

CACE guide to the draft Darebin Climate Emergency Plan - Summary document

V1.2.e1. 1 June 2017 - Adrian Whitehead - CACE Campaigner - www.caceonline.org

On December 5th 2016 Darebin Council declared a climate emergency. On Monday May 29th 2017, Darebin Council released their draft Climate Emergency Plan. This new plan includes many of the suggested changes made by local climate emergency campaigners to earlier drafts but fails to meet a number of key criteria to be considered a full climate emergency plan.

This document is CACE's initial response to the draft Climate Emergency Plan Summary Document. Please use the material we have provided to guide your response.

You can find and respond to the draft here: <http://www.yoursaydarebin.com.au/climateaction>

A response to the full document is being developed and should be available on the 31st of May.

Why have we responded to the summary document first?

Most people will read the summary document but skim read the full plan. Summary documents also highlight the priorities of the plan and thinking of staff. If the summary document is wrong then the implementation of the plan is likely to follow in a similar way.

Who is CACE?

CACE stands for Community Action in the Climate Emergency. CACE was started by two climate emergency campaigners and Save the Planet candidates who ran in the 2016 local government elections in Darebin, Adrian Whitehead and Bryony Edwards. They saw the potential in local councils to lead in our response to the climate emergency and sought to create an organisation that could directly support that campaign in Darebin and beyond.

This work builds on the campaign work started in 2012 by Save the Planet and RSTI (Research and Strategy for Transition Initiation Inc.. CACE works in close partnership with Philip Sutton from RSTI on the Darebin Campaign.

Key Issues

Diet is missing

Some estimates put our diet as contributing over 50% of our total emissions*. This is from food production, processing, storage, transport, landclearing and waste.

*see for example <http://ijc.cgpublisher.com/product/pub.185/prod.269>

Changing our diet provides us one of the few short term options immediately available to reduce global warming. This is because much of the global warming caused by our diet comes from consumption of beef, lamb and dairy, which produce methane. Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas which causes 105 times (NASA figure) the warming of carbon dioxide while in the atmosphere. However it is only in the atmosphere for just over a decade, so if we stop producing methane we can have a short term impact on our warming.

Diet is arguably the first step anyone should take in their response to global warming both because of the short term impacts and because they they can take this step the next time they go to the shops.

Not including diet in the summary document is unacceptable in a true climate emergency approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Darebin include reference to diet and its importance in the section titled "Reducing Emissions".
2. Darebin include diet related emissions in their Community Emissions Profile
3. Darebin add a 10th key direction "Reducing emissions from diet" with explanatory notes etc
4. Under the 2nd of the nine key directions remove the words "This is the first step in".

Drawdown is missing

We have already heated the planet too much and must now reverse global warming and create a global cooling. A part of achieving a global cooling is to draw down past carbon dioxide emissions. This can be done in a number of ways including planting trees, building soil carbon, and making biochar. Biochar is a stable form of charcoal that supports the creation of healthy and productive agricultural soils. Biochar has been used for hundreds of years and can be made from any organic matter. In Australia biochar production from waste biomass could draw down 10% of our current annual emissions each year.

Councils have the potential to play a key role in the production of biochar through the collection of organic waste. Currently councils only collect garden waste but this could be changed to collect all household and business waste organic matter on a weekly basis. This would also reduce rubbish going to landfill and methane emissions from landfill sites and personal compost piles.

A climate emergency response by council must include support for drawdown as a key priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

5. Darebin add a 11th key direction "Supporting drawdown" with reference to implementing a new organic waste recovery and biochar system.

"Fossil fuel divestment" needs to be broader

Key direction 6 should be changed from "Fossil fuel divestment" to simply "Divestment" and include all high emission industries including beef, lamb and dairy, land clearing, and native forestry in the explanatory notes. A climate emergency response is NOT just about fossil fuel emissions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

6. Council rename Key direction 6 from "Fossil fuel divestment" to "Divestment" and include reference to all high emissions industries in explanatory notes.

Significant Issues

Energy Foundation needs renaming

Key direction 9 refers to the establishment of a “Darebin Energy Foundation” to reduce emissions and support resilience building within the Darebin community. If this is the case it should be renamed to “Darebin Climate Foundation” or “Darebin Climate Emergency Foundation” or similar.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

7. Council rename the proposed “Darebin Energy Foundation” to reflect its role beyond just an energy focus