

# Response to Productivity Commission Draft Report

## ***Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation***

***April 2012***

The following information is submitted as a response from the Administration of the City of West Torrens, South Australia.

### **General comments**

- The issue is of relevance to the City of West Torrens as we have commenced Stage One of a regional Climate Change Action Plan. Stage One of the project is to collect local and/or regional level climate change data appropriate to the project. It is intended that latter stages of the project will make recommendations about infrastructure protection and land use and development policy. Completion of this project is envisaged by early 2013.
- The Productivity Commission's report demonstrates sound research and an understanding of the issues facing local government. It also indicates a range of matters that may affect consistent and effective decision-making in relation to climate change impacts.
- Need to consider the "opportunities" of climate change as well as the risks and negative impacts. For example, more frequent droughts may affect the viability of some farming businesses, but it may also provide an opportunity for new farming practices and growth markets.
- The report makes reference to phrases such as "community wellbeing". How is it envisaged "community wellbeing" will be defined and how will it be measured?

### **Draft recommendations**

The following comments are made in relation to the draft recommendations, as summarised on page 19 of the report:

<b>4.1</b>	It is considered draft recommendation 4.1 is generally appropriate, however where measures have high up-front costs, it is suggested that these areas be the focus of intensive investigations in the short to medium term. "Deferring high-cost options until better information becomes available" does not adequately compel the necessary investigations or research to deliver better information. Further, the cost of acting now may be cheaper than in the future. Additionally retrofitting or repairing infrastructure once damage is done could be significantly more costly.
<b>5.1</b>	While Council staff do not have the skills or expertise to comment on the precise nature of the proposed reforms, it is agreed that government should "build adaptive capacity for dealing with future climate change". It is considered that financial measures are likely to be a significant barrier to appropriate adaptation measures and hence financial intervention from government in some form is likely to be required.
<b>6.1</b>	Agreed.

<b>7.1</b>	Agree to first step of this recommendation to "publish a comprehensive list of laws which delegate regulatory roles to local government". However it is considered the recommendation could be expanded to recommend a process to be used to clarify roles and responsibilities.
<b>7.2</b>	Agreed.
<b>8.1</b>	<p>A high priority should focus on data collection about likely climate change impacts and the timing of those impacts. This information is required at the local and/or regional level such that it is meaningful to the community during consultation processes and can be meaningfully applied to decision-making about land use. While overall recommendation 8.1 is considered to be appropriate, it seems premature in the absence of climate change impacts information at the local level.</p> <p>This recommendation also raises a question about what climate change and emissions scenarios are most appropriate.</p>
<b>8.2</b>	Agreed.
<b>8.3</b>	Agreed.
<b>10.1</b>	No opposition to this recommendation is raised.
<b>12.1</b> <b>12.2</b> <b>12.3</b>	It is considered that local government does not have a role to play in relation to influencing insurance policy.
<b>13.1</b>	Agreed. A central body to coordinate policy responses is considered a necessity to continue progress towards effective climate change adaptation. Any authority formed should have the necessary resources and knowledge base to facilitate required policy responses. It may be beneficial for any authority to be established outside of the sphere of local, state or federal politics.

### **Information requests**

The City of West Torrens is unable to add to the body of information at this stage. However upon completion of the regional climate change adaptation plan additional information and proposed strategies may become available.

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