

2009 Tasmanian Awards for Environmental Excellence

Category: **Local Government Award**

Entry Title: **A Decade of Climate Action**

Entrant: **Hobart City Council**

Summary

Over the last decade, the Hobart City Council has been fully committed to addressing climate change through positive and innovative actions. It is now rightly acknowledged as a community leader in Tasmania.

Innovative strategies such as using energy from the Hobart landfill to heat the Hobart Aquatic Centre, supporting households through rebate schemes, informing local communities through forums and providing building design guidelines are all part of the Council's integrated approach to proactive climate change action.

The Council has developed a new strategic framework known as *Hobart's Climate Change Strategies x5* (HCC S5). The focus of HCC S5 is on five core strategies which apply across the organisation, local community and regional linkages.

The results achieved by the Council show that independent local action can be successful in making a real difference. The Hobart City Council continues to promote long-term collective action across all tiers of government in Tasmania.

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Attachments:

Summary of the Council's Climate Change Activities

Climate Change and Sustainability Steering Committee Organisation Structure

Hobart City Council Climate Governance (Strategic Plan, Emissions Profile and Council Resolutions).

Climate Change Media Various 2007 onwards

Housing Sustainability (Energy Efficiency Design, Water, Solar and Insulation rebates)

Beat Winter Chills and Bills Q&A Initiative

McRobies Gully Landfill Gas Power Plant

Sustainable Transport - Media Various

Photographs (on CD)

Introduction

Over the last decade, the Hobart City Council (HCC) has committed itself to a program of actions and initiatives to address climate change. The Council has been recognised as a leader in Tasmania and has demonstrated its willingness to act by providing a holistic corporate framework for climate change activity. More than anything, the results achieved show that independent local action can be successful in making a difference. As part of its leadership role, the Hobart City Council is promoting the need for long-term collective action across all tiers of government in Tasmania.

Criteria 1 - The extent to which the local government authority has developed and implemented environmental policies

The Council has been working on climate change initiatives since it joined the Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) Program in May 1999, being the first Tasmanian council to do so. By 2002 the Council had completed the five CCP Program milestones and then joined CCP Plus, a program to facilitate climate change action on an ongoing basis.

A number of measurable objectives have been defined and are included in the Council's Strategic Plan, Greenhouse Action Plan and CCP initiatives.

The HCC has also ensured its management structures are equipped to deal with the complex challenges ahead. A Climate Change and Sustainability Steering Committee has been created to drive corporate activity across energy management, climate change action and sustainability initiatives in the coming years.

A new strategic framework for action known as *Hobart's Climate Change Strategies x5* (HCC S5) has also been recently developed. The focus of HCC S5 is on five core strategies which apply across the organisation, local community and regional linkages. These strategies, known as the five A's of climate change, are:

- **Abatement** - the reduction of emissions through on-ground energy efficiency measures;
- **Accounting** - investigating the economic impacts on the Council's core activities and on the community;
- **Adaptation** - adjusting lifestyles to cope with and learn to live with climate change by identifying the risks, threats and opportunities;
- **Advocacy** - promoting leadership within the Council and throughout the community in responding to climate change; and
- **Awareness** - increasing awareness and understanding of climate change throughout the community and across the Council.

To align with national approaches on climate change action, Hobart's sustainable and climate friendly vision is:

- *"The Council and its activities to be carbon neutral by 2020;*
- *To create a climate aware and resilient community that has supported and invested in a range of strategies led by the Council to abate emissions, adapt to impacts and account for a carbon neutral economy;*
- *To be an advocate for climate change action and create a climate aware and resilient community's; and*
- *To lead as a local government our community and urban region for the necessary transitional change to a carbon neutral society at all levels."*

Criteria 2 - Achievements and results

The results achieved over the past ten years are impressive. Apart from setting, *and achieving*, the most progressive greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of any participating council in Australia (70% emission reduction from 1996 to 2010). To date, it has abated a total of 166,937 e-CO₂ tonnes from its activities with over 40% being achieved since 2007. This is equivalent to taking 38,823 cars permanently off the road or turning off all Australian streetlights for 53 days. And through its Solar Hot Water Rebate, in 2007, approximately 520 e-CO₂ tonnes has been abated from 180 + systems installed.

In addition the following specific actions and results have been achieved from 2007 onwards:

- Increased energy efficiency of households through its *\$500 Solar Hot Water Rebate Scheme*, *\$300 Insulation Rebate*, *Building Design Rebate* and *Beat the Winter Chills and Bills Question & Answer Sessions*;
- *Energy Reserve Fund* - \$50,000 for corporate energy saving projects in addition to those identified in annual budgets;
- Trialling energy efficient low carbon emission street lighting in residential streets;
- Commitment to reduce remaining greenhouse emissions by a further 30% by 2020;
- Coordinating the *Hobart Regional Arterial Bike Network* strategy in 2008 - a collaboration with local councils and Cycling South;
- Release of the draft *Sustainable Transport Strategy* in 2008; and
- Encouraging other councils to participate in the CCP program and strongly advocating a regional approach to address climate change.

These initiatives are aligned with previous abatement actions including:

- Installation of cogeneration technology at the McRobies Gully landfill where methane is converted to electricity and fed into the State-wide grid
- Installation of 140kWh cogeneration water treatment plant which burns methane to heat digesters;
- Installation of heat exchange technology enabling heating of Hobart Aquatic Centre using from heat extracted from sewage pipe;

Refer to the attached "*Summary of the Council's Climate Change Activities*" for other achievements.

