

2 September 2019

Sent via email : ClimateChangeInquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Committee Manager,

Re: Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities

Thank you for your invitation to provide a submission to the Victorian Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee's *Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities*. I am pleased to provide you with this submission on behalf of Hepburn Shire Council.

Hepburn Shire - Background

Hepburn Shire is in central Victoria, located to the northwest of Melbourne with easy access to the regional cities of Ballarat and Bendigo. The Shire covers an area of 1472km² and is home to a population of approximately 15,000 people. There are four main towns and several smaller villages, each with their own identity, community sentiment and priorities. Agriculture and tourism are key economic sectors in the region.

The Hepburn Shire community is renowned for community leadership in grassroots environmental action. The Shire is home to several sustainability groups which are leading community action, in addition to Hepburn Wind (www.hepburnwind.com.au). Hepburn Wind is the first community owned wind farm (currently planning to expand to a solar farm), in Australia.

Hepburn Shire Council has a mandate of carbon neutrality from Council operations by 2021, through its *Towards Zero Emissions Roadmap*. This Roadmap is available at www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/waste-environment/sustainable-living/. Council is an active member of Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance(CVGA), the Victoria Government's *Take2* Initiative and the Climate Council of Australia's *Cities Power Partnership*.

Building on a long history of sustainability initiatives and encompassing much of the great work already undertaken, the community-led Hepburn Shire Zero Net Emissions Transition (Z-NET) project was carried out throughout 2018. Z-NET has helped to highlight the local challenges and opportunities for the Shire to transition to zero net emissions by 2030. Council worked to support the project during its development, and formally endorsed its outcomes and ongoing support in late 2018.

Under this open-source framework, communities and local government can continue with their respective existing goals, while also collaborating on Shire-wide initiatives. By quantifying the

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local emissions baseline and setting timelines for completion, the necessary scale and rate of implementation for projects can be determined. Rather than developing projects in isolation, based on existing resources and commitments, Z-NET looks to the level of transition required and considers ‘what will it take?’ in order to achieve net carbon neutrality over the next decade.

Actions being taken by community members and organisations to mitigate the severity of climate change, including actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions:

Developing projects and policies at a national, state or regional level is vital in achieving a robust framework for supporting action, particularly when dealing with sector-wide transitions.

However, it is important to note that addressing climate change poses unique challenges, risks and opportunities for different regions. Additionally, actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change can potentially impact significantly upon communities, and as such, there is a need for community input to guide these actions.

Partnerships between community, industry and government are proving vital in the successful implementation of projects. The centrality of partnership to successful project outcomes needs to occur at both local and regional levels.

Locally, collaboration between community groups and Council is supporting a targeted rollout of residential projects such as distributed rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, waste reduction projects, efficiency improvements and education.

Regionally, high impacts projects for electric vehicle (EV) charging, streetlight upgrades and procurement of renewable energy are underway. Without this collaborative approach, delivery of many of these projects would be cost or resource prohibitive.

Some of the significant projects occurring at the community, local government or regional level include:

Quantifying the local greenhouse gas emissions:

- ***Hepburn Shire Z-NET***

With the support of numerous organisations, the community-led Z-NET project has been underway in the Hepburn Shire since early 2018. This project is building on a long standing community presence in emission reductions, and provides a holistic framework for quantifying and addressing greenhouse gas emissions locally. Through use of this comprehensive, open-source blueprint, the Z-NET Community Transition Plan has been developed: Hepburn Shire’s plan to reach net-zero emissions by 2030. The Z-NET deliverables and resources are available at z-net.org.au/hepburn.

Development of a local emissions baseline allows community members to identify how their individual actions contribute to climate change and provides a reference point for tracking progress.

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Engaging and supporting community:

Social acceptance is vital in the success of climate change action. Communities must be empowered and supported to identify their priorities and implement innovative local solutions. Projects which have facilitated this, or are planned in future include:

- ***Carbon Free Community Conversations and Z-NET forums***

Council held sessions around the Shire where community members could put forward their thoughts around climate change action. These concepts were compiled, analysed, prioritised and developed into tangible local projects with meaningful metrics. Projects were then brought back to community through the Z-NET forums and Z-NET Roundtable, in order to assist with prioritising implementation.

