban areas. Professor Steffen was a contributing author to the IPCC AR4 WGI report.

New appointees, 1 January 2014

Two additional members, Toby Roxburgh and Dorte Ekelund, were appointed to the Council in 2013-14, commencing 1 January 2014, for a period of three years. Toby Roxburgh was appointed to the Council as the sustainable energy planning representative and Ms Dorte Ekelund as a representative of the public sector.



Toby Roxburgh is the chair of the Canberra branch of the Australian Institute of Energy and the District energy sector leader for Australia and New Zealand at AECOM. Toby is a Principal Electrical Engineer with over 11 years of experience in sustainable energy projects. He has worked across the energy delivery spectrum: from education and energy policy through to cost benefit analysis, feasibility, design, construction, commissioning and operation.

Toby brings passion and experience from his work in the energy sector across fields including: education, policy, planning, sustainable design, energy efficiency, district energy, renewables and peak demand reduction. He has worked with university students in gathering data through community consultation to develop thermal maps in GIS, providing spatial analysis of district energy demands for the ACT government. He has also been involved in light rail and demand management projects for ActewAGL, district energy delivery for the City of Sydney, remote solar PV systems for Indigenous communities through Indigenous Affairs, and energy master planning and delivery for the ANU to reduce carbon emission by 35% from 2006 levels by 2020.



Dorte Ekelund is Director-General, Environment and Planning Directorate, ACT Government. Dorte is experienced in urban development coordination, infrastructure planning, statutory planning, planning system reform and governance reform. She has a strong interest in climate change adaptation and mitigation, water quality planning, environmental management, living and housing affordability, and the integration of transport and other infrastructure investment with strategic land use planning.

In her current role, Dorte is responsible for overseeing the development of policies and programs that: promote sustainable living and resource use, strengthen the Territory's response to climate change and provide an integrated planning and land use system that contributes to the sustainable development and future of the ACT. Prior to taking on the role of Director-General, she held the position of Executive Director of the Major Cities Unit at the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport. She has also previously held the role of the Deputy Director General of the Western Australian Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

Performance

Council Meetings

The Council meets at least four times a year to discuss climate change matters relevant to the ACT. The first meeting for 2013/14 financial year occurred in August 2013 and this was meeting 8 since the Council's inception in 2010/11. Over this reporting period, the Council continued consulting with representatives from business and the community on climate change matters and key stakeholders were invited to attend Council meetings.

Meeting 8, 20 August 2013: Update on AP2

The Council discussed a range of topics in relation to the second ACT climate change strategy and action plan, AP2, including:

- the Solar auction feed-in tariff
- the review of the Water Sensitive Urban Design Code
- a study into enhancing disaster resilience in the built environment.

The Council agreed that their future work program will be focused on 'mainstreaming' climate change, in order to routinely consider and address climate change.

Engagement with stakeholders

The Chair invited representatives from the Australian Youth Climate Coalition ACT and ANU Green to attend the Council's meeting to discuss climate change issues. The Council hosted Kate Wilson-Woolley, Moira Cully and Tom Swann.

Issues raised in discussion

The invited speakers expressed the following views:

- the 'fossil free youth movement' is expanding across Australia, with a focus on removing fossil fuel assets from the investment portfolios of both governments and citizens
- the desire of young people for Australia's energy to be from 100% renewable sources and concern that funding is not visible to achieve the ACT's renewable energy targets
- the cessation of mining coal and extracting coal seam gas
- the presentation to the whole ACT community of real-time energy use such as the roadside billboards (such as those used during the Millennium Drought to show daily water consumption).

Meeting 9, 20 November 2013: Work planning

The Council welcomed a newly appointed member to the Council, the Director-General of the Environment and Planning Directorate, Ms Dorte Ekelund, to represent the public sector.

The Council received a presentation from the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment regarding the implementation status of the ACT's second climate change strategy and action plan, AP2.

Members provided comment in response to a presentation regarding the ACT's approach to waste management through material recovery and the consideration of options such as composting for future management.

A themed work program was outlined for 2014 including: water, transport, the built environment, and the Territory Plan. Consideration of adaptation to climate change and energy efficiency across government was raised as an area that needed to be expanded further.

Engagement with stakeholders

The Chair invited the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Robert Neil with representatives from his Office to speak about their review of AP2. EPD staff, including Ben Ponton, Deputy-Director General and Alan Traves, Executive Director, Policy attended to hear this discussion.

