

Draft Climate Change Strategy
Greater Wellington Regional Council
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10 April 2015

Re: GWRC Draft Climate Change Strategy

This submission is from the Architectural Centre, an incorporated society dating from 1946, which represents both professionals and non-professionals interested in the promotion of good design.

The Architectural Centre strongly supports the Greater Wellington Regional Council's initiative to have a Climate Change Strategy. We endorse the council taking a leadership position on the mitigation of climate change, rather than waiting for what appears likely to be a conservative and hesitant stance from central government. We acknowledge the politically unpalatable and controversial nature of a meaningful commitment to address climate change and encourage the council to quickly convert these words into substantive results. We congratulate the council on stating that it is "committed to undertaking mitigation and adaption initiatives by identifying and following through on the actions we can undertake ourselves or directly influence."

The message we most wish to convey is that while there will be various ways in which a Climate Change Strategy might be figured, the important thing is to establish the strategy and make committed, meaningful and timely progress. We wish the council well in its achievements in this regard.

We support the councils' three objectives of mitigation, adaptation and awareness, and we make some additional and more specific comments as follows under these three headings:

Mitigation

1. Acknowledging the significance of transportation with respect to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, we encourage the council to develop a specific transport climate change strategy with targets.

2. In this regard we encourage the council to implement strategies which discourage car ownership, in addition to the current attempts to reduce car use - which do not appear to be terribly successful. In saying this we are not suggesting discarding the promotion and development of public transport, but - given the apparent lack of a political willingness to materially reallocate road space to sustainable transport at the expense of private cars - it appears that a change in mindset and approach of some kind is needed.

3. We encourage the council to show leadership in its internal transport practices, by limiting/removing GWRC car parking and providing public transport passes, rather than cars or car parks, for its staff and councillors.

4. While it is important to reduce GHG emissions inside the GWRC region, we also support the council recognising that demand from within this boundary for particular



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needs (such as food or construction materials), will also lead to emissions elsewhere. We suggest that the council include these issues within its strategy somehow.

5. We support the council's recognition of the importance of native plant species for mitigation. Additional actions might also include seasonal suburban plant-giveaways, and supporting local stream-cleaning initiatives.

6. We encourage the GWRC to lobby central government to increase its commitment to addressing Climate Change issues, including encouraging the government to demonstrate leadership and commitment through publishing National Policy Statements on Climate Change and on Sustainable Transport (<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/rma-legislative-tools/national-policy-statements>).

7. We suggest that any regional level Climate Change tax be equally redistributed to ratepayers via regional rates credits, given the aim would be to encourage behaviour change not raise funds. This would increase any incentive to reduce activities creating greenhouse gas emissions.

Adaptation

8. While we encourage the prioritisation of Mitigation over Adaption, we appreciate the need for options such as a managed retreat, and suggest that legal issues over property ownership are likely to be key part of such strategies.

Awareness

9. We support council investment in communicating climate change issues to the wider public.

10. We note the success of the WCC's tsunami lines along the south coast, and suggest an equivalent sea level rise line be delineated throughout the CDB and coastal suburbs. Identifying key Wellington institutions (e.g. Parliament) and indicating when they will have water lapping around their feet might also engage the public's interest. Perhaps the GWRC could hold a public competition to guess the ten Wellington buildings closest to getting ground floors inundated by sea level rises?

11. We encourage the GWRC to collaborate with the VUW Climate Change Institute on public awareness initiatives, given they are our local centre of expertise on the matter. We also acknowledge the leadership of the Insurance Council with respect to Climate Change issues, and consider that they may well be another key partner regarding Climate Change issues for the GWRC.

12. We wonder if GWRC programmes for schools on climate change might be appropriate in order to engage the younger generation, and educate their parents and grandparents.

13. Should Wellington invest in a centre of somekind to explore, test and promote Climate Change issues further, such as a Climate Change Experimental Museum and Exhibition Centre, perhaps again in conjunction with the VUW Climate Change Institute, and with the blessing of the Prime Minister's Chief Scientist? Such an initiative could include 1:1 scale adaptive and speculative experiments (e.g. floating buildings), and mitigation strategies re: sustainable transport, and models of Wellington under various scenarios of sea-level rises as well as being a public venue for lectures and debates on the topic.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the GWRC Draft Climate Change Strategy. We consider this to be an important council initiative. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



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