



## Delegates Report

### Local Government Association of NSW Climate Change Summit 27 November 2006

*Report by Cr Peter Westheimer (Deputy Mayor)  
Presented to Council's Ordinary Meeting on 19 December 2006.*

#### **Websites to refer to**

[www.lgsa.org.au/climatechange](http://www.lgsa.org.au/climatechange) NSW Local Government and Shires Association  
for more detailed information of proceedings

[www.greenhouseinfo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.greenhouseinfo.nsw.gov.au) NSW Greenhouse Office

[www.greenhouse.gov.au](http://www.greenhouse.gov.au) Federal Government Greenhouse Office

[www.iclei.org/anz](http://www.iclei.org/anz) Local Governments for Sustainability

[www.acf.org.au](http://www.acf.org.au) Australian Conservation Foundation

[www.deus.nsw.gov.au](http://www.deus.nsw.gov.au) NSW Department of Energy and Utilities

#### **Opening address: Genia MCaffery**

President LGA NSW, Mayor of North Sydney

There is a need to adjust to change....rising sea levels, higher storm surges, drought, limited water supplies, rising temperatures, decreased but often increased intensity rainfall. 2005 was the hottest year on record in Australia.

Sir Nicholas Stern is a 'conservative' former chief economist of the World Bank and advisor to Tony Blair whose recent report "UK Governments Review on the Economics of Climate Change" states that the cost of not addressing climate change will ultimately cause greater adverse impact on the economy than more immediate action.

Regional forums will be encouraged by LGSA across NSW in 2007. Genia reaffirmed acting locally thinking globally.

Peter Cosier:

Executive Director Wentworth Group of concerned Scientists, ex Deputy Director General in NSW DIPNR and for 6 years policy advisor to Robert Hill ex Aust. Min. for Environment

Mr Cosier stated, "We need to save this world from ourselves!"

Polluters of the past were heroes but the carbon pollution from their successes is now having a deleterious effect. Vested interests still challenge science and then proceed to say we can't afford the costs of doing something about Climate Change thus buying more time for polluting industries.

A 60% reduction in greenhouse gases is needed in the next 40 years, and importantly, we don't have to give up anything - just change the way we power machines and equipment.

By 2100 the average income of an Australian in today's figures [currently \$44,000 a year] will be \$185,000 but if we factor in spending to address climate change then the figure reduces only slightly to \$176,500, which translates into very little difference in projected wealth for minimal sacrifice and therefore minimal effect on Australia's economic growth.

The long term costs of doing nothing will far outweigh the short term costs.

We need to protect environmental river flows and develop adaptation plans with Catchment Management Authorities and regional groups of councils”.

Kevin Hennessy:

CSIRO Principal Research Scientist, Marine Atmospheric research

There has been a 0.7C degree increase in temp since 1900.

The 12 warmest years ever recorded are since 1990. Warming is occurring particularly in the lowest 8 km of earth's atmosphere.

CO2 can last 100 years whilst CFC's last 3000 years. So time to effect change and reverse effects will be slow.

Some EU governments are suggesting that to stabilise CO2 levels at 450ppm by 2100 and to prevent a temperature rise of more than 2C a cut in CO2 emissions of 40% by 2050 or 70% by 2070 is needed.

Current International Panel for Climate Change [IPCC] projections are: Predicted Temperature rise 0.5 to 1.2 C by 2030, 1.4 to 3.8 by 2070. Predicted Sea Level Rise 3-17cm by 2030, 7-50cm by 2070.

Importantly species may not necessarily be able to migrate to other climate zones because of habitat fragmentation leading to loss of biodiversity.

2004 CSIRO projections for NSW suggest that overall the state is likely to become warmer and drier. The North Coast faces the likelihood of increased summer rainfall, decreased spring and winter rains as well as increased hail storms. NSW wide there is likely to be increased storm surges and drought intensity, more fire danger days and temperatures above 35C , decreased days of frost and less water flow in the Murray Darling basin.

A study recently on the Narrabeen/Collaroy Beach area in Sydney projected that a sea level rise of 20cm would translate into an advance of the shoreline landwards of up to 22 metres but more than 110 metres if combined with a one in 50 year storm surge.

Road maintenance costs may raise by 30% by 2100 and there is likely to be inundation of road, rail and transport systems.

Geoff Barnden: Director of NSW Greenhouse office

The IPCC was established by the World Meteorological Organisation [WMO] and the United Nations Environmental Program[UNEP] in 1988. It involves thousands of global scientists who are due to release their 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> yearly world assessment report in 2007.

If no action is taken greenhouse gases could reach double pre-industrial levels by 2035. Costs of stabilisation are significant but manageable – delay would be much more costly and dangerous.

What are Governments and business doing? There is a market of potentially \$500 Billion for green low carbon emitting technology by 2050.

The Stern Report reinforced an earlier report from the Australian Business roundtable which comprised I.A.G., Visy, Swiss Re, BP, Origin Energy, Westpac and ACF [Australian Conservation Foundation].

Between 2004 and 2006 all states of Australia produced Greenhouse action plans, NSW being the first in 1997.

The NSW BASIX building code legislations should result in a decrease of 8 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> over 10 years. The NSW Greenhouse action plan released in 2005 aims for an overall 60% reduction by 2050.

It aims to diversify the energy mix with a 15% renewable target by 2020 and 10% by 2010 and \$24 million being invested into education and research.

