

# Victorian Climate Change Green Paper Submission from the Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group

PO Box 468 Traralgon VIC. 3844  
Green Paper Response Coordinator: Dan Caffrey



The Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group (LVSG) is a community based, newly incorporated group of citizens with the aim of working towards creating a sustainable future for our own and future generations and to preserve the natural environment to provide quality of life for our citizens. We have over 70 members and welcome this opportunity to respond to the Government Green Paper.

Green Paper proposal	Submission
<p>Intro: Highlights of the Victorian Climate Change Green Paper</p> <p>The Government has developed five priorities for action that will give Victoria a strong foundation for further developing its long term response to climate change. The Government is particularly interested in receiving suggestions for policies or projects that fall within these five priorities.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive innovation to position Victoria to capitalise on new jobs and skills, new technologies and new markets and accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy</li> <li>• Support private action to adapt to a changing climate, and undertake adaptation actions on behalf of the Victorian community to protect the environment, key public assets and manage major public risks</li> <li>• Help vulnerable regions, businesses and communities adjust to a carbon price, particularly the Latrobe Valley</li> <li>• Promote low emissions energy technologies as the key to Victoria's energy future</li> <li>• Establish future-focussed transport, planning and building systems to support a low emissions future and accommodate a changed climate.</li> </ul>	<p>We support the five priorities outlined for Victorian Government action.</p> <p>However we consider that the Government's current actions are not matching the rhetoric and that more action needs to be taken, and more quickly.</p> <p>We prefer to keep current power industry workers employed in new energy industries. We commend the recent Government initiative as discussed at the Latrobe Valley Energy Summit (late July 2009) to look at the transition of coal-fired electricity industry workers to clean energy employment. But the wider community needs to be kept informed and involved in the decision making process</p>
<p>1.2 The Commonwealth CPRS</p> <p>Accordingly, the Government does not see any benefit in legislating for a state-based emissions reduction target that is inconsistent with a national target.</p> <p>In particular, Victoria will not abolish or scale back State emission abatement initiatives until an effective Commonwealth equivalent is in operation.</p>	<p>That is a reasonable position, but should not prevent the Victorian Government from aiming to achieve greater reductions in its own operations.</p> <p>We support this position.</p>
<p>1.4 Our Long Term Goals</p>	<p>We support all 10 goals.</p>
<p>1.5 Our priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive innovation to position Victoria to capitalise on new jobs and skills, new technologies and</li> </ul>	<p>We support all five initiatives strongly. We see concentration of effort into developing and promoting</p>

