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NORTHERN
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ACTION

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Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action Submission to the Strategic Review of Climate Change Programs

The Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA), which began operating in 2002, is a network of 9 Councils spanning the northern region of Melbourne from the CBD to the rural/urban fringe (see footnote) and Moreland Energy Foundation. The Alliance shares information, coordinates and implements community based emission reduction activities, undertakes research into reducing carbon emissions across the NAGA region, and cooperates on the research and development of innovative corporate emissions projects. NAGA also establishes partnerships and linkages with state and federal government agencies and departments, local government and industry associations, community groups and consultants to facilitate climate change action in the Northern Metro region.

Over the last 2 years, NAGA has attracted more than \$1,000,000 in cash and in-kind contributions to implement climate change action projects in the NAGA region, demonstrating significant emission reduction innovation at the local government and regional level.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Review. NAGA's key concerns related to the Review, and to the development of Australia's program of Climate Change action are listed below.

The overwhelming scientific evidence indicates that urgent action and deep cuts are required to keep warming below 2°C to prevent dangerous climate change. Given the complexity of the issues, a wide range of both supply and demand side measures are essential to be able to achieve the required levels of cuts to greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors.

An Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is important to place a cost on emissions and assist the economy to make the transition to a low carbon future. The scheme should be established so as to ensure a robust, transparent, efficient and effective scheme. We believe that this requires that the proposed ETS does not include provision of free permits. A fair price on carbon, with permits that are auctioned, would raise significant revenue that should then be invested in future-proofing low income households to avoid fuel poverty, and in visionary infrastructure, such as a national rail freight system, and renewable energy infrastructure for public buildings such as schools, that will further contribute to climate change mitigation action. Whilst an Emissions Trading Scheme is a key element in the climate change response, it is a medium-long term measure and will not, of itself, achieve the rapid deep cuts we must begin to achieve immediately.

An Emissions Trading Scheme will complement a comprehensive raft of other supply and demand side measures that are essential to achieve short term deep cuts to Australia's greenhouse emissions. These measures should include:

- Renewable Energy supported by financing measures that include:
 - an effective national feed-in tariff for photo-voltaic grid connected panels, other renewable energy generation and low-carbon co-generation. Key features of an effective feed-in tariff include mandating the tariff at 60c/kW, and gross production metering;
 - rebates, low interest loans and other innovative measures such as a National Climate Change Savings Scheme;
 - increase of the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

BANYULE CITY COUNCIL, DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL, HUME CITY COUNCIL, MANNINGHAM CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF MELBOURNE, MORELAND CITY COUNCIL, MORELAND ENERGY FOUNDATION LIMITED, NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL, CITY OF WHITTLESEA, CITY OF YARRA

- Energy Conservation, Energy Efficiency and Behaviour Change programs supported by measures including:
 - Strengthening and expanding the Minimum Energy Performance Standards program;
 - Improving regulation and statutory planning requirements for building standards and sustainable infrastructure;
 - Urban planning considerations that take into account access to local economic development and local food production to ensure development of more sustainable local communities, including access to local employment opportunities, access to efficient sustainable transport options, access to fresh food outlets.
 - Support for, and national expansion of energy efficiency programs such as the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target. Such programs have value in increasing energy efficiency installations, as well as stimulating the energy services sector; there are massive efficiency opportunities in non-residential sectors, including businesses, agriculture, streetlighting, etc.
 - funding community capacity building programs; working directly with existing networks and intermediaries including Regional Greenhouse Alliances and Local Government to implement effectively targeted programs.
- Social impacts:
 - Strong consideration given to the social impacts of climate change action (including increased power costs, food security and access) and provision of assistance to low income households.

The flow on effects of price increases of electricity and energy intensive goods and services are likely to have a major impact on the community, in particular low income and elderly people. NAGA members (and the local government sector as a whole) play a major role in working with communities to reduce their emissions, and ease the burden of price increases. Local Government is delivering programs to educate the community and also provides an avenue for major roll-out of retrofit and energy efficiency projects. Local government as a sector is well placed to be able to deliver national programs that are tailored to fit local communities' needs.

NAGA is one of 6 Regional Greenhouse Alliances in Victoria. The Greenhouse Alliances bring together local governments, state government departments and agencies and other key players to plan, design and implement regional programs for climate change mitigation and adaptation. They have demonstrated they are effective and efficient vehicles for regional action, and the establishment of such alliances across Australia should be encouraged and supported to establish a nation-wide network.

As noted in the Interim Report of the Garnaut Climate Change Review, 'the development of, and the marshalling of community understanding and support for steady policies that can be sustained over long periods' (p 58) is of critical importance. Community-focussed organisations and alliances, such as NAGA, and including NAGA's members (local government sector, and the not-for profit sector) are well placed to significantly contribute to this process of community engagement and support. The role of these organisations, alliances and partnerships should be recognised and their ongoing existence advocated as part of the Review process.

Yours sincerely



Judy Bush
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