

The City's Climate Plan in the 'fitting room'

Remember when your grandma or favourite aunt gave you that long awaited, promised gift dress or shirt and you opened it to find it wasn't quite what you had in mind? You didn't want to hurt her feelings or reject the garment that had cost her a lot but you want to ask her to make some changes.

Climate Action Hobart, a grass-roots community group advocating for strong climate action, feels a bit like that about the City of Hobart 'Sustainable Hobart Action Plan'. We have waited years for an updated climate strategy (if you hunt on the HCC website you will find the last one from 2009) and what the City has sent us is not a full strategy with clear goals, targets and outcomes. It's an Action Plan that is usually the end point of a strategy. We don't want to throw it out but It needs some nips and tucks and additions to make it fit better. Here are some of the things that need improving to create a really great gift to Hobart.

Given the City's strong commitment to the First Tasmanians, we are surprised that the document has no Acknowledgement of Country. That is easy to fix and we assume it will be.

We like the fact that links have been made between climate action and strong economic, environmental and social sustainability, and the five year timeframe recognises the importance of quick action.

There are some innovative proposals, such as the virtual power networks initiative which will provide an economic win-win, benefitting the Community as well as reducing the City's bottom line, a great outcome.

We like very much that the Plan links to the Hobart Community Vision and the Capital City Strategic Plan, recognising that strong communities build strong resilience. But across the areas of Leadership, Mobility, Energy, Resilience, Waste and Governance, the actions proposed are not as robust for delivering change as previous community consultations have asked for. For example, bike riders would like more bike paths and bike parking as well as the suggested e-bike charging stations which in reality may be of limited usefulness.

One of the Goals is 'creating the path to a zero emissions future for the City and the broader community', however there are only hints to that pathway in this document, and little emphasis on the growing climate emergency. We think there should be a fully developed strategy that drives this action plan, with staged targets and timeframes out to 2050.

We would like to see the Plan identify the actions that would have the most impact on reducing emissions and developing resilience so they are delivered first. For example, our use of petrol-driven vehicles is our biggest carbon impact for the State so any way of reducing emissions from this sector would be beneficial. This has recently been recognised by the State Government, with the announcement by the Premier that the Government fleet will be transitioning to lower-emissions vehicles, emphasising our view that actions relating to Mobility should be at the top of the priority list.

We are proud of our City and how it has responded to climate change over two decades. The City of Hobart has exceeded its own emissions reduction targets and has been instrumental in working with and supporting other Tasmanian Councils to adapt to the changing climate. Many of Climate Action Hobart supporters are Hobart residents; others live in Greater Hobart and Southern Tasmania and look towards the City of Hobart for leadership. We know from our decade of community involvement in climate action that there is a ground swell of support for strong action and

community engagement. It was only twelve months ago that over 20,000 people turned up with the School Strike for Climate students, highlighting the thirst for a way to contribute to a more sustainable future.

The City given us an opportunity to provide feedback on the Plan. In fact it makes clear our engagement is critical. "In recognising that community involvement is critical to building a sustainable future, the City is now seeking community and stakeholder feedback on the Draft Plan. Feedback gathered during this phase of engagement will seek to determine the community's level of support for the Draft Plan and will inform the final Plan." (from the yoursay survey)

It would fail the Hobart community to leave the 'gift' in the drawer and waste the opportunity to help drive change. So we are asking community members wherever you live to read and comment on the Plan and provide your encouragement to the elected Council to vote for the Sustainable Hobart Action Plan and then engage in the work of grounding it in a strong climate strategy. Here's where to go: <https://yoursay.hobartcity.com.au/sustainable-hobart>

Climate Action Hobart working group
climateactionhobart@gmail.com