

Submission to Wellington City Council on the Draft 2010 Climate Change Action Plan

1. Greater Wellington thanks Wellington City Council for the opportunity to comment on its Draft 2010 Climate Change Action Plan.
2. Greater Wellington is appreciative of the indications in the Draft Plan of financial support for Greater Wellington-lead initiatives, notably eMission and the sea level rise impacts assessment project.
3. In general we believe it is a pragmatic plan with good prospects of making a difference in both mitigation and adaptation areas. We congratulate Wellington City Council on its leadership in the region, especially with regard to such mitigation activities as home insulation, support for energy-efficient housing and, above all, for practical actions to support the rapid deployment of electric vehicles. We note that transport emissions account for almost half of all the greenhouse gas emissions in the region and recognise the urgent need to migrate the fleet away from fossil fuel-powered vehicles.
4. Greater Wellington wonders whether some of the language used runs the risk of raising residents' expectations unrealistically. Objectives of protecting or safeguarding the city may give the impression to residents that the city will take care of it all. From what we know of the scale of likely impacts of climate change effects, an early adoption of the civil defence approach - self-reliance and responsibility for making family plans - might be wiser. The draft regional strategic response has as its desired outcomes the following:

"that the residents of the Wellington region, in all their different roles, will:

- Understand climate change risks and the region's vulnerabilities to its effects
- Take climate change into account in their decision-making
- Act to increase our shared resilience to climate change impacts"

We suggest the adoption of these outcomes or something similar might be more realistic while still allowing Wellington City Council to show leadership by putting in place initiatives which will assist its residents to achieve them. Much of what the City is proposing in the Draft Plan would support achievement of such objectives.

5. There are some very positive initiatives and objectives in the Draft Plan which have a focus beyond Wellington city. However, there is very little indication of how Wellington City Council intends to achieve them. Greater Wellington suggests a more explicit acknowledgement of where the Council will work alongside its regional partners and where its initiatives are a stand alone effort. The wording used on waste emissions reduction

initiatives is an appropriate example. It may be important to residents to be able to differentiate between these two roles for the Council since it will influence its ability to achieve stated objectives.

6. Greater Wellington suggests that the Plan would be strengthened by the adoption of the draft underpinning principles it has helped to develop for the regional climate change response. These were developed by an officer working group in which Wellington City Council plays a leading role and discussed with all the region's councils in 2009. They would indicate the philosophical basis guiding the decision-making which residents might wish to comment on. They are:
 - The region's response to climate change will be a collaborative effort lead by local government.
 - Different councils may give effect to shared decisions in different ways, as climate change effects will be felt differently in different parts of the region.
 - Up-to-date, agreed, regionally specific scientific information will be sought, to serve as a basis for our decision-making and to be shared with local communities.
 - As far as possible, existing policy and planning structures will be used as vehicles to give effect to our climate change response.
 - Decisions will be proactive and will avoid locking future generations into unaffordable or intolerable choices in their adaptation to climate change.
 - Communities will be involved in finding and prioritising creative solutions to problems.
 - Climate change response actions will identify and utilise opportunities to improve the environmental, economic, cultural and social well-being of our communities.
 - Local authorities will act as strong advocates for our communities with central government, and for climate change action with our communities.
 - International experience will inform our decision-making on climate change actions.
7. In particular, Greater Wellington believes that early involvement of communities of interest in developing options and creative solutions to climate change issues will be critical to the region's ability to manage its way successfully through the climate change transition. Greater Wellington suggests that, even if no other principles are formally included, some explicit inclusion of this principle in the Plan would be beneficial.
8. Greater Wellington looks forward to continuing to work closely with Wellington City Council on this very important issue.