

# CLIMATE READY HOBART

Working together for our living city

## REPORT OF THE HOBART CLIMATE ASSEMBLY

Prepared by the Hobart Climate Assembly, 17 March 2024



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City of **HOBART**

## BACKGROUND

The Hobart Climate Assembly brought together a diverse group of 33 members representative of the diversity of the Hobart community, participating over the four days to provide a clear set of community priorities to address climate change. Convened by the City of Hobart on 17 to 18 February and 16 to 17 March 2024 the Assembly provided advice on how Council and community can respond to our climate and biodiversity emergency together to inform a new climate change strategy. The following document is the Report from the Hobart Climate Assembly, written in the Assembly members own words. The City of Hobart is committed to providing feedback to the Assembly on how the recommendations have been responded to in the new climate change strategy.

## INTRODUCTION

The Hobart Climate Assembly is a diverse group representing citizens from suburbs around Hobart. We are high school students, retirees, stay at home mums, working mums, builders, business owners, renters and more. We ride buses and bikes and we drive cars in and around the city and our children play in parks. We signed up to this process because we wanted a say on the Council's climate plans.

Across four intense days, our group heard presentations from experts and council staff on what is possible in our city and how urgently we need to address climate change. The process was respectful, creative and inspiring. We didn't always agree. Some in our group rightly raised questions about the speed and cost of moving swiftly on climate. We were surprised at how united we were on the need for rapid action and how we were able to prioritise goals and actions.

The majority of our group want the council to have the highest level of ambition. We want Hobart City Council (HCC) to lead on climate locally and become an international example of positive climate action. We also believe the community and Hobart businesses have parts to play in emissions.

We want Hobart City Council staff, elected members, and everyone living in Hobart to know that ordinary people expect our leaders to move as quickly as they can on climate. We are excited because we know that if the Hobart City Council can act on our recommendations, then great things will happen. We can support people who have less; we can move more and be healthier; we can protect our biodiversity and have cleaner air and water, now and for future generations.

We feel privileged to have been part of a historic move by council to bring together citizens in this way. We thank council staff and the independent facilitators for leading this process and giving us the opportunity to express our views.

## WHAT DID ASSEMBLY MEMBERS LEARN ALONG THE WAY?

The Assembly members gained significant amounts of knowledge in the two weekends, about the impacts of climate change locally, potential solutions, and logistics of creating change. Coming from different backgrounds and experiences, each of us came to the Assembly with a different breadth of knowledge, hence the first weekend which focused on educating us with the same resources was paramount. Learning of the existing work done by the council in addition to planned actions, it was interesting to understand the logistics and role of HCC as an example, facilitator and advocate for the community. The interconnectivity of problems and solutions was made apparent through in-depth discussion and hands on activities.

The difference of priorities was made clear in a room full of 33 people, representative of broader society. To work with this, it was insightful to learn of the process of deliberation as opposed to discussions and debate, and the importance of it.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Considering the five goals: Emissions, Restore Nature, Equitable Transitions, Climate Resilience, and Mobilise Leaders, there were strong support for the vast majority of objectives. However, in four of the goals there were at least one objective that trailed behind or had very little support. Support for the objectives was often lacking if members of the assembly felt that it was poorly worded, was overlapped with another objective, or it was in the wrong place in the strategy. This was a great opportunity for the assembly to indicate where they believe resources should be spent, and to better understand the priorities of the assembly members themselves.

## OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AS HAVING THE BIGGEST IMPACT

In emissions, members recognised that active transport, public transport, and electric vehicles were great opportunities to reduce emissions and supported the objectives related to those topics. The objectives that fell under supporting nature with the strongest support were green spaces within the city and supporting existing bushland, the two of these received the bulk of the votes. In Equitable Transitions, there was strongest support for ensuring the benefits of a climate ready city extend to all, with the two groups mentioned being low-income communities and language diverse communities. All objectives from climate resilience received an even amount of support aside from one, which was ultimately amalgamated into others. For Mobilising Leaders, the assembly indicated that the council can be encouraging community groups and businesses to take part in the conversation.

## PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR REDUCING EMISSIONS

### **For transport:**

The Assembly most strongly favoured the Hobart City Council developing a network of safely connected walkways and cycleways to encourage active transport as the action for reducing emissions. We supported this knowing transport is one of the largest source of emissions for the Hobart community, and because it developing active transport has an enormous number of co-benefits including improving our health and making the city more accessible for people with wheelchairs and prams and more enjoyable to be in. We expect this to be delivered over a medium to longer term period, understanding there would be considerable planning resources required initially as well as extensive infrastructure spend.

### **For building and energy:**

The most strongly favoured action under building and energy was for the Hobart City Council to put in place regulation to prioritise electrification in new builds and ban new gas connections. This would send a strong signal to developers and builders that gas is polluting. It would potentially cost council in staff to implement this but not a large cost.

### **For waste:**

The assembly wants the Council to prioritise stopping selling offsets and allowing others to pollute. We strongly supported this based on expert advice as a clear way for the council to reduce emissions. However, we understand that there could be a significant financial hit to the HCCs bottom line. We expect work to begin on this immediately but understand that it may take time for the process to be unwound in a way that balances the financial implications with the emissions.

The second most favoured action under transport was for the Hobart City Council to strongly lobby the State and Federal Government to develop a zero emissions public transport system that encourages use through better user experience and increased availability. We believe that applying pressure on the Tasmanian Government and the Government enterprise Metro can begin immediately but understand that the actual spend and work on this would need to be done over the medium to longer term.

## PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR RESTORING NATURE

Developing green and blue corridors were the potential actions believed to have the most positive impact for restoring nature. We emphasised the importance of restoring and maintaining existing areas, prior to investing in further developments. These actions had the most amount of co-benefits for the climate, community and biodiversity.

The council needs to take the lead in investing in these projects, engaging with the community to get it done, and advocating to the government for funding (\$).

Short-term time period for these actions, recognising that planting trees is quicker and cheaper than converting to an entirely EV fleet in Hobart for example.

## PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE

Assess and improve infrastructure around the city to be climate ready, and using planning, legislation and regulatory controls to reduce risk - were the top priority actions believed to have the most positive action for building resilience.

The council would be taking the lead for the infrastructure it owns in public spaces, and regulating what they can to reduce risk (though the state government would be the ones to enforce any legislation, putting the council in a position of advocacy).

We view these as a large investment over a medium time scale.

## PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR EQUITABLE TRANSITIONS

The most strongly supported actions for equitable transitions were providing financial support for low-income households, providing safe public spaces, and ensuring social housing is energy efficient via retrofitting and new builds. Council can take the lead in this process both in a direct role and in an advocacy role. All of these actions require sizable investment but could be acted upon in short term.

## PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR MOBILISING LEADERS

Providing support and financial incentives to households and businesses to electrify and retrofit was the priority action for mobilising leaders. We recognise the benefit of the 'carrot' approach to action, ensuring accessibility for climate action as climate change affects everybody.

For these actions Council can the lead; it would be a large investment over a medium time period.

## THE TOP TEN PRIORITY ACTIONS

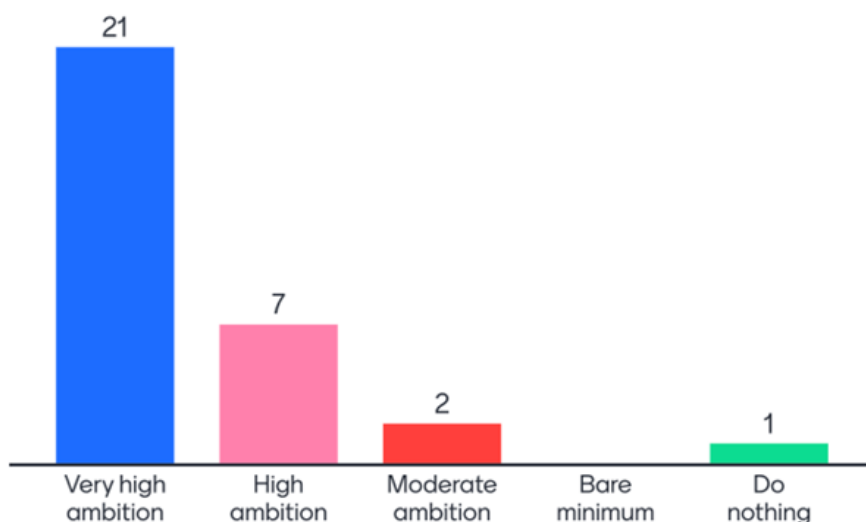
After identifying co-benefits for all actions, and considering the linkages between them the following priority actions were identified, considering all short-listed actions for all priority areas.

