



CLIMATE
EMERGENCY
STRATEGIC
ACTION PLAN
2020

Introduction

At its July 2019 meeting, Indigo Shire Council (ISC) declared a Climate Emergency and committed to a staged approach to respond to the emergency by integrating strong mitigation, adaptation and advocacy measures across all ISC services. The high level action plan that follows represents the first stage of ISC's response to the climate emergency. The Action Plan sets six strategic priorities to focus our climate emergency response, with more detailed actions to be developed and costed under each strategic priority. Many ideas that were identified in the initial stakeholder consultation phase are included under the strategic actions. There were several other actions suggested that were also supported but have already been completed, or are in progress. This Plan focuses on new actions and those strategic in nature recognising that there are many other things that will be implemented at an operational level that will also contribute to Council's climate emergency response.

The top six recommended actions are focused on embedding the climate emergency in all aspects of how ISC does business: from the strategic requirements of the Council Plan, to being reflected in decision making, policies and procedures, right through to how individual staff members interact with the public. These combined elements give the climate emergency the priority it needs in a corporate planning sense, as well as developing a culture to support the emergency, and has been described as a *red-carpet, not a red-tape approach*. The red-carpet philosophy represents both the attitude of paying the highest respect to environmental considerations and rolling-out the welcome mat for ideas and actions. To address the climate emergency requires transformational action, across all functions of Council.

In addition to the Strategic Actions, two actions identified by Council in its Climate Emergency resolution are included as potential considerations to generate revenue to help fund priority actions.

Methodology

Fishbowl PR was appointed to engage specific stakeholders and develop recommendations for a Climate Emergency Action Plan, in consultation with staff and community stakeholders. Via surveys and workshops, stakeholders were asked for their ideas on:

- Actions ISC could take;
- Actions ISC could lead / support the community to take; and
- Actions for which ISC could advocate to other levels of government.

Action ideas were qualitatively evaluated based on these criteria:

- climate change impact (which could be mitigation or adaptation);
- indicative cost;
- timeframe;
- how highly stakeholders rated the importance of the idea in the initial targeted consultation; and
- complexity (issues and opportunities).

It was agreed that climate change impact is the most important criteria and no ideas should be dismissed due to cost. The evaluation criteria were also applied to other action ideas, including those in the Climate Emergency resolution, and other related plans and policies. The next step is to develop more detailed project plans and costing for endorsed priorities.

As an important foundation for the Action Plan, ISC has recently embarked on a process of mapping its carbon footprint. This will result in an accurate emissions profile that will provide a baseline to develop an Emissions Reduction Plan. ISC has adopted the target of net zero (corporate) emissions by 2035.

Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan

Item	Strategic priorities	Climate change benefit (mitigation / adaptation) Low, Medium, High	Cost / Resources Indicative range: \$, \$\$ or \$\$\$	Timeframe Quick win = immediate, S = within 1 year, M=2-3 years; L =3+ years.	Other Considerations Issues, opportunities, complexities
1	<p>Embed Climate Emergency in the Council Plan</p> <p>Integrating the Climate Emergency response into the Council Plan is vital to gain consistent organisational commitment to considering climate change in everything that we do.</p> <p>This will flow through to reviewing all policies, plans and procedures through the climate emergency lens and making any changes required to align with the Climate Change Policy and this Action Plan.</p> <p>Priority actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include climate change information/workshop in the new Council induction program. • Commence review of key strategic documents (plans, policies and strategies) that inform the delivery of Council's functions across procurement, infrastructure design, maintenance, built environment, health and wellbeing, community engagement, plant, equipment and fleet to ensure climate change mitigation and adaptation opportunities are considered. • Apply risk management processes to develop, implement and monitor adaptation strategies and actions (including potential failure to adapt to climate change). • Prioritise sustainable procurement throughout the supply chain, including consideration of environment/climate change criteria when evaluating quotations for applicable goods and services. 	High	\$	S-M New Council has 12 months to deliver Council Plan. Plans/ policies reviews could start before this.	<p>How Climate Emergency will be prioritised in the development of the new Council Plan can only be recommended to the new Council.</p> <p>Community has opportunity to provide input as ISC develops its new Council Plan.</p>
2	<p>Reduce ISC carbon footprint</p> <p>Accelerate our transition to net zero by 2035 via renewable energy, energy efficiency and embracing innovation.</p> <p>Priority actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate sufficient budget to implement actions from the Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP, currently being developed). • Embrace Electric Vehicles for council fleet. • Fast track transition to 100% renewable electricity procurement. • Promote drawdown (carbon sequestration) opportunities and adaptation via land-use decisions (increased greening and retention of vegetation). • Evaluate the merits and opportunities of acquiring low-productivity cleared land and planting it out. 	High	\$ - \$\$\$	M	<p>Budget constraints, requires a change to the business as usual approach.</p> <p>Return-on-investment over time must be communicated and considered.</p> <p>Encourage community to do the same.</p>
3	<p>Cultivate a Climate Change Culture</p> <p>Change Council's culture to value, prioritise and champion the application of a climate change lens to all Council decisions, operations and functions.</p> <p>Priority actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular and ongoing education and staff training to support individuals and work teams to identify and implement climate change and emissions reduction actions. • Embedding climate resilience into all ISC's work and supporting staff to understand the climate emergency and to deliver climate responses as part of their roles. • Consistent leadership that champions climate change in all applicable decisions and processes. 	Medium - High	\$	M to L Quick win: declaring that a Climate Emergency warrants starting on culture change now Ongoing	<p>Must include Councillors, management and all staff.</p> <p>Culture change is a long-term undertaking requiring leadership drive, consistent implementation & reinforcement across all departments.</p>
4	<p>Promote Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD)</p> <p>ESD means integrating environmental considerations in strategic and statutory planning, capital works and maintenance, with the aim of protecting the environment while meeting current and future community needs.</p>	High	\$\$	S – M ongoing	<p>Resourcing and budget constraints.</p> <p>Embedding tools and knowledge for staff to</p>

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	Priority actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce greater environmental considerations in all planning and building applications. Undertake a land availability assessment to map strategic use of land for sustainable agriculture, incorporating climate projections. Support community uptake of electric vehicles, i.e. public EV charging stations. Consider climate change impacts and include ESD considerations for new buildings, maintenance and asset renewal – via sustainable design and orientation, energy efficiency and renewable energy, low-impact materials, reuse and recycling of materials. 				consistently apply ESD principles. Opportunities to learn from other councils that have already taken this action.
5	Mobilise and enable the community to act on climate change More effective community engagement to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate what climate change actions and projects ISC is undertaking. Support and enable community groups working on climate change and the environment. Provide more opportunities for the community to be involved in decisions. Substantively engage with youth and First Nations stakeholders. Priority actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult environmental community groups about the type of support they need from Council and agree how this will be delivered consistently. Provide practical support for local projects such as infrastructure, space, and waste services for local food producers' markets and events. Showcase updates and regularly report on ISC climate change projects and status. Continue to promote/enhance the community directory function of the website to help connect the community to climate action groups. Facilitate/support community events to engage the broader community on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Support the Indigo Shire Youth for Climate Action climate change summit. 	Medium	\$	S-M Ongoing	Clarity needed regarding how ISC will provide support, considering resourcing constraints. Novel methods of communicating climate change actions, projects and opportunities is required.
6	Collaborate and advocate Partner with others in the climate emergency movement to increase our impact, leverage funding and lobby the state and federal governments to take action. Priority actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively contribute to Climate Emergency Australia (CEA), which has been formed by the 90 Councils across Australia that have declared a Climate Emergency Investigate participating in regional approaches e.g. Z-Net Adopt collaboration/brokering role within Indigo Shire and the Ovens-Murray region to develop enterprise partnerships and connect with others on large scale initiatives to attract funding. Advocate to state and federal governments to commit to and deliver the transformational changes required to avoid overwhelming climate damage 	Medium	\$	Quick win - Ongoing	Many possible partners / opportunities. Resourcing needs to be considered. Opportunities to learn from other councils and gain efficiencies.
Possible Funding Consideration	If and when the financial need is identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore a rate cap variation to fund climate change action. Explore the possible sale of the Buller Gas Contract (Note A legal review of the Buller Gas contract is planned for 2021/22 in the lead up to the next 10-year extension option on that contract. Information on the potential sale of that contract could be evaluated in that review.) 	Nil Nil	\$\$\$ \$\$\$	L M	Extensive community consultation and business case required to support a rate cap variation.