Issues raised in discussion

The Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment is required under AP2 Action 18 to provide the Implementation Status Report in 2014. The Commissioner discussed the approach to this first review and the Council suggested that case studies could be a useful way of demonstrating effectiveness of some AP2 actions.

Meeting 10, 17 February 2014: Water

The Council welcomed a newly appointed member, Toby Roxburgh, to represent the Energy sector. The Council provided advice on the direction for the ACT's future Water Strategy. The Council's views were sought in relation to how climate change will affect water availability and quality in the ACT and how this should be reflected in a new strategy. Members provided strategic advice on a number of important issues such as potential impacts on water supply. Minister Corbell attended the end of the meeting.

Engagement with stakeholders

The Chair invited representatives from the Australian National University and staff from relevant sections within EPD. The Council hosted Thomas Sloan and Jemma Williams, ANU Honours Graduates who each spoke about their research.

EPD Water Policy and Sustainability Programs staff provided a presentation on the proposed water strategy and the current outreach programs.

EPD staff also in attendance included Alan Traves, Executive Director, Policy, and representatives from Energy Policy, Climate Change Policy, Nature Conservation Policy, Natural Environment Programs.

Issues raised in discussion

Council comments on the topics presented noted:

- the roles and challenges facing to reduce power use (emissions reductions) in water systems
- water supply and the direction of the ACT's future Water Strategy
- the Australian Government's greenhouse gas reduction policies and ways to implement its clean energy package and progress of renewable energy installations
- ACTSmart Energy and Water Programs, including Outreach – sustainability in public housing.



Enlarged Cotter Dam spillway in overflow, 2014

Meeting 11, 21 May 2014: Transport

The Council meeting included presentations on developments in transport policy in the ACT, including: Capital Metro Stage 1 and the Light Rail Master Plan, the Low Emission Vehicles Strategy and the ACT Freight Strategy. The Council agreed future meetings will cover themes including:

- Energy (August 2014)
- The Built Environment (November 2014)
- Changes to the Territory Plan (February 2015).

Engagement with stakeholders

The chair invited representatives from the ACT Government, including the Director-General of the Capital Metro Agency and a senior manager from Strategic Policy and Projects, Strategic Planning. The Council guest speakers were Emma Thomas, Director-General, Capital Metro Agency and Kristin Blume, Senior Manager, Strategic Policy and Projects.

Issues raised in discussion

Council discussion focused on:

- the progress of Capital Metro's Light rail project
- policy developments, including the low emission vehicle strategy, the ACT freight strategy, the light rail master plan, and active travel
- challenges and opportunities faced (such as behaviour change)
- links to other projects across Government, such as the healthy weight initiative and the importance of shifting more people to the active travel modes of cycling and walking
- the District Energy Concept.

The Council meeting coincided with delivery of the Ministerial Statement, fulfilling AP2 action 16 and outlining the need for more action on climate change adaptation. The Ministerial Statement is available on the EPD website. The Minister announced the commencement of a new work by EPD and launched the brochure *Adapting to a changing climate: Directions for the ACT*. The Council Chair, Professor Barbara Norman, spoke in response to the Minister's statement. A transcript of her response is available in Appendix C.

Following the speeches, Council members Dorte Ekelund, Barbara Norman, Will Steffen, and Toby Roxburgh participated in a Q&A panel with the Environment Minister, responding to questions from members of the community on climate change adaptation and what it means for the ACT.



Council at Ministerial Statement event on 21 May 2014

Left to Right: Dorte Ekelund, Minister Simon Corbell, Barbara Norman, Will Steffen, Toby Roxburgh.

Stakeholder engagement

The Council conducted out of session community engagement activities, including face-to-face meetings to provide advice on policies and programs, presentations to Community Councils and other community organisations, radio interviews, and individual participation in climate change themed public forums. Details of engagement activities are outlined below.

ACT Public Service Strategic Board

The Council prepared an overview to the ACT Government Strategic Board on the IPCC Working Group 2 “Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability” and Working Group 3 “Mitigation of Climate Change” reports and made connections to local climate change issues and consequences for the ACT. This occurred in July 2014.

Emergency Services Authority

Council members met with the Commissioner for Emergency Services to discuss the review of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan and incorporate climate change considerations.

Environment and Planning Directorate, ACT Government

Members of the Council engaged in discussion with the ACT Government officials to provide advice on the Government’s strategy to achieve a 90% renewable energy target as well as energy efficiency programs such as the Energy Efficiency Implementation Scheme (EEIS).

