

NCOSS CCAP consultation Feb 6, 2009

N.B. These notes are verbatim from an NCOSS workshop held on February 6, 2009. Participants were asked to discuss two questions in the context of providing advice to the NSW Government on the development of the Climate Change Action Plan:

- 1. What are the key issues for your sector?*
- 2. Having identified the key issues, what is the role of the government and what are the key actions?*

Key issues for the sector

Workshop notes

GOVERNANCE

- Lack of co-ord between levels of gov't and inter-government on similar policy areas
- Need a holistic response urgently
- Increased density promoted without commensurate regulation of the building's EE design e.g., insulation, orientation and air-conditioning

SERVICE DELIVERY / FINANCIAL VIABILITY

- Having to trade