Better climatology data is needed.

Over the last 420,000 years analysis of core sample air bubbles from Antarctica and Greenland has shown temporary rises of CO<sub>2</sub> levels from a baseline of 280ppm to approx 300ppm but not as high and a sustained increase as now ...currently 380ppm and rising exponentially.

A Carbon Tax or trading system may possibly be more effective than overregulation by governments. Carbon Geo Sequestration technology is still theoretical although pilot projects results are imminent. Plantations may capture CO<sub>2</sub> [Biosequestration] in the long run as may geosequestration and clean coal technology.

Global Dimming is caused by a haze of pollution artificially keeping temps down whilst global brightening as a result of cities cleaning up their act may cause temp.increases!

10% of global emissions at present are caused by forest destruction!

Secure local native vegetated areas may provide linkages to facilitate the inevitable migratory shift of fauna and flora.

Nuclear power is 3 times more expensive than coal power and that doesn't include the cost of decommissioning the nuclear plants currently costed as A\$220 billion for 20 plants to be decommissioned in the UK. And then there's the issue of where to store safely the waste which stays radioactive for millions of years.

18 workshops are planned in Queensland for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Councils need a dedicated person to manage climate change as do the corporations these days. He felt these issues are best managed not just as an environmental issue but as an issue best managed by the General Managers of Councils.

There are no Silver Bullets, Nuclear certainly isn't.

Political Leadership is needed. Mayors and councillors need to own the issue. Community change is needed.

The recently announced NSW plan is for a renewable target of 15% by 2020 and an interim target of 10% by 2010 with a \$24 million Greenhouse innovation fund over 4 years for community awareness climate action and technologies grants, impacts and adaptation research, rural industries and farmers adaptation, and greenhouse gas reduction programs.

The impacts and adaptation projects include: risks to human health, bushfire risks, coastal impacts-erosion, storm surge and estuarine inundation, high resolution coastal terrain and hinterland mapping, threatened species risks, biodiversity conservation planning, aquatic ecosystems, invasive weeds and pests.

An agreement has been signed with the Australian Business Limited covering 25,000 businesses [including the Australian Chamber of Commerce] to promote greater awareness and capacity in small and medium sized business in NSW over the next 12 months.

Bridget Dwyer: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation project officer LGSA  
[www.lgsa.org.au/climatechange](http://www.lgsa.org.au/climatechange)

Guidance and Educational materials for NSW councils are being developed and will be released as a Climate Change Action Pack in 2007. More info re grants will be available on the website above.

8 Regional forums will be held across the state in August 2007 after the pack is completed.

The Australian Greenhouse Office is also developing a Local Government Climate Change guide pack, 1st draft available Feb 2007 and then stakeholder input for some months before finalisation in 2007/2008.

Dr Gina Newton  
Australian Greenhouse Office [AGO] adaptation program. Federal Department of Environment and Heritage

Australia's total Greenhouse gas emissions in 2004 were 582 million tonnes. New climate projections for release in October 2007 will be based more on probabilities rather than projections. A scenario generator with user's inputting their own data will be available on **ozclim.net**

Also planned are Adaptation and Risk Management Guides for local governments. There is a need for digital elevation coastal models in conjunction with improved near shore bathymetry. A national assessment of coastal vulnerability is to be released soon.

**Dr Karl Sullivan: General Manager Risk and Disaster Planning for the Insurance Council of Aust.**

Climate change is already affecting the insurance industry. There is \$85 billion in assets, and currently \$65 million claims per day, in Australia.

Only 74% of Australians don't have insurance. For every 25% increase of storm intensity there is a 650% claim increase. Hail will become larger and more frequent. For a 2C increase in temperature there is likely to be a 200% increase in number of households exposed.

Swiss Re and Munich Re reinsurance companies are doing advanced risk modelling. Hurricane Katrina bill was \$45 billion.

Need advanced catastrophe readiness with increased resource sharing, building code changes. All insurance policies in areas prone to storm surges, flood plains etc. will become more expensive to the point of possibly prohibitive.

Yianni Mentis: Water and Energy Services Skills Coordinator Department of Energy Utilities and Services [DEUS]

Initiatives may include councils to prepare a energy savings action plan[for councils with more than 50,000] with a NSW energy savings fund of \$200 million to be created. ROCS may coordinate grant funding. 46 councils in NSW are doing energy plans taking into account current energy use, management review to improve savings and detailed technical review of practices and a 4 year comprehensive plan. Councils are encouraged to target top 10 areas of electricity consumption.

For more information regarding programs and grants:  
[www.deus.nsw.gov.au](http://www.deus.nsw.gov.au) Yianni Mentis (02) 8281 7373 DEUS (02) 8281 7417

**ICLEI:****Local Governments for Sustainability. International Local Council membership of 600**

218 councils in Aust so far are participating covering 82% of the population, 69 in NSW. CCP [Cities for Climate Protection] milestones 1 to 5 and CCP plus for advanced initiatives. Greenhouse purchasing strategies.

[www.iclei.org/ccp.au](http://www.iclei.org/ccp.au)

Geoff Withycombe Sydney Coastal Councils Group [SCCG]: Suggested the possible need for a climate protection act.

The SCCG and CSIRO have begun a 2 year project through the AGO. It is focused on climate vulnerability mapping and adaptive capacity of councils in Sydney. The results are intended to be a pilot and guide to other councils.