- ***Information sessions, forums and events***

A common theme raised by the broader community is that there is a desire to act locally, but a lack of knowledge about which actions to take. To address this, community information sessions, movie screenings and discussion forums are occurring in the Shire, with the intention of building local engagement and capacity. This network of engaged local individuals continues to grow.

- ***Social and print media***

Council has an active media presence, allowing promotion of significant programs to community members and other regional groups on an ongoing basis. This approach also facilitates the process of informed two-way conversation between Council and community, both on specific projects and broader issues of interest and concern.

- ***School partnerships***

Hepburn Wind and Hepburn Shire Council are working with CERES Community Environment Park, to develop and offer education programs and training materials for schools within the Hepburn Shire.

- ***Community grants***

Community groups which identify worthwhile environmental projects must be supported to implement their visions. Funding for small projects (up to \$2,500) is available from Council on a quarterly basis for eligible projects/applicants.

- ***Council's Towards Zero Community Grants***

This annual grant program allows Council to fund larger emission reduction projects (capped only by total available budget) for local community groups. This includes energy efficient

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lighting and appliances, solar PV systems, education programs and various other initiatives. As many community groups are unsure of which actions to take, Council supports these applicants in the development of worthwhile projects with reasonable Return on Investment (ROI) and emission savings.

- **Z-NET Climate Resilience Fund**

Achieving zero net emissions can only occur by implementing a range of initiatives across all sectors. Many initiatives are economically viable in the current market and popular within community; other initiatives are not economically or technically viable at present. There is a need to highlight and support projects without a clear ROI, such as behavior change and feasibility analyses. The Z-NET Climate Resilience Fund (CRF) was formed in order to support these types of projects. This fund is open for contributions from external funding bodies and community, and is supported by Hepburn Shire Council, Hepburn Wind, Creswick and District Community Bank and Powershop. The Z-NET Roundtable guides allocation of funding from the CRF. Since its inception earlier this year, the Z-NET CRF has been able to leverage significant additional funding for capital works projects, with further funding and projects continually being sought.

Energy efficiency

- **Free home energy assessments and subsidised retrofits**

Energy efficiency will play a significant and vital role in de-carbonising the energy system. However, energy efficiency projects are often ignored or discounted in preference for other actions, such as solar PV. To address this, the Z-NET CRF will be supporting free home energy assessments and subsidised retrofits for up to 68 households over the next 18 months. This is with the hope of displaying case studies to community to highlight the importance of energy efficiency in this transition.

- **Retrofit of streetlights**

Retrofit of the Major Road lighting within the municipality to energy efficient LEDs is planned to be carried out in the 19/20 financial year. Streetlights on residential roads have already been replaced.

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- **Energy audit and grant submission assistance**

Energy efficiency upgrades are often financially viable, and funding streams are also available for many actions. Nevertheless, it is often difficult to convince businesses to perform upgrades or access grant funding, due to the perceived complexity of the process. The Z-NET CRF will provide a resource to support businesses and farms to access upgrades, from project concept through to implementation. It is intended that some successful case studies can be highlighted, resulting in a broader acceptance and uptake of these programs.

- **Environmental Upgrade Agreements**

Council offers Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs), which allow businesses to access secure finance for eligible projects that improve the environmental credentials of a site. The charge is tied to the property receiving the upgrade, to be paid back over an agreed upon loan term.

- **Bulk buy appliances**

As appliances require replacement, there is a need to ensure upgrade to energy efficient alternatives. This carries inherent challenges due to rapidly improving technologies and false perceptions within community of financial savings by purchasing cheaper, but less efficient options. As with solar PV, bulk buy programs which identify efficient appliances and highlight the potential cost savings will be vital for this transition. Community benefits from bulk buy programs, whereby systems/appliances are donated for a given number of sales, can assist with improving uptake, community support and social equity.

Some programs are already under development, for example the purchase of discounted hot water heat pumps being offered by local community businesses. This is with the goal of making these technologies more commonly understood and trusted. There is a need for bulk buy programs for a range of other appliance types.

- **Home audit toolkits**

Home energy audit 'toolkits' will be developed in late 2019 and made available at local libraries. Toolkits will provide instructions, supporting information and devices such as a thermometer, thermal camera, multimeter etc. to allow households to perform their own basic home energy efficiency assessment.