<p>new markets and accelerate the transition to low carbon economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support private action to adapt to changing climate and undertake actions on behalf of the Victorian community to protect the environment, key public assets and manage public risks.</li> <li>• Help vulnerable regions, businesses and communities adjust to a carbon price, particularly in the Latrobe Valley.</li> <li>• Promote low emissions technologies as a key to Victoria's energy future and to accommodate a changed climate</li> <li>• Establish future-focussed transport, planning and building systems to support a low emissions future and accommodate a changed climate.</li> </ul>	<p>new green technologies as a way of capitalising on the skills that the community already possesses, which can lead to increased job and export possibilities. This is especially needed in the Latrobe Valley to compensate for any job losses in the coal-fired electricity sector.</p> <p>The Latrobe Valley region is unique in Victoria, due to the fact that well over half of the GHG emissions in the state emanate from here. Moving to a less carbon intensive economy will hurt this region economically, more than anywhere else in Victoria. This compels a transition to greener jobs as soon as possible in the Latrobe Valley ahead of other areas of Victoria.</p>
<p>1.6 Choosing between different policy levers</p> <p>Question: Has the Government set the right priorities for short-term action on climate change? Should there be others?</p>	<p>We encourage stronger targets for mitigation in Government operations. The Government could be more proactive in leadership by example. Specific areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change should be considered in planning and rezoning.</li> <li>• Climate change should be a key consideration in developing and implementing major State projects.</li> <li>• Infrastructure to assist community mitigation efforts should be a priority (eg. public transport).</li> <li>• Government departments should be leaders in reducing the carbon intensity of their operations.</li> <li>• When assessing whether new coal proposals are put forward, the prime determinant should be, what extra contribution to Green House Gases in the atmosphere and what GHG free alternatives are available.</li> </ul>
<p>2.1 Our Changing Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Victoria, the average daily max. temp has increased 0.8 ° C and daily minimum by 0.4 ° C since 1950.</li> <li>• The decade from 1998 – 2008 was exceptionally dry and hot – daily max was 0.6 ° C warmer than the 30 year average form 1961 -1990.</li> <li>• By 2030, temps expected to increase by a further 0.6 and 1.2 ° C on 1990 levels.</li> <li>• By 2070, the average annual temp. could increase by 1.4 ° C under a low emissions scenario and by 3° C with a high emissions regime.</li> </ul>	<p>These figures are conservative compared to some predictions and the latest scientific evidence. The impacts are now considered likely to be more severe and to occur earlier than previously predicted. This makes mitigation efforts more urgent than ever before.</p>
<p>2.1 How is Climate Change Likely to Affect Victoria? In 2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ave annual temps up 1.2° above 1990 level.</li> <li>• More days above 35 °C.</li> <li>• Less rain and fewer rainy days.</li> <li>• More frequent droughts across the state.</li> <li>• Reductions of at least 30% in run-off into catchments.</li> <li>• Increased water temperature in inland and marine environments.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree with all these, but many seem to be conservative.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More extreme weather events.</li> <li>• More frequent bush fires, with number of extreme fire danger days increasing by between 5 and 40% by 2020, relative to 1974-2003.</li> <li>• Rising sea levels and increase in storm surges.</li> </ul>	<p>The Jan/Feb bushfires of 2009 should be considered an example of what the future holds for us unless, we can rein in GHG emissions and reduced them to less than 350 ppm over time.</p>
<p>2.1 What is Climate Change Likely to Mean for the Latrobe Valley?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some agricultural industries will be adversely affected, but others may be more suited to drier and warmer conditions.</li> <li>• Fire risk will increase. More fires expected in the Strzelecki Ranges and Wilson's Promontory.</li> <li>• Latrobe Valley's economic base will suffer in the initial to medium term because of the impacts of putting a price on carbon.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree, and we have already experienced some of these impacts. These are likely to become more severe.</p> <p>Another example is that the current allocation of water to the coal fired power industry is unlikely to be sustainable, especially as the climate dries and population pressures and agriculture compete for dwindling water resources.</p>
<p>2.1 The Latest Climate Change Science on a Global Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the warming over the last century has been from anthropogenic causes.</li> <li>• Warming will continue for centuries even if GHG concentrations were stabilised today.</li> <li>• IPCC predictions of sea level rise of 59 cm by 2100 may be too low, because they don't include the possibility of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets melting.</li> <li>• The observed decrease in rainfall over south eastern Australia since 1970 is already greater than the predicted decrease due to climate change for 2030.</li> <li>• Even with no further emissions, the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere have probably committed the planet to future global warming of 1.4° C to 4.3° C above pre-industrial levels – double to 7 times the warming already experienced.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree with these, as they have been well publicised.</p>
<p>2.2 Our current emissions</p> <p>Victoria's Emission Reduction Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big challenge due to our heavy reliance on brown coal.</li> <li>• Need to invest in renewables, such as wind, solar, geothermal and biomass.</li> <li>• Also carbon capture and storage. Offers the prospect of very substantial cuts of GHG's.</li> <li>• Making these changes will also boost opportunities for low emission technology commerce, plus environmental benefits.</li> <li>• Victoria will play its part in the national CPRS.</li> <li>• Victorian government will legislate in key areas to ensure the effectiveness of a CPRS.</li> </ul> <p>Victoria' Emissions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 1990 to 2006, Victoria's emissions increased by 13.1 Million tonnes (Mt) or 12.2 %.</li> <li>• This is 21% of Australia's total.</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> was 80% of Vic total, Methane 15%, Nitrous oxide 4%.</li> <li>• The Energy sector was 67% of the state total followed by Transport 16%. Agriculture was 12%.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree, but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We consider that direct investment into renewables now will be more cost effective and deliver reductions sooner than investment in carbon capture and storage.</li> <li>• We question the conventional wisdom that "economic growth" underpins societal welfare, given that the Earth has finite resources. At a minimum, society needs to find a way of having economic growth without the growth in emissions.</li> <li>• Renewables would seem to be the answer, along with state of the art energy efficiency and waste elimination.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land-use and forestry are now net sinks of carbon since 2006 due to reduction of land-clearing.</li> <li>• Main driver of emissions in this state is the growth of commerce. Must de-couple economic growth from growth of emissions.</li> <li>• Per capita emissions for Vic are 23.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e at present, which is less than WA and Queensland and NT.</li> <li>• But Australia’s per capita greenhouse emissions are virtually the highest in the world, because of our reliance on coal for power generation – nearly twice the OECD average.</li> </ul>	<p>Salient point. The rest of the world will judge us by this.</p>
<p>3.1 The Stationary Energy Sector As the major contributor to Victoria’s overall greenhouse gas emissions, the stationary energy sector will need to undergo a major transformation to make the transition to a lower emissions future.</p> <p>In 10 years almost 20% of Victoria’s electricity consumption will be from renewables, due to MRET.</p>	<p>We strongly agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victoria needs to set high targets for CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions.</li> <li>• This is a necessary minimum start to introducing renewables at the scale required to combat climate change.</li> <li>• Intelligent grid research with distributed energy sources to accommodate an increasing amount of renewable energies such as wind, which can be intermittent and difficult to integrate into the grid, needs to be a policy priority.</li> </ul>
<p>3.2 Energy Efficiency Is an area with the potential to achieve significant cost- effective reductions in GHG emissions.</p>	<p>We agree that energy efficiency programs must be maintained and strengthened.</p>
<p>3.3 Transport</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the Government build on the Victorian Transport Plan and Melbourne 2030 to encourage concentration of housing, jobs and recreation opportunities around key centres to minimise journeys?</li> <li>• What activities are needed to drive the development of low emissions vehicles to reduce emissions and create jobs and investment in Victoria?</li> <li>• What information and assistance is needed to encourage mode shift?</li> </ul>	<p>Mode shift to public transport is best achieved by providing a service that is frequent, safe, comfortable, reliable and affordable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on Rail – see Environment Victoria report on Green Jobs and the potential for rail if infrastructure is addressed.</li> <li>• Priority or dedicated rail lines through the metropolitan area for V-Line regional train services would encourage uptake of these services. The section from Pakenham to Caulfield is especially important to Gippsland.</li> <li>• Regional transport connections between the larger cities are improving, but public transport within country areas is still problematic and there is often little coordination between different transport modes, such as between buses and trains.</li> </ul> <p>Focus on bike-friendly transport. Mode shift to cycling and/or walking is best achieved by providing safe facilities such as dedicated bike tracks and footpaths. Who would want to ride a bike on a city thoroughfare at peak hour?</p> <p>Mode shift can be spurred by actions to discourage vehicle usage (such as higher fuel taxes).</p> <p>Transport emissions are heavily influenced by the vehicle fleet mix. Government should use motor vehicle registration fees to encourage more appropriate vehicle purchase and usage (eg. higher registration fees for 4WD and V8’s and lower fees for hybrid vehicles; or a fee based on fuel efficiency).</p>