The following table shows aggregated energy and carbon emissions since the Council began measuring these from 1996. Notwithstanding one-off increases associated with the Aquatic Centre becoming operational and the laying of the gas pipeline, the table indicates a decreasing trend. Greenhouse gas emissions (eCO₂t) from Council activities have been significantly abated.

Since 2004, considerable abatement has been achieved for emissions from Council's landfill by initially flaring and then cogeneration technologies which feed power generated from methane emissions into the statewide electricity grid.

| | 1996 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------------------|---|---|---------|--|---|---|--|---|
| GJ | 55,357 | 107,705 | 105,341 | 107,873 | 120,945 | 114,826 | 113,468 | 103,587 |
| eCO ₂ t | 45,818 | 46,801 | 47,271 | 38,495 | 20,192 | 12,027 | 11,662 | 13,215 |
| Comment | Base Year First inventory undertaken as per CCP program | Increase GJ Aquatic Centre came on line almost doubling HCC energy consumption | | Decrease eCO ₂ t - due to commencement of flaring of methane (CH ₄) at McRobies Gully landfill | Increase GJ due to laying of statewide gas pipe line and increase use of Bitumen plant | Decrease eCO ₂ t - due to cogeneration of methane (CH ₄) at McRobies Gully landfill | Decrease eCO ₂ t - due to cogeneration of landfill methane and conversion of bitumen plant to natural gas | Increase eCO ₂ t- due to increase in the Tasmanian Emissions factor 1996 00.2 kg CO ₂ -e/GJ to 2007 - 0.13 kg CO ₂ -e/GJ |

Criteria 3 - Scale and broader impact

The leadership shown by the HCC over ten years has encouraged a number of other councils and community organisations to become more involved in climate change action. Most of the specific programs initiated by the Council can be duplicated by other councils, particularly the rebate incentive schemes, waste management and energy projects and support for local groups.

The Walking School Project is a classic example of transferability where it can be adopted by many schools on a long-term basis. The positive outcomes of this model provide reduced greenhouse gas emissions for each school's local area, encouraging physical activity and fostering community participation.

The Sustainable Transport Strategy provides a robust model for local government to start integrating a range of transport options into transport planning and design.

Most importantly, the Council's climate action plan (HCC S5) provides a clear framework which can be utilised and adapted by other councils.

Overall the Council has been proactive and vocal in its support for climate change action, and remains committed to making a real difference at the local and regional level.

Criteria 4 - Innovative practices, technologies or standards developed or utilised.

The HCC has driven a decade-long process to realise significant outcomes for climate change action across all its operations as well as establishing itself as a leader and innovator for the local community.

Much of what has been achieved has been unique for local government in Tasmania, such as:

- Achieving the most progressive greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of any participating council in Australia;
- Committing to reduce Council's remaining greenhouse emissions by a further 30% by 2020;
- Purchase of carbon offsets emissions for the Taste of Tasmania Food Festival;
- Providing a solar hot water rebate, still the only one of its kind in Tasmania (and Australia);
- Adopting energy efficient street lighting to achieve a reduction of 25 tonnes of CO₂ emissions p.a.;
- Developing cogeneration potential from Council's landfill to heat the Hobart Aquatic Centre;

- Resources integrated across the Council to ensure the HCC can meet its commitments to climate change projects and activity; and
- Establishing the Climate Change and Sustainability Steering Committee to direct Council activity.

More than anything the last decade of action has demonstrated that with a commitment to seeking long-term change, significant and measurable outcomes can be achieved.

Criteria 5 - Partnerships formed and utilised and stakeholders engaged

In taking a leadership role on climate change action in Tasmania, the Hobart City Council has worked hard to support local businesses and residents in adopting climate change actions, through the following measures:

- Release of *Energy Efficient Guidelines* for home builders and designers;
- *Building Fee Rebate* which encourages energy efficient siting, design and construction;
- *Solar Hot Water Rebate* - \$500 for installation of these systems;
- *Insulation Rebate* - \$300 for installation in houses constructed prior to 2003; and
- *Water Rebates* -for the installation of water tanks, water efficient systems and appliances.

The *Beat the Winter Chills and Bills Question & Answer Sessions and Displays* initiative delivered 6 community and 4 Council in-house sessions to assist householders and staff improve energy efficiency, increase knowledge on climate change and build community resilience.

A number of community focussed activities have also been supported by the Council including:

- A grant to Sustainable Living Tasmania to deliver a series of community workshops on climate change and host a community conference;
- The *Walking School Bus Project* in partnership with the Australian Greenhouse Office and South Hobart Primary School to enable children to walk to school on a regular basis with the aid of parent volunteers along a designed safe route to school;
- Hobart Sustainable Schools Initiative - working with MacKillop College to encourage participation in the Solar Schools Initiative;
- Around the World in Eighty Ways - support for participants at the UN Bonn Climate Change conference using carbon friendly transport

A new initiative by the Council is to coordinate, through the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, the development and implementation of community based programs that foster sustainable behaviour change and adapt to the social, economic and environment impacts of climate change at local, regional, national and global levels.