Renewable energy generation

- **Solar Savers**

Council purchases systems for low income households at no upfront cost to the household. This continues to be offered in parallel to the Victorian Government's *Solar Homes* program, because there are nuances which make Solar Savers more suitable for certain members of

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the community. These distinctions include the bulk procurement and vetting of solar PV systems/providers, project management on behalf of vulnerable households and the fact that loan terms are longer, allowing households to be 'cash flow positive' from the outset. This program is extremely well subscribed within the Shire.

- ***Hepburn Wind solar farm***

Hepburn Wind is currently in planning to expand and include a large solar farm (3-5MW) at its Leonards Hill wind farm site. This project will form a considerable component of the additional local renewable generation capacity identified in the Z-NET project.

- ***Hepburn Solar Bulk Buy***

The *Hepburn Solar Bulk Buy* is delivered by CVGA, through partnership with Council and Hepburn Wind and support from the sustainability groups. This program provides information to community members interested in solar PV, with installation from a reputable supplier that is appointed after an open procurement process. The Bulk Buy has resulted in a significant increase in solar PV penetration within the Hepburn Shire and also includes a community bonus, based on number of sales.

- ***Bio-Energy project***

Council is currently operating a pilot scale Anaerobic Digester using putrescible food waste. This demonstration project aims to increase community awareness around bio-energy and the detrimental impacts of organic waste sent to landfill, while refining the collection, separation and operating processes. If increased to full scale, this project could divert the majority of the Shire's organic waste from landfill, while generating enough electricity to offset Council's annual electricity consumption.

Procurement and infrastructure investment

- ***Local Government Power Purchase Agreement project***

Development of a collaborative Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for renewable energy project across 47+ Victorian LGAs. This was conceived and led by local governments and Victorian Greenhouse Alliances; it is now also supported by Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).

- ***Charging the Regions***

Development of a coordinated, local government EV charging network across the state (currently including 43 LGAs) is underway. The role of local government, State Government and industry in installing and supporting EV charging infrastructure in future is unclear in a rapidly changing market. As a regional council, EV charging infrastructure offers an opportunity to safeguard tourism and economic activity as vehicles transition to electric.

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- ***Hepburn Wind funded Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station***

Hepburn Wind has already installed a free, public EV charging station in Daylesford's main street. This is one of many EV chargers which will be required to support the transition away from fossil fuels.

Projects in non-energy sectors

- ***Heavily subsidised compost bins and worm farms and free education programs***

Organic waste sent to landfill is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, while causing an ongoing financial and environmental burden to Council and community. Encouraging community members to minimise organic waste generation and then deal with their own waste can significantly reduce this burden. The bio-energy project will process residual waste only, after exhausting higher levels of the waste minimisation hierarchy.

- ***Leadership in food security***

The Hepburn Shire community is well placed to look to innovative solutions for the challenges ahead. The Shire is already a hive of activity for adaptive actions such as regenerative agriculture methods and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, together with a broader advocacy for climate change action.

As a significant and long-standing economic sector for the Shire and a major contributor to local greenhouse gas emissions, there is a need to support the agriculture sector in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Permaculture also has strong ties to the Hepburn Shire, and permaculture practices are prevalent locally.

- ***Land use change***

Future land use requires consideration if zero net emissions is to be achieved. The Shire has a long history of forestry industry and is also heavily forested in many areas. The role of reforestation/afforestation and land management in local carbon sequestration requires increased analysis, advocacy and support.

The existence of strong reciprocal relationships between community and Council positions the Hepburn Shire well to deliver outcomes which address the intersection between land use change, agriculture and biodiversity.

- ***Future projects***

There is a long list of future projects to be implemented, with additional projects being added continually. A detailed list is included within the Z-NET Community Transition Plan (znet.org.au/hepburn).

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Actions by community members and organisations to adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change

The focus on adaptation to climate change impacts is gathering momentum, but at present does not attract the same level of buy-in from the broader community as climate change mitigation actions. The reasons for this are likely varied, but a sentiment does appear to exist within certain community groups that focusing on adaptation shows a despondent or defeatist approach.

The fact that climate change impacts are already apparent and quantifiable is an area which needs increased advocacy moving forward.

Current projects aimed at climate change adaptation include:

- ***Water usage***

Council carried out a project in 2016-2017 titled *Climate Resilient Recreation Facilities*. This project assessed the water usage at several ovals and analysed the specifics of each site. Factors which impacted usage included irrigation system type and usage patterns, species of grass, desired quality of pitch, water storage options and a range of other factors. By analysing this data, an action plan for reducing water usage was developed. Several key actions have already been implemented, with further works planned in future.