<p>3.4 The built environment</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What actions are required to ensure our cities, towns, suburbs and homes produce low emissions and are located and designed to deliver comfort and affordability as our climate changes?</li> <li>• What actions are needed to make Victoria a centre of innovative and sustainable building products and services?</li> </ul>	<p>Melbourne 2030 has been undermined by inconsistent planning decisions and needs to be re-affirmed with a stronger legal basis.</p> <p>Construction standards for new housing need to be increased beyond 6 stars. In Europe, 7-star ratings are becoming standard.</p> <p>Energy and water efficiency should not be either/or options, they should both be required.</p> <p>Appliances and fittings should be considered.</p> <p>Renovations should be included in such standards.</p> <p>Star ratings should favour actions such as building orientation, shading, thermal mass and natural ventilation over air conditioning.</p> <p>There needs to be schemes for the retrofitting of owner occupied and rental properties.</p>
<p>3.5 Solid waste management</p> <p>Process organic waste to compost and bio-fuels to prevent methane going into the atmosphere.</p>	<p>We support energy recovery in every situation where it is feasible.</p>
<p>3.6 Land use and Forestry</p> <p>The carbon stored in forests and other natural systems makes a significant positive contribution to Victoria's emissions profile and Vic has significant opportunities to exploit our comparative advantage in this sector to achieve further emissions benefits.</p>	<p>We see more value in leaving old growth and/or mature forests for carbon sequestration, rather than logging it for wood chips. Conservation and biodiversity values add to the importance of these forests.</p>
<p>3.7 Agriculture</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can Victoria develop and commercialise new, efficient agriculture practices, products and services to prepare the agricultural sector for inclusion in the CPRS, reduce costs for the sector and make Victoria a leading green economy?</li> <li>• How can we build Victoria's "Clean and Green" credentials, to ensure our products meet increasing community and international market desire for low carbon products?</li> </ul>	<p>Agricultural produce should be delivered more to local markets rather than distribution centres, to reduce the amount of handling and the "food miles".</p> <p>Planning policy should prevent the redevelopment of prime agricultural land on urban fringes.</p> <p>We encourage research into the feasibility of biochar as an industry, for use as a fertiliser and carbon-sequestering agent.</p>
<p>4.2 Driving innovation</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>What is the right mix of tools available to Government to foster innovation and maximise the benefits to Victoria under the CPRS?</p>	<p>Government purchasing should support the local manufacture of green products (eg. hybrid and electric vehicles, smart PCs).</p> <p>Apply tax incentives for renewable energy initiatives.</p> <p>Fostering innovation through grants etc.</p> <p>Electric vehicle manufacture will transform car production. Victoria has the resources for this.</p>
<p>4.3 Developing skills</p> <p>Question:</p> <p>How can we ensure Victoria has the skilled workforce needed for the transition to a low carbon economy?</p>	<p>Applying stricter building standards for renovations as well as for new construction would drive the market demand for training courses to provide skilled tradespeople.</p> <p>Encourage training opportunities through subsidies to promote re-training of staff in new technologies.</p>

