

**27 November 2019**

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Our Reference: Climate Change in WA Issues Paper Response

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## **SOUTH WEST GROUP RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA ISSUES PAPER, SEPT 2019**

The purpose of this correspondence is to respond to the state government's Climate Change in Western Australia Issues Paper, September 2019 (the Issues Paper).

This submission is provided in my capacity as the Director South West Group, and not as a position of the South West Group Board. It is a high level submission intended to:

- support the individual submissions made by South West Group member Councils and to commend these to the state government, and
- support the comprehensive submission made by the Western Australia Local Government Association (WALGA), to which the South West Group's NRM (Natural Resource Management) Regional Facilitator contributed, and to commend this to the state government.

### **Background**

The South West Group, formed in November 1983, is a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils. It comprises the Cities of Cockburn, Fremantle, Kwinana, Melville, and Rockingham, and the Town of East Fremantle. The South West Group is managed by a Board consisting of the Mayors and CEOs of its member local governments.

The South West Group seeks to work with these six local governments and through cooperation with industry, community and the other spheres of government to capture a wide range of opportunities to enhance economic growth as well as supporting a diversity of quality lifestyles whilst servicing and sustaining cohesive, productive communities in an enviable environmental setting.

The South West Group therefore recognises the critical need for well-planned and adequately resourced management of the state's assets and importantly, also recognises the crucial role that cooperative and productive partnerships between state and local governments, business and the community play in maximising beneficial environmental, social and economic outcomes.

### **Response**

It is imperative that all governments worldwide take decisive and immediate action to address climate change. The South West Group therefore commends the state government on its decision to develop a State Climate Policy, and on seeking feedback

from the community, business and local government via the Issues Paper to inform that policy. The state government is also to be commended on adopting a net zero emissions target by 2050.

However, the development of a State Climate Policy and associated targets will not be sufficient alone to address climate change, and in the absence of effective federal government leadership on this issue, the South West Group is looking to the state government to provide strong leadership and to partner with and enable local governments to more effectively address climate change. Local governments have a key role to play in climate change mitigation and adaptation, both within their own operations and by implementing policies and programs that encourage and support their communities to undertake mitigation and adaptation actions.

The South West Group therefore supports the consolidated position of the state's local government sector as expressed in WALGA's Climate Change Policy Statement which states:

**Local Government acknowledges:**

- I. The science is clear: climate change is occurring and greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are the dominant cause.
- II. Climate change threatens human societies and the Earth's ecosystems.
- III. Urgent action is required to reduce emissions, and to adapt to the impacts from climate change that are now unavoidable.
- IV. A failure to adequately address this climate change emergency places an unacceptable burden on future generations.

**Local Government is committed** to addressing climate change.

**Local Government is calling for:**

- I. Strong climate change action, leadership and coordination at all levels of government.
- II. Effective and adequately funded Commonwealth and State Government climate change policies and programs.

*(WALGA Climate Change Policy Statement (2018), p3.)*

The South West Group therefore recommends that the state government:

- In the absence of effective federal government leadership on climate change, continues to play a lead role in championing action on climate change and works with all other state governments and territories to facilitate collaborative action at a state level,
- Lobbies the federal government to provide effective leadership on climate change and to develop mechanisms that enable state and local governments and all Australian's to collectively play a globally leading role in addressing climate change,
- In line with the Paris Agreement, maintains the commitment to pursue emissions targets that are capable of limiting mean temperature rise to < 2° C above pre-industrial levels, and furthermore, sets interim targets that demonstrate a clear emission reduction pathway and regularly reports on progress towards these,
- Commits to actively transitioning Western Australia from a state with an economy heavily driven by resource extraction and reliant on fossil fuel use, to a state

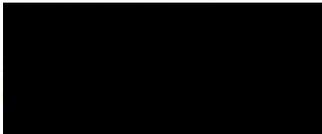
whose economy is instead driven by renewable energy production. As a matter of priority, the state government should promptly institute reforms in the electricity generation and distribution sector to encourage and enable improvements in renewable energy production, distribution and trading,

- Develops policies and programs that support accelerated action on climate change,
- Removes all possible regulatory and financial barriers to such accelerated action,
- Provides incentives to business, local government and the community that encourage and enable such accelerated action,
- Links the State Climate Policy to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition to the above, the state government is also encouraged to:

- Support investment in and development of new industries and technologies that help meet the objectives. This could include:
  - Adjusting curriculum, training and workforce pathways to align with the objectives
  - Re-training and re-deployment strategies for existing workforce in non-renewable pseudo-Govt enterprises (e.g. coal-fired power stations)
  - Strategic allocation / designation of land to help the 'green economy' and/or 'blue economy' develop through R&D, industry clustering etc.
- Better promote grants, subsidies and incentives linked to industry innovation,
- Continue to support the Future Battery Industry Strategy which the South West Group regards as a great development,
- Increase investment in clean energy-powered public transport in order to reduce automobile dependence and reduce carbon emissions.

Yours sincerely



**Tom Griffiths**  
**Director South West Group**