

3 STATE GOVERNMENT TAKE2 PLEDGE PROGRAM

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council takes the TAKE2 pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and joins the State Government's TAKE2 program.

Attachments

Nil.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Paris Agreement of 2015 has set ambitious targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions that will require significant action on the part of all levels of government and the community.

The Victorian Government response is a target of zero net emissions by 2050 and to assist in achieving this, TAKE2, a pledge program for action to help reach the emissions reduction target. Cardinia Shire Council has been invited along with all Victorian local governments to take the pledge to support the state government's program.

Cardinia Shire Council has implemented various initiatives to reduce emissions as part of Council's aim to achieve the target of zero net emissions for its operations by 2024 under the Aspirational Energy Transition Plan. Our target and leadership will contribute towards the state government's efforts.

By taking the pledge Council will receive recognition of its efforts and help to create momentum to reduce emissions across Victoria. Taking the pledge will further strengthen Council's relationship with the state government and will assist Council to access grant funding opportunities. The pledge does not require additional funding, nor does it require Council to commit to actions that are not already identified within current plans

BACKGROUND

Cardinia Shire Council's Aspirational Energy Transition Plan

Cardinia Shire Council's Aspirational Energy Transition Plan was endorsed in 2014. The plan includes an analysis of Council and community greenhouse gas emissions along with initiatives to reduce them.

Since the plan's endorsement Council has implemented numerous activities to reduce its emissions and energy costs. These include:

- Environmental upgrades of Council facilities including Cardinia Shire's main aquatic centre Cardinia Life, the Cardinia Cultural Centre and the Beaconsfield Community Complex
- The upgrade of decorative street lights with energy savings globes
- The installation of 243 kW of solar electricity systems comprising of over 930 solar panels at 14 sites
- The incorporation of a high level of sustainable design in new Council facilities.

These initiatives are saving over 1200 tonnes of CO₂e per annum and \$165,000. Council has a planned ongoing role out of projects similar to these in the coming years. The Aspirational Energy Transition Plan also includes Council's intention to move to 100% renewable electricity in the coming years, based on a competitive financial solution being available to achieve this.

Council has delivered various programs in recent years to assist the community reduce emissions and energy costs. These include a program to assist sporting clubs improve their energy efficiency and an initiative to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of the elderly. These programs are often delivered through external grant funding in partnership with the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance.

Council is also looking into establishing a process to ensure private development meets higher levels of sustainable design to reduce energy costs and usage and improve liveability. Council is working closely on ensuring precinct structure plans for growth areas and township plans require high levels of sustainable design for new development.

These community actions form part of Council's efforts to achieve a 36% reduction in community emissions on a per capita basis by 2024.

State Government TAKE2 Pledge Program

On 9 June 2016, the Government announced that it will undertake to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through:

- A target for Victoria of net zero emissions by 2050, with five-yearly interim targets yet to be set.
- TAKE2, a pledge program for action to help Victoria reach the emissions reduction target.

The target and the pledge program were recommended by the Climate Change Act independent review. Along with state renewable energy targets of 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025, also announced in June and the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (VEET), these commitments support the Victorian Government's ambition to become a national leader on tackling climate change.

TAKE2 comprises:

- Encouragement for voluntary pledges to take action on climate change to help reach the state's emissions reduction target, open to all Victorians: local government, businesses, individuals, educational institutions and community organisations
- Mandatory pledges from all state government departments and agencies to reduce operational emissions (offices, fleet and assets)
- Mandatory pledges by the Government to reduce emissions across a number of key sectors including energy, agriculture, transport and waste management.

The pledge process contains two steps:

Step 1: Take the universal pledge: Working together, we pledge to play our part and take action on climate change for Victoria, our country and our planet by signing up. The universal pledge includes a number of pre-set options as the reason for the pledge, including for our local community, which is appropriate for local government.

Step 2: Pledgers should also share the specific voluntary greenhouse saving measures they are taking to help meet Victoria's universal pledge and reduce greenhouse emissions through an online portal. For Cardinia Shire this will involve outlining actions contained within our Aspirational Energy Transition Plan and providing a link to the plan.

TAKE2's terms of use include an expectation that all pledges and the choice of actions are made in good faith and that pledgers will follow through on their pledges. TAKE2 reserves the right to remove organisations from the TAKE2 program if they have not updated their chosen actions within 12 months of their estimated completion date.

Once an organisation has registered a pledge, they can acknowledge participation in TAKE2 in public communications and use the TAKE2 logo. Once Cardinia Shire Council is registered our logo will be displayed on the TAKE2 website with details of our climate change actions and commitments.

A pledge may be withdrawn at any time by the pledger simply updating the TAKE2 website.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Taking the pledge to work with the state government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is consistent with actions and targets in Council's Aspirational Energy Transition Plan.

RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN

Section 3 of the Council Plan (2013-17) includes the action:

"Reduce Council's energy consumption and help the community to do likewise".

The TAKE2 pledge and program is consistent with this action and its focus is on energy consumption and emissions reduction.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

Discussions have taken place with other Councils who are taking the pledge, and the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA). The City of Casey, the City of Port Phillip, Bass Coast Shire Council, Mornington Peninsula Shire and SECCCA have all taken the TAKE2 pledge and are supportive of the TAKE2 initiative.

The TAKE2 program has also been discussed in detail with Sustainability Victoria representatives who are managing the program to clarify its requirements and opportunities.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The pledge does not require additional funding, nor does it require Council to commit to actions that are not already identified within current plans. A small amount of time is required to engage in the program and report on Council's emissions reduction actions. Sustainability Victoria recognises that local governments have been taking actions to reduce emissions for many years. They have advised they will make the reporting and goal setting process available through TAKE2 as simple as possible for local government.

It is likely that those Councils who have taken the pledge will improve their chances of accessing future state energy efficiency and renewable energy funding, as their funding applications will be looked upon more favourably. Some funding opportunities may even require the pledge to be taken for Councils to apply.

CONCLUSION

The TAKE2 Pledge is a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and is in line with Council's Aspirational Energy Transition Plan. The pledge does not require additional funding, nor does it require Council to commit to actions that are not already identified within current plans.