1. Develop a network of connected and safe walkways, cycleways to encourage active transport (incl. footpath upgrades, pathways, trails and cycleways).
2. Develop a network of green corridors throughout the city to increase tree cover, cool the city, improve liveability and movement.
3. Stop selling offsets and giving someone else permission to pollute.
4. Phase out fossil fuels from Council operations, including through assets, supply chains and investments.
5. Develop a network of waterways, wetlands and blue corridors to improve irrigation and manage runoff from heavy rainfalls, reduce pollution/flooding.
6. Implement fire management programs that improve biodiversity and bushland health.
7. Advocate to develop a zero emissions public transport system that encourages usage through increased availability and better user experience.
8. Provide safe and inclusive publicly accessible spaces for extreme climate-related events for priority communities and those who require support.
9. Use planning, legislation and regulatory controls to reduce risk; and assess and improve critical infrastructure across the city to be climate ready.
10. Provide support and financial incentives to households, businesses and neighbourhoods to electrify and retrofit.

## AMBITION FOR CLIMATE ACTION

In response to the key remit question, the Assembly strongly recommended that Council should commit to a very high level of ambition, as shown below.

What level of ambition do you believe the City of Hobart should have in relation to taking climate action?



## REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS

Everyone was invited to share their thoughts on the process, in addition to a Menti Poll.

### To what extent do you agree with the following statements



#### Comments were as follows:

- Excellently facilitated
- Representative (of problems, assembly members)
- Balance of speakers and participation
- Given the diversity of the group there is a surprising level of consensus.
- Investing heavily in the process meant that it had a lot of weight and most took it very seriously.
- The digital polling solutions meant that we had a democratic vote on issues.
- Anonymity in voting processes.
- Facilitators spent time and effort on giving a voice to softer spoken people.
- Facilitators and City of Hobart staff take feedback seriously.
- The fact that the draft strategy was changed between the two weekends offered everyone a lot of trust that our voices were being heard.
- Starting with expert opinions on the first weekend was a great choice.
- Boots on the ground council staff coming in was appreciated.
- Impressed with the diversity and quality of guest speakers - gave credibility to the conversations that followed
- Council is clearly taking advice from experts

- Impressed with the facilitation and the way facilitators were able to keep conversations on track
- Impressed with organisation and how much effort went into food, supplies, venue, etc.
- We feel that diverse voices could have been amplified more (acknowledging that effort went into hearing from everyone, e.g., through Menti)
- Very accommodating (e.g., for breastfeeding, cultural considerations)
- Council team were very welcoming, supportive and friendly
- Feeling heard and reassured that our voices matter and that the outputs from this Assembly will be reflected in the strategy
- Could have been better with more time to process rather than learning a lot of information very quickly
- The food was better on the second weekend
- The presenters did very well at giving us information in layman's terms
- We feel heard by HCC and the facilitators, our ideas aren't shut down but maybe redirected
- Excellent presenters, and all the people who came from the City of Hobart
- Payment to attend is pretty encouraging, it was good to see that participation was highly valued
- Very inclusive and representative approach, participants were well selected effectively
- Jess Robbins has been exceptional and the involvement of other staff has been useful for both them and us
- Excellently facilitated
- Representative (of problems, assembly members)
- Balance of speakers and participation
- More time for questions
- Less frequently hurried mentis (recognise importance of data collection)
- Effectively got everyone on the same page from the beginning, helped us learn about this issues to inform discussions
- Facilitators did a good job of wrangling a vocal group, ensuring the voices of all participants were heard