- ***Increasing the thermal efficiency of municipal buildings***

Council sites are being upgraded to improve thermal efficiency, through insulation, draught proofing and glazing upgrades. This will assist with reducing energy consumption (a mitigation outcome), but also make sites more comfortable in extreme weather events.

- ***Consideration of impact to Council's roles and functions***

With each new innovative project aimed at climate change mitigation or adaptation, Council takes on roles which are, from a planning and development perspective, somewhat removed from its traditional roles and functions. There is a need to also consider the intersection between Council's traditional operations and climate change action. This is a complex undertaking which impacts many areas of council. Areas which require a consideration of climate change adaptation include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency management
 - Consideration of increased frequency and intensity of weather events, a need for refuge facilities, updated procedures etc.
- Planning

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- Considerations such as changes to weather event frequency/intensity and how this relates to historical information and current decision making, e.g. currency of Land Subject to Inundation Overlays.
- Economic Development
 - Economic development supports existing economic activity and aims to support new activity. Existing industries, such as agriculture, are susceptible to climate change impacts. For example, hotter and drier conditions may result in a need for commodity changes in the region in future. This requires a structured and supported transition.
- Asset management
 - Council holds a large number of facilities, many of which are aging. There is also a significant network of roads, bridges and drainage infrastructure. Extreme weather events, such as flooding or prolonged drought, may potentially cause significant damage to infrastructure.

Embedding climate change considerations into different sectors of Council will require ongoing work, as new policies, strategies and frameworks are developed.

Ways in which the government can best support communities in their efforts

A multi-faceted approach is needed across all levels of government, sectors and communities in order to realize the deep emission reductions needed. This includes a robust policy framework for supporting a high degree of change, and also significant on-the-ground support for implementation of specific projects.

The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report, *Global Warming of 1.5°C...*, sets the stage for potential emission pathways and the likely inputs and implications of these pathways. The Report timeline aligns closely with that of Hepburn Z-NET, which in turn is tied to the delivery of several tangible projects. Consequently, support to help realise these local projects is vital if Hepburn Shire is to take an effective lead role in addressing climate change.

Policy support

- **Emission Reduction Targets (ERTs)**

Bold leadership is needed in order to achieve the necessary emission reductions. As highlighted in the Z-NET project, regional and rural areas have a significantly different emissions profile from metropolitan areas and national/state averages; agriculture and transport are disproportionately large emission sectors in these regions. Considering

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this, there is clearly a need for any community led plans and actions to be representative of their local carbon footprint in order to effect worthwhile, local impact.

ERTs do include non-energy sectors, but at present there is a strong project focus on energy, particularly stationary energy; sectors with lower total emissions (based on state averages) have been flagged as future areas for focus. It should be highlighted that the transitions of these sectors will have long lead in and target attainment timeframes, due to a range of inherent technical, social and economic factors.

There is a need to further support these sectors now to account for these long transition timeframes.

- **Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET)**

The Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET) outlines the Victorian Government's goals for penetration of renewable energy into the National Energy Market (NEM). The VRET considers current electricity usage, with provisions for changes such as population growth. Through the Z-NET project, the need to consider significant changes to the net energy consumption (and consequently the percentage which a given renewable generation capacity represents) due to other sector transitions was apparent. These include:

- Transport shift to electric/hydrogen vehicles and the significant associated rise in electricity consumption
- A shift away from firewood, natural gas and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and the associated rise in electricity consumption

Further, the Victorian Government is in a position to set bold and ambitious targets for climate change mitigation. A science-based approach to emission reduction targets over the next decade will be critical in mitigating the worst impacts of climate change.

- **Distribution network development support**

Small-scale distributed generation is being supported financially by Federal Government (through small-scale technology certificates (STCs)) and by the Victorian Government (through the *Solar Homes* program), making these small scale installations extremely viable in many instances. This rapid uptake is highlighting various technical challenges which will become increasingly apparent in future.

