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Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation
Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Delivered by email climate-adaptation@pc.gov.au

To Whom it May Concern,

Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation, Draft Report

The Western Suburbs Regional Organisation of Councils (WESROC) would like to express our support for the Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation Draft Report, released for public consultation by the Productivity Commission in April 2012.

WESROC is a regional organisation comprised of six Perth inner city Local Governments in Western Australia, being the Cities of Nedlands and Subiaco, Towns of Claremont, Mosman Park and Cottesloe, and the Shire of Peppermint Grove. While not a formal member, the Town of Cambridge is also a participant. WESROC collaborates on cross-boundary issues relating to environment, town planning, transport and community development on a voluntary regional basis.

WESROC completed a strategic Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Project for the region between February and June 2010. The Project involved all WESROC local governments and was facilitated by the specialist consultants Coastal Zone Management Pty Ltd.

A series of workshops were held with local government staff, Elected Members and stakeholders from state government departments to i) identifying risks to local government assets and operations from projected climate changes and ii) prioritise risks and identify actions to treat the risks. The final report can be viewed at <http://www.subiaco.wa.gov.au>.

A WESROC Regional Climate Change Adaptation Committee oversees implementation of the action plan. WESROC Local Governments are also in the process of developing local action plans for adaptation requirements specific to their local areas.

WESROC would like to support the Productivity Commissions finding that coordination and collaboration among local governments enhances local government's capacity to respond to climate change, given the scale of the anticipated impacts of climate change.

WESROC would also like to emphasise the following points which were discussed in the Productivity Commissions Draft Report:

State Policies and Frameworks

It is critical that local government is guided and supported through policies and frameworks from state government. In many cases, it is unclear which level of government is responsible for managing the various climate change risks. This results in inaction, inefficient use of resources and an uncoordinated approach to risk management.

In particular, local government requires frameworks for incorporating climate change in land-use planning decisions and enforcement. There is currently little guidance in this regard. Where local governments elect to incorporate climate change in land use planning decisions, they lack the capacity to enforce climate-sensitive land use planning decisions.

Funding

Capacity to adapt to climate change and prepare for risk management is hindered by financial constraints. In many cases, funding is required for detailed project assessments for assets or operations determined to be at high risk from climate change. Funding is also required for implementation of the identified management actions. For example, a geotechnical study is required along the Cottesloe ocean foreshore to identify and implement any sub-surface stabilisation required for existing buildings.

Finally, WESROC would like to express support for a panel hearing to occur in Western Australia during July 2012.

Yours faithfully

Michael Cole
A/Chief Executive Officer
City of Nedlands

On Behalf of WESROC