

## **Developing a Climate Change Framework**

Yarra Climate Action Now (YCAN) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this important document.

YCAN is a community climate action group based in inner-city Melbourne with a membership of more than 1000 people concerned about climate change and sustainability. We support Victoria's effort to develop a framework for tackling climate change, and agree that each of the seven discussion topics is urgent. However discussion is useless and any proposals are meaningless without the Victorian government mandating that the basis for every decision it makes about development, industry, innovation, research and employment is the necessity of reaching a position of zero greenhouse gas emissions in order to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees.

The first two immediate requirements are:

1. Act to cease all government support and subsidies for coal-fired power stations and implement the complete prohibition of all forms of unconventional gas mining. This means the immediate closure of Hazelwood Power Station
2. Commit to a strong VRET of at least 50% by 2020.

Transition to a Climate Ready Victoria in 2030 will not happen while Hazelwood, one of the most polluting power stations in the world continues to be supported. Committing to a strong RET, and putting a price on carbon pollution will be imperative.

We see that there are many opportunities in Victoria for climate change innovation, but manufacturers and renewable energy providers require the certainty of government support for their industries. In the past this certainty has been lacking due to constantly changing government policies, and the ambiguity of government support for polluting industries such as the Alcoa plant in Portland.

Opportunities for innovation already exist in places like Morwell where the Hazelwood plant has reduced its workforce, leaving skilled workers and young people alike ready for training and re-skilling in the new sustainable industries.

The number of people in apprenticeship training has fallen dramatically. Victoria calls itself the Education State, but many young people are falling through the cracks, particularly if they do not want to enter tertiary education. Developing and funding new courses in teaching how to build and operate renewable energy industries would lead to the skilled workforce to assist the redundant workers from places like Hazelwood.

The Australian government has recently announced plans to cut over 100 jobs from the climate change sector of the CSIRO, deeming research positions unnecessary as climate change is now understood. The Victorian government should make a formal protest to the federal government about the appalling short-sightedness of this move. In addition, the government should seize the opportunity to employ this expertise in building Victoria's research, science and capability in relation to climate change.

In order to build a climate ready infrastructure the government must legislate to ensure that new developments are sustainable; this means not just including solar panels **or** hot water **or** water tanks, but all of the above, as well as mandatory insulation, appropriate siting, excellent public transport and community facilities. Providing safe and efficient routes for active transport users is essential. The state government must support local government to ensure that bike paths are interlinked across local government boundaries, rather than depending on the priorities or budgets of individual councils.

Public transport is a state responsibility and requires a commitment to its provision and maintenance as a first priority, rather than added extra lanes to roads and freeways which quickly become congested again.

YCAN demands to see that the Victorian government proves that its claim to be leading by example in climate action is more than a reassuring piece of spin by immediately closing Hazelwood, and replacing it with a renewables energy program. Prompt action on these issues, long overdue, would help persuade our members that the government is serious about climate change.