ACT Community Councils

Council members presented to and engaged with ACT Community Councils on climate change matters, including:

- the Inner South Canberra Community Council's public forum
- the Weston Creek Community Council on climate change adaptation
- the Gungahlin Community Council on climate change implications for a regional centre such as Gungahlin
- the Woden Valley Community Council on climate change, energy conservation and solar access.

Speaking engagements

Council members presented on climate change matters to:

- Australian Institute of Architects
- ABC 666, 4 June 2014, Making us sick: understanding the health effects of climate change. Genevieve Jacobs spoke with Council Chair Professor Barbara Norman alongside Professor Tony McMichael and Dr Peter Tait, on sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation issues. Available at youtube.com
- Public Forum in March 2014: How Australia can Thrive in a Low Carbon World, Pathways to Prosperity in 2050, Dr Frank Jotzo.

Comments and submissions

Council members provided out of session comment on the following circulated documents:

1. Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Briefing paper regarding the AP2 Implementation Status Report, November 2013
2. EPD Briefing paper on ACT Water Strategy, 2014
3. EPD Briefing paper on ACT Basin Priority Project: Improving Long Term Water Quality in the ACT and the Murrumbidgee River System, 2014
4. EPD Canberra Residential Energy and Water Consumption Baseline and Program Report, 2014
5. Emergency Services Agency Exposure Draft of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, version three, 2014

Letters and Submissions from the Council

On 25 March 2014, the Centenary Parliament of Youth on Sustainability presented the recommendations from their white paper, *How should Canberra change by 2020 to meet its ambitious carbon emission targets and become more sustainable?*, to the ACT Legislative Assembly. The Council wrote thanking them for their contribution to the climate change and sustainability debate in the ACT. The Council congratulated the contributing authors and acknowledged the valuable work of Professor Bob Douglas and Ms Anne Quinn, members of SEE-Change advocacy group.

Verbal advice was provided by the Council to Emergency Services personnel on the review of the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan and to the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment on the first review of AP2.

Advice to the Minister

During the 2013-14 reporting period the Council provided advice to the Minister in person at meetings. The Council's advice did not take the form of formal recommendations, rather guidance on the topics outlined below.

Community engagement

The Council provided input into the early development of the Community Engagement Strategy on Climate Change over 2013-14. This Strategy recognises the Council as a key partner that will play an important role in its implementation.

The Council provided advice regarding the need for a continual education and engagement campaign on climate change matters, both within and outside of Government. The final Community Engagement Strategy on Climate Change was launched in July 2014.

The Council members advised that the ACT Government needs to reiterate previous community conversations on climate change matters. This will allow the community to form links between relevant engagement activities and policy development over time, such as Time to Talk on AP2 engagement.

Energy

Council commended the ACT Government for its leadership in the renewable energy sector with the solar and wind generation facilities. They noted that this work is contributing to Canberra's clean green economy and bringing a positive spotlight to the ACT.

Council commented that sub-stations, such as for the light rail project, could emulate the Danish engineering art competition and suggested that ACT Government investigate offering prizes for displaying excellence in innovation for sustainability.

Water

The Council advised that raising awareness about water restrictions is not enough. Among other things advice and information should be provided to the community on drought-tolerant plants for gardens. The City should focus on urban design that includes drought tolerant species.

The Council warned the Government not to rely on current global rainfall models as they do not accurately reflect models for the Australian Capital Region (ACR). Current projections for the ACR indicate winter rainfall quantity will reduce and that annual temperatures will increase. Therefore evaporation and evapo-transpiration will increase, resulting in soil moisture decrease.

Transport

The Council advised that given a staged approach is to be taken in building the light rail, Capital Metro should strive for smooth transitions between stages for a stable local economy.

The Council supported the ACT Government's light rail project. The IPCC Working Group III report's comparison of greenhouse gas emissions between various modes of passenger transport clearly shows that light rail has the lowest emissions as measured on a kilometre/passenger basis. Light rail is significantly better than buses and much better than motorcars. Council members advised that of the two possible IPCC emission levels for light rail, the lower would apply to Canberra given that by 2020 90% of our electricity will be generated by renewables.



Appendix A: Council member's attendance

During the 2013-14 financial year the Council held four meetings, there were on:

1. 20 August 2013
2. 20 November 2013
3. 17 February 2014
4. 21 May 2014.