<p>5.0 Adaptation</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What support do you need from the Government to better prepare for climate change in your household, business or community?</li> <li>• What are the barriers preventing you from preparing effectively?</li> <li>• How can we ensure government, households and businesses are able to prepare for and take early action to reduce the costs of adapting to climate change?</li> <li>• What are the roles of government, households and businesses in preparing for the impacts of climate change?</li> </ul>	<p>Government should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prevent rezoning and building in vulnerable areas.</li> <li>• protect valuable farmland from urban redevelopment.</li> <li>• assess the need for protective structures in vulnerable areas.</li> </ul> <p>Society should aim to slow population growth and eventually to have stable population numbers where deaths are matched by births and net immigration.</p>
<p>5.1 Managing our water resources</p> <p>Question: How can we build on the Government's Water Plan to secure Victoria's water future, by using water differently as individuals, households, communities and businesses?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stringent demand management and water recycling.</li> <li>• More stormwater harvesting.</li> <li>• Protect environmental flows.</li> <li>• Aim for zero population growth.</li> <li>• Stop taking water from rural regions like the Goulburn and extra from the Thompson and harvest more water nearer sea level so that the environment gets to use more of it. I.e. Implement much more collection of rain-water and storm water within the Melbourne Metropolitan area.</li> </ul>
<p>5.2 Victoria' Natural Ecosystems</p> <p>Question: How can we ensure the resilience of our ecosystems at a time of climate change, and the crucial role they play in our social and economic well-being?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the planting of indigenous gardens, which are also water efficient.</li> <li>• Stop inappropriate logging in the Strzelecki Ranges and in East Gippsland.</li> <li>• Aim for zero population growth.</li> </ul>
<p>5.3 Adapting to Change in the Built Environment</p> <p>Question: What are the critical areas the government needs to address in relation to adapting our urban built environment and infrastructure to climate change?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved energy efficiency standards to ensure residential and commercial buildings can cope with higher temperature and more storm events.</li> <li>• Incentives to retrofit existing housing stock that targets both landlords and owner-occupiers.</li> <li>• Aim for zero population growth.</li> </ul>
<p>6.2 Government leading the way</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How should Government lead the way in reducing its own emissions and adjusting to a carbon price?</li> <li>• In which areas can Government use its significant expenditure on goods and services to drive Victoria's green economy?</li> </ul>	<p>Government should lead the way by adopting stringent targets for energy and water efficiency in its own operations.</p> <p>Government should encourage green investment through purchasing hybrid and electric vehicles, smart PCs, etc.</p> <p>Some carbon abatement programs are already in place, but haven't been implemented, such as the Solar Schools program. There needs to be follow through with those programs that are already in place and that could make a difference.</p>

	Local councils need to be more accountable both for their own emissions and those of their community. They could be given more discretion to implement energy efficiency and even energy supply measures, such as initiating community wind farm developments.
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**EXTRA COMMENTS:**

Not enough appears to be done to actually reduce emissions by the most direct means.

e.g. There are limits to the amount of solar electricity householders can produce from solar power. If they produce more than the stated limit, then they are penalised, because they do not get paid for any excess of electricity produced above the limit.

e.g 2: In order to encourage the faster reduction of GHG emissions from the domestic sector, why not introduce a progressive sliding scale for electricity pricing, whereby the first (say) 10kWh per day is at the base price, with progressively more expensive rates for energy used above that basic level. This would encourage a higher rate of installation of household based solar panels and wind generators, and further encourage energy efficiencies measures to reduce escalating electricity bills. Poorer households are generally smaller, use less energy and would be less affected by the higher rates.

In many ways, in the schemes devised so far to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, too much effort has gone into “padding” such as compensation for polluters and soft building regulations and not enough direct support for renewable energy projects. The quickest and most reliable way to prevent global warming will be to replace fossil fuel energy by renewable energy and the softly softly approach we see from all levels of government so far, is not producing the necessary change quickly enough.