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Committee Regional Sustainability Committee
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Communities for Climate Protection National Forum

1. Purpose

To report on attendance at the Communities for Climate Protection (CCP-NZ) National Forum in Hamilton on 2 April 2008.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Comment

I attended the National Forum of CCP-NZ in April in Hamilton as part of my responsibilities as nominated GW Councillor to CCP-NZ, and found the one day event to be excellent value, albeit involving flying some distance to get there. It was very pleasing to see three Wellington region mayors, Kerry Prendergast, David Ogden and Jenny Rowan, also attending.

Opening addresses from Patti Wenn, Executive Manager of Oceania Region, celebrated the significant levels of participation from local government in New Zealand and Australia, even though the latter had been the laggard in signing the Kyoto Protocol.

CCP registered local bodies cover 84% of the Australia's and 80% of NZ's population. There are now 21 CCP councils in NZ, producing 1-3 % of NZ emissions but with oversight over 50% through council policies.

Effective response depended on how seriously local bodies took their responsibility. Wellington City aims to be C-neutral by 2012 and the first Green Capital in the world. Kaikoura claimed that the appointment of a Sustainable Development officer was crucially important. Hawke's Bay Regional Council emphasised how important it was to make sure your calculations were correct - especially with respect to forests.

We (NZ) have amongst the highest per capita green house emissions (GHE) in the world. However, NZ is getting kudos for PM Helen Clark's speech declaring a target of carbon neutrality alongside other countries such as Costa Rica, Iceland and Norway. There was no international standard for carbon neutrality, and it was very important to document every step, to avoid getting egg on your face. Start with forests and local energy.

The "How to Do" was amply illustrated by an address from inspirational Jim Norris, Mayor of Mt Alexander, a small rural community of 17,000 centred on Castlemaine out of Melbourne. Mt Alexandra shire was severely impacted by the drought, but changed direction to create new employment in innovative environmentally friendly industries. Land developers went to environmentally sustainable spec housing, and the first Australian Electric car industry was established.

Quotes:

"We have only one chance", he said, "this is not a dress rehearsal!"

Be Loud, be proud to get change!

Distribute leadership, initiative and ownership!

Celebrate others successes!

Murray Ward outlined the new Emissions Trading Scheme, and the staged entry of Forestry (2008), Transport (2009), Stationary Energy (2010) and Agriculture and Waste (2013). He considered that it was essential that there was some revenue recycling, and that Councils can use the Voluntary Carbon Market as a testing ground.

Gerri Ward, senior advisor climate change implementation, and MfE's acting CEO, Howard Fancy, introduced themselves and the "6 Pack" (lead government departments) Carbon Neutral Public Service Programme. Stage two will be the uptake by 28 other departments.

Peter Neilson of the NZ Business Council for Sustainable Development described the results of a recent survey which indicated that businesses were slightly greener in their views than the public-at-large. Businesses tended to believe that sustainability "best practice" enhanced brand value and helped retain staff, and claimed that 42% had dropped suppliers for social or environmental reasons. 83% regarded climate change as a major issue for business.

Their research also suggests that people consider the environment at home but less so at work. 72% of respondents consider the environment when making household purchases but only 48% say environmental considerations impact their procurement and decision making when making business purchases.

Local Government has a leadership role to play in promoting sustainable procurement policies. Businesses need commonsense measures to help them lower energy and transport costs, and strong signals on what products and services were acceptable. Sustainable building initiatives lower costs for everybody.

Genesis, a sponsor of CCP-NZ, claimed that the Huntly power station was essential for dispatch and back up of the system, and explained how reduction in peak demand was the way to lower the use of fossil fuels in generation. They supported the introduction of the smart meter, and were setting up a school with solar generation as a template for others.

I attended a workshop on "Community Partnerships - driving community actions", led by Melanie Thornton. We chose the introduction of Water Tanks for a Communications Strategy Template. The background was a water crisis, and the need to increase security while reducing electricity generated from fossil fuels.

The objectives were to get water tanks on 1000 houses, heighten awareness of the value of utilising rain water tanks through the engagement of the key audience, householders (younger demographic in wealthier area?). Messages - save money, secure your water supply, protect your family, be prepared. A communication toolbox would be utilised to ensure that the messages got to the target audience. Critical issues would be examined, action plan with specific activities, budget and a final roundup to assess whether it worked, by measuring outcomes against the objectives, i.e. how many rang an 0800 number, and how many then installed tanks.

A final session looked at Big Hits and Savings and tumbling the Barriers, which led to my discovery that Nelson City Council was paying a travel allowance to cyclists and walkers.

Air New Zealand now has a Carbon Offset Programme to "take responsibility for" the CO₂ emissions of your flight. I choose instead to purchase carbon credits from Save Happy Valley Coalition to cover my air travel.

4. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

Report prepared by:

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