

Time for Action

We, the Melville City Climate Action Network, commend the City of Melville (CoM) for being a signatory to the WALGA Climate Change Declaration (2012), when CO₂ levels were 394 ppm. They are currently **412 ppm**⁽¹⁾. The world has warmed ~1.0 °C above the 1850-1900 baseline⁽²⁾ and Australia is already experiencing unprecedented weather events. Missed workdays from the recent bushfires have cost more than \$1.3 billion in lost economic production, with the health of ~5.1 million adults, along with many children, being negatively impacted⁽³⁾. According to satellite data the rate of sea level rise in WA is 4-7 mm per year, amplifying the effects of tides and risks of storm surges⁽⁴⁾. Sea surface temperature in the Australian region has warmed by ~1 °C since 1910, with 8 of the 10 warmest years on record occurring since 2010, leading to a greater prevalence of marine heatwaves. Heatwaves and increased ocean acidity due to higher CO₂ levels, are having negative effects on coral and shellfish⁽⁴⁾. Since 1999, rainfall in the southwest has declined by 26% from the long-term average⁽⁴⁾.

The current pledges under the Paris Agreement put the world on track for **at least 3.2 °C** of warming by the end of the century⁽⁵⁾.

On 5th Nov 2019, world scientists published the paper “World Scientists’ Warning of a Climate Emergency”. More than 11,000 scientist signatories from around the world have declared “clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency”⁽⁶⁾. Climate change is becoming an existential threat— a threat that could annihilate most people on earth⁽⁷⁾.

The WALGA declaration, signed 8 years ago, is no longer ambitious enough. We currently face a global climate and ecological emergency.

Over 1700 local councils across 30 countries have acknowledged or made a Climate Emergency Declaration (CED)⁽⁸⁾. **Local governments are fundamental in the climate emergency response**⁽⁹⁾. They are developing plans and linking with other climate emergency councils, universities and their communities to innovate and build economies of scale for emissions reduction and drawdown.

Mitigation and adaptation actions required under a CED⁽¹⁰⁾:

- We request the City of Melville make a CED. This provides a powerful public signal that influences and engages the entire community to reduce community-wide emissions. Community engagement is the most crucial objective of a council CED.
- Priority — appoint a full-time Climate Emergency Officer with powers to plan and coordinate all of the CoM's climate and resilience responses including emergency climate mitigation and resilience and adaptation programs;
- Educate and mobilise the community about the climate emergency;
- Reduce emissions and drawdown previous emissions in the CoM's own operations and in the community;
- Build community resilience against global warming impacts;
- Directly lobby State and Commonwealth Governments’ to take emergency action to reverse global warming and fund the mitigation and resilience programs the CoM can implement;
- Include initiatives which incur an implementation cost but are ultimately of greater financial benefit to the council or community;

- Promote the CoM Revolving Fund to the community bodies who are eligible to apply e.g. community groups who use CoM buildings; and
- The most important action is to acknowledge the increased urgency to act on emission reduction.

Examples of more specific actions:

- Melville is vulnerable to storm surges. CoM need to support the building of a barrage on the new Fremantle bridge⁽¹¹⁾;
- Plan and lobby for the addition of large-scale energy storage systems to the electricity grid;
- Replace existing CoM fleet with electric vehicles, with solar recharge at council⁽¹¹⁾;
- Plan and lobby for clean energy public transport along major roads, e.g. Trackless Trams⁽¹¹⁾, renewable-hydrogen buses, etc.;
- Carbon neutral urban development⁽¹¹⁾ e.g. local recycling of building materials; hempcrete; and
- On declaration of a CE, liaise with the multiple CE councils who attended the National Climate Emergency Summit in Melbourne, 14-15 Feb 2020⁽¹²⁾.

Further information from Beyond Zero Emissions (BEZ)⁽¹³⁾, Climate Emergency Declaration and Mobilisation in Action (CEDAMIA)⁽¹⁴⁾, and Shire of Mundaring Council Minutes 10 Dec 2019⁽¹⁵⁾.

People are already scared⁽⁷⁾

- Over half believe “we face a **50% or greater risk of our way of life ending within the next 100 years**”
- A quarter rated the risk **of humans being wiped out at 50% or greater.**
- Almost 80% agreed “**we need to transform our worldview and way of life if we are to create a better future for the world**”
- Over two-thirds agreed that “**hope for the future rests with a growing global movement that wants to create a more peaceful, fair and sustainable world.**”
- Over a third – “we are facing a **final conflict between good and evil in the world**”. (Randell and Eckersley, 2015)

“It didn’t seem plausible to me that there was more risk at scaring people too much than there was at not scaring them enough.. my feeling was, and is, **if there’s a one percent chance that we’ve set off a chain reaction that could end the human race, then that should be something that the public knows and thinks about.**”

David Wallace-Wells, deputy editor at New York magazine and the former deputy editor of the Paris Review

Sources

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