Small to mid-scale (<1-10MW) renewable generation projects are often more accessible to community members and groups, due to their lower capital cost and community ownership of suitable sites. These types of important projects will increasingly face challenges around social equity, together with technical and financial limitations, without a broader policy framework to support them. Issues include:

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- The inherent variability in renewable energy generation and its impact on grid integration of a project. At present, this is addressed through fixes such as storage, grid augmentation or export curtailment. There is minimal 'line-of-sight' for when and where these upgrades will be required for a specific project location or size, until well into project planning. This causes uncertainty for investment and project development. Advocacy to Distribution Network Service Providers (DNSPs) for greater visibility to local network constraints would greatly assist with project development.
- The financial viability of solar PV in the current market means that many systems are being oversized for the site's consumption. This translates to high export levels at some sites and an increasing number of systems being subjected to grid export curtailment or zero export limitations. While we appreciate that these limits are imposed for valid technical reasons, the fact remains that this scenario poses equity challenges and potential barriers to future investment. Advocacy to DNSPs for innovative solutions such as dynamic export limitations, pre-emptive upgrades, or support for pilot projects such as micro-grids or Virtual Power Plants (VPPs) would assist with addressing these current and future issues. Strategic allocation of additional battery rebates to constrained regions would also assist with this goal.
- The significant expansion of large-scale generation in western and northern Victoria is already highlighting transmission grid constraint issues, with numerous large projects facing grid export curtailment. The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) plans to address this as outlined in their Integrated System Plan (ISP). While we are supportive of the increased renewable penetration which these upgrades will facilitate, there is a need to highlight that the Regulatory Investment Test – Transmission (RIT-T) process carries inherent delays and challenges, as outlined in CVGA's submission to the Preliminary Assessment Draft Report (PADR). https://www.aemo.com.au/-/media/Files/Electricity/NEM/Planning_and_Forecasting/Victorian_Transmission/2019/Submissions/Central-Victorian-Greenhouse-Alliance-Submission-to-the-PADR.pdf

It should also be highlighted that such significant upgrades carry inherent challenges around social license, due to perceptions of impact on visual amenity, property value, or numerous other concerns.

Unlocking of the distribution network for more small to mid-scale projects has the potential to encourage faster implementation of regionally appropriate projects/grid infrastructure. This could include minor augmentation of the distribution network to facilitate and encourage mid-scale renewables. While smaller scale projects often carry a higher cost per installed MW, it would be prudent to consider the true costs of all project components, including grid augmentation, line upgrades, land access, and many others including non-financial impacts.

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- A Community Energy Target, supported by a carve-out of the VRET specifically for community energy projects, would greatly assist with safeguarding the types of projects and local ownership which communities want to see in their region.

- ***Circular Economy and Waste***

Waste is a significant ongoing issue for local government and Hepburn Shire Council awaits the release of State Government's Circular Economy Policy in late 2019. Avoided landfill emissions and reclaiming energy are clear potential benefits from improved waste management policies. The impact of circular economy principles in reducing waste generation in the first instance is even more important.

As previously noted, while policy framework is important for transition, there remains a need for tangible objectives and support to effect change. This may be through regulatory controls, financial incentives, product stewardship programs or numerous other initiatives.

Project support

- ***Financial support for project implementation***

State government is supporting several innovative programs at present, aimed at displaying what is possible in climate change mitigation. While this is proving worthwhile in developing plans and roadmaps for transition, there is also a need for project continuity, facilitated by longer term implementation funding and scale up of projects.

Local governments operate within strict budgetary constraints, while continuing to deliver core services. Without implementation support, there is a risk that successful pilot programs will not be continued or expanded due to budgetary and resource limitations, and that the worthwhile outcomes will ultimately be lost.

- ***Embedded resource funding***

Councils across the state are in varying degrees of action on climate change. This may be due to a range of factors including community sentiment, priorities or resources. State Government support for an embedded staff resource (similar to Emergency Management staff) to address climate change related issues would assist with delivering a broad increase in local government capacity in this field. This resource could be allocated to individual councils or across regions, as appropriate.

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- **Structured education programs**

There is a call from community members for local action, education programs and working groups. These generally rely on voluntary input from a small, core group of engaged individuals. Expansion of programs is necessary to achieve the desired impact, but without corresponding support this risks further burdening those in community who are already extremely generous with their time. Specific issues and potential response strategies include:

- **School based projects** - Projects aimed at engaging school students to consider sustainable behaviors are commonplace in many regional schools, however this implementation relies on the initiative of teachers, students and/or community members. Responsible management of resources and the environment are not peripheral issues which should be addressed sporadically, nor should they be reliant on voluntary inputs. A structured curriculum and ongoing presence within schools is vital in achieving the widespread, foundational change required.
- **Registered training organisation (RTO) or tertiary institution based training** - Formalised courses for renewable energy infrastructure (design, commissioning, maintenance, decommissioning, recycling etc.) are vital, and there is already some existing or planned training in this field. There is also a need for an increase in formalised training pathways for the transition of other sectors such as transport, agriculture, waste and land use.

