
From: Asher Coleman [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 26 August 2019 3:58 PM
To: ClimateChangeInquiry
Subject: Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities: South East Climate Action

To the Parliamentary committee

My name is Asher Coleman, and I'm a co-founder at the South East Climate Action Network (SECAN), a local community organisation seeking action on the climate crisis. I'm writing today to provide our submission regarding the Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities. This submission has been authorised by the Core group executive of SECAN.

Regarding the first part of the terms of reference: (What urban, rural and regional communities in Victoria are doing to tackle climate change)

Since our founding in June, we've been focused on two things. Firstly we've been running outreach events with guest speakers or climate documentaries to help improve our communities understanding of the climate crisis and their engagement with potential solutions. Secondly we've been working closely with councils to beef up their climate strategies, successfully pushing Mornington peninsula to declare a climate emergency and create a climate action plan, bringing forth a vote on the same in Monash council tomorrow Tues 27th Aug, and giving a submission to Dandenongs community consultation process for their climate action plan.

Regarding the second part of the terms of reference (How the Victorian Government could support these communities)

* Enactment of the strongest targets possible will be of great assistance in helping us get councils engaged in solving the climate crisis. The current targets act as a barrier to achieving faster action. However, even with the current targets we've been successful in pushing councils to aim for more ambitious goals than the government (generally zero council emissions by 2025 and community carbon neutrality by 2040, although our partners in the rural Bass Coast elicited a very ambitious target of carbon neutrality by 2030). Adopting a statewide carbon neutral 2040 target would be of great assistance in persuading reticent councillors to take more ambitious action to assist in the meeting of state targets.

* Setting up a community assistance team of government officers able to provide expertise and assistance to new groups in getting off the ground. The biggest obstacle to the successful creation of community groups is a lack of knowledge about how to go about things at the beginning (with everything from which grants to apply for to whether public indemnity insurance is necessary for an event, to how to get the word out. While our team managed to figure these things and many other questions out on our own, if there had been an experienced voice able to help us and others with such questions at the start we would have had a significantly smoother path. One of the great things about community climate organisations is they attract many people who have not engaged as organisers before, but this means institutional knowledge is slim on the ground in the early days.

You can contact me on this email [REDACTED], through my postal address at [REDACTED], or via phone at [REDACTED] (the last is preferred). Confidentiality is not required.

Kind regards

Asher Coleman
Co-Founder
SECAN