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To: ClimateChangeInquiry
Subject: submission

I wish to make the following points:

- There are Three legs to this stool: the General Public and Victorian communities, Industry, Commerce and corporate Victoria, and Government at state and local levels.
- All legs need, not only to be engaged, but to be aware of the actions and strategies of the others.
- The production of greenhouse gases and the ownership of our carbon footprint sits primarily with industry and agriculture so these sectors must be 'loud and proud' about their actions and processes. Victorian communities cannot be expected to soldier on in an information vacuum, or feel that the responsibility is solely on their collective shoulders.
- Addressing an issue the size and complexity of climate change means that a one-size-fits-all is impossible. Rather than large homogenous actions, support structures like Extinction Rebellion – all actions are driven by individuals in small locally-based areas with local or like-minded communities forming around each action. And XR supports these activities with resources such as meeting rooms, digital platforms for information sharing and communication.

Bringing in "government experts" immediately sets up barriers to participation because of Australia's prevalent 'Us & Them' mentality. Rather, XR provides an opportunity for individuals to acquire information about the issue, decide what type of action interests them and enables a group to form around that community 'driver' which engages everyone and dramatically increases the opportunity for both success and sustainability.

- This means each street can decide what the priorities are and what is possible and achievable. This might be fundraising for a street battery powered by individual household solar panels. It may be something small such as eliminating landfill waste by sharing ideas around recycling. It may be someone who has a terrific plan for energy saving that can be supported and developed by a small community of like-minded people (students, fellow engineers, CALD etc.) leading to new and innovative solutions. It may be a street theatre group performing and educating and creating links between networks and pushing information around the community.
- Encouragement, in the form of innovation seed funding (what can be done with plastic bags??), design competitions (if Mexico can turn hard plastic waste into housing materials why can't we?) and public recognition (good ideas are worth rewarding and publicising and celebrity is cheap for govt. but desirable in the community).

If everyone is engaged in the flight for <1.5°C, and aware of the efforts of others, and feeling that they are walking hand-in-hand with both government and industry, then the collective push has more chance of effecting real change. One size can never fit anybody and looking for a hierarchical process, controlled by government that sits separate from the community, and reported on quarterly to a committee somewhere is tantamount to doing nothing.

- The very first thing that the Victorian government must do is declare a Climate Emergency and publicly recognise the various efforts, actions and groups that are already working towards climate goals. This shows that this effort will be collective, and truly inclusive. And the Vic Government must lead – ignore the Federal Government because waiting for guidance, funding or sensible policy will be a waste of precious time. Like Huckleberry Finn painting the fence, if the Vic Govt. is seen to be adopting a clear unequivocal stance on the climate then you will have the pleasure of infuriating the Feds, inspiring other states, engaging and energising your constituency and doing something worthy for future Victorians. **Take the Lead, steal a march!**

- As this discussion will inevitably be about money, the idea that we are working, as a community, to change the way we live, so that the planet is safe for our children, can only be referenced as a benefit which offers much profit for everyone. This is a social issue not an economic one. “The economy” is the last bastion for deniers because it is a single view that cannot be refuted even though the alternative reality of a carbon neutral economy may be very much more profitable.
- Finally, the indigenous people must be involved! Their custodianship of Australia for 60,000+ years means they understand better than anyone how to care for and nurture the land. And it must be meaningful and respectful engagement – not just rolling out Auntie for a Welcome to Country and then making all decisions based on English farming ideas from the 19th century.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit.

Nicola

Nicola McKay