- **Energy Efficiency**

Improvement in the energy efficiency of buildings remains critical in reducing energy consumption. Support and expansion of State Government programs such as DELWP's *Scorecard* or Agriculture Victoria's *Agriculture Energy Investment Plan* is vital in achieving this. Funding and project support for capital works which are identified by assessments is also critical in achieving uptake, at least while trying to build the programs' profiles.

- **Major Road lighting funding support**

Councils across the region are planning to upgrade streetlights to LEDs in coming years. Most municipalities have already upgraded residential streetlights, with only Major Road lighting outstanding. Many of these are cost shared with the Victorian Government's Department of Transport. Advocacy for State Government to support the capital cost of these upgrades has been ongoing for a number of years; without a reasonable funding model, many councils are not prepared to continue with Major Road lighting upgrades.

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- ***Electric vehicle support***

As previously noted, local governments are considering their role in the EV transition. Clarity from the Victorian Government on its role over the coming years would assist with providing guidance.

Financial incentives, such as further reductions in registration fees, stamp duty, parking and toll fees etc. may assist in expediting this transition. While some of the above are not the responsibility of State Government, a policy which highlights potential incentive mechanisms may assist in policy development within local government or industry.

- ***Support for farmers***

Around 60% of Victoria's landmass is used for agricultural activity. Consequently, significant potential for generating greenhouse gas emissions or sequestering carbon lies within the agriculture sector. Agriculture can also have considerable impact (positive or negative) on other environmental sectors such as water security and biodiversity. Supporting farmers to continue with successful management practices, or improve upon practices, is vital in ensuring positive environmental outcomes.

Regional initiatives which support circular economy principles and improved environmental outcomes should be encouraged, supported and promoted. This includes innovative projects aimed at reclaiming energy from biomass, activities which reduce supply chain length (such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)), mobile/on-farm/regional abattoirs, farmers markets), regenerative agriculture and process efficiency improvements, the potential of new commodities, or numerous other aspects.

Innovation within agriculture requires economically viable markets, supported by a regulatory framework. Working more closely with farmers to determine what the potential barriers to innovation are will assist in improved outcomes in this sector.

- ***Climate modeling***

Support for increased development and promotion of localised climate data and modelling, to assist with:

- Highlighting the impact of climate change and displaying a tangible impact to communities
- Allowing for future land use planning, particularly in relation to the agricultural sector, such as reduced water availability and changes to the local climate. Climate change has the potential to directly impact farming viability, practices and commodity types: translating to an impact on economic and food security.

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Interstate and overseas best practice models that could be implemented in Victoria

Within Australia, Victorian local and State governments are leaders in climate change action. The role of regional Greenhouse Alliances in maximising the capacity and resources of local government should not be understated; these groups are displaying best practice for advocacy, education, feasibility and delivery of projects on behalf of most local governments across the state. This model should be promoted, expanded and replicated elsewhere.

There are several interstate and international programs which could potentially be learnt from and applied in a Victorian context. Each program will have nuances which may require modification for successful implementation in different regions across the state. Similarly, there is a need to assess and understand models which have not worked, or which do not align with the sentiment of our state or region.

Specific case studies have not been provided; however Hepburn Shire could benefit from policy guidance and implementation support for the following sectors, many of which have effective programs already underway in other regions.

- **Waste management** including resource separation and recovery, container deposit schemes, waste to energy, product/landfill bans and stewardship programs.
- **Transport** - Ambitious policies or quotas for sale numbers of electric/hydrogen vehicles, strict emission guidelines, timelines for restrictions on the sale of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, active transport policies and infrastructure support, increased accessibility to public transport.
- **Renewable energy** - Ambitious renewable energy targets, financial incentives and income mechanisms which make investment in renewables viable on an ongoing basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Victorian Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee's *Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities*.

If you would like to discuss this submission further, please contact Council's Sustainability Officer, Dominic Murphy, at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Yours faithfully



Evan King
Chief Executive Officer

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