Number of meetings attended by Council members

Member	Number of meetings in reporting period	Number of meetings attended
Professor Barbara Norman (Chair)	4	4
Ms Lynne Harwood (Deputy Chair)	4	3
Professor Will Steffen	4	3
Dr Frank Jotzo	4	1
Ms Maria Efkarpidis	4	2
Ms Dorte Ekelund	2*	4*
Toby Roxburgh	2*	2*

*Dorte Ekelund and Toby Roxburgh were appointed to the Council in January 2014, hence, only two meetings took place in the reporting period. Ms Ekelund attended meetings in late 2013 on behalf of the previous Council member, David Papps.

Appendix B: Budget

Climate Change Council	Payments in 2013-14
Council sitting fees	\$6,250.00
Meeting/event venue hire	\$2,511.45
Hospitality	\$609.53
Total (including GST)	\$9,370.98

Appendix C: Transcript of ACT Climate Change Council Chair's Response to the Ministerial Statement

Council Chair, Professor Barbara Norman, Wednesday 21 May 2014

Thank you very much Minister Corbell and Dorte Ekelund, who is (a Council member as well as) the Executive Director of Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, and may I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, both past and present.

I think today is a really special day for Canberra. The national leadership that is being shown by the ACT Government in launching this brochure *Adapting to a Changing Climate: Directions for the ACT* that outlines new work to be done, really will stand us apart from many other jurisdictions in Australia, in what is a very challenging time.

Yes we are in the ACT a small jurisdiction, but people are looking for positive stories, people are looking for action on climate change and people are looking for action on the ground in relation to sustainability. And I think in the ACT we have the benefits, the richness of experience, of political commitments, of collaboration, of leading national institutions, universities, and high schools becoming involved in these issues. The ACT has a Government where we don't have to debate the issues of climate change, but we can immediately go on the front foot and start acting on climate change. It is a very refreshing change in this country at the present. I really want to congratulate the Minister, Simon Corbell, and the Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher, in showing some courage at this present time.

I introduce the other Council members beside me, Professor Will Steffen and Toby Roxburgh, both providing terrific expertise to the Council, and Dorte Ekelund as a member representing Government. The Council also has a member from the community sector and the business sector. So we have a mixed and talented Council, and I'm very privileged to be leading as the Council chair.

The Council would say that the focus should be on mitigation. At the end of the day we need to be reducing our emissions as much as possible and the targets that the ACT have, that by 2060, reducing our emissions to zero, is slightly stretched, but we're on track. I think that is a very good position to be in. And the 90 per cent renewable target by 2020 really sends a very strong message out to industry. We are not uncertain in this jurisdiction, we are certain that we want to be attracting investment in renewable energy. I think there is nothing better than for industry to know that there is certainty in policy, and consistency. That is what the ACT is presenting, and as a Council we are very supportive of that.

So much of the focus must remain on mitigation, but as the Minister has already indicated, there are already some of the impacts that are locked in, and we will be living with climate change. We are living with climate change, and that is a key message for today.

There are also limits to adaptation that is an important concept as well. We can't just live in a hotter and hotter environment. So what does this mean for Canberra? It means the potential for increased bushfires and that's something that is very dear in the hearts of this community. Drought, extreme rainfall and extreme heat, and that will affect sectors right across the community. It will affect human health, the built infrastructure, energy security, water resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems.

So the key message also I think that is reflected here, and we look forward very much to working with the Government on the adaptation strategy, is that action will be required right across the community and the sectors, and the implementation of the sustainability and climate change agenda will need to be mainstreamed right across all aspects of Government and in partnership with business and the community. Partnership and collaboration are really key to what we are discussing today.

So today's Ministerial Statement is another step in action on sustainability and climate change by the ACT Government. Let me say this: Canberra is facing many challenges in a difficult environment. Today's statement presents the next significant action on climate change. In doing this Canberra is providing a more secure environment, not less – a more secure environment. A more secure future focusing on green growth, investing in long term sustainability, and contributing positively to global action.

I spent the last two days in Melbourne with Jeffrey Sachs who is the Director of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network who made some comments on national radio this morning about our Federal Government. We discussed these issues, and I was thinking, how can the ACT Government contribute to those global goals? The nation states will be meeting in September next year in New York, and Canberra, here in the ACT, will be doing our part and making our contribution to the global agenda. And I think that is something we should all be collectively proud of and a great goal to be working towards.

So just in summary, the ACT is positioning itself as the national leader in action on climate change and sustainability to the overall benefit of the whole Canberra community. And once again I congratulate the Government on taking this initiative and with my colleagues on the Council; we look forward to working with you in developing the adaptation strategy. Thank you.