

**Submission  
No 37**

## **INQUIRY INTO TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE IN VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES**

**Organisation:** Melton City Council

**Date Received:** 21 August 2019

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**From:** Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities  
[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 21 August 2019 3:35 PM  
**To:** ClimateChangeInquiry  
**Subject:** New Submission to Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities

Ms Holly Dillabough  
[REDACTED]

Environment and Sustainability Policy Officer  
Melton City Council

232 High Street, Melton VIC, Australia  
232 High Street  
Melton  
3337

## **SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Dear Environment and Planning Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Victorian Parliament's Environment and Planning Committee's inquiry into tackling climate change in Victorian communities. Melton City Council understands the impact a changing climate will have on its community and supports enhanced efforts to assist and encourage communities to minimise their greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

The City of Melton community is supportive of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as evidenced through consultation for the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021. Despite this, Melton City Council residents face significant structural barriers to participating in low-carbon lifestyles including limited local employment opportunities, lack of access to public transport, and inefficient new housing developments. Located in the western growth area of Melbourne, City of Melton is expected to grow to a community of over 450,000 by 2051, from a current population of 162,118. This population increase is outpacing the delivery of non-residential infrastructure such as public transport, healthcare, open space and education, leaving new communities with little access to local employment or recreational opportunities, and poor access to public transportation. The result of this is a highly car-dependent community of which nearly 80% commute outside the municipality for work or education.

To support communities in reducing transport-related emissions, a long-term strategy is required for investment attraction and job creation. Providing infrastructure and services in a timely manner will enable walkable, liveable neighbourhoods for new communities in Melbourne's western growth area. In addition, improved access to public transport with frequent and reliable service will encourage residents to leave their cars at home.

Communities should also be supported in climate change mitigation and adaptation by facilitating the development of climate resilient homes. Climate resilient homes use energy efficient design to decrease

power consumption, reduce energy bills, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve thermal comfort. On the other hand, poor building design is carbon intensive, uneconomical and results in high power bills, leaving socio-economically disadvantaged residents with a reduced ability to deal with extreme heat events and a high vulnerability to climate change. Improvements to the Building Code of Australia and a coherent state-wide policy that addresses the energy efficiency of new homes would support Victorians in their ability both to cope with climate change and to reduce the carbon intensity of their homes.

The City of Melton community is particularly exposed to the impacts of climate change due to its moderate level of socio-economic disadvantage and large proportion of overseas-born residents. These communities can be supported in adapting to extreme weather events through targeted, graphic rich communication that addresses climate hazards such as bushfire-risk. Some additional interventions to support communities that were identified by Council in recent climate change adaptation workshops are:

- Facilitating community gardens to encourage blue/green infrastructure to reduce urban heat island effect and increase water retention in landscapes. Community gardens are also known to build community cohesion (and therefore adaptive capacity) and improve food security.
- Providing grants to schools and groups seeking to build capacity and resilience.
- Strengthening community connection by hosting or funding community building events such as ‘Know Your Neighbour Days’. Improving social cohesion is a tool for strengthening climate resilience.

At the local level, Melton City Council is currently developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan to identify and minimise the impacts of extreme weather on its community. Council looks forward to hearing from your team in due course and would welcome the opportunity to provide further input into developing strategies to support communities to tackle climate change. In the meantime, if you require any clarification on the contents of our submission please do not hesitate to contact Holly Dillabough, Environment and Sustainability Policy Officer on [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,  
Holly Dillabough

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File1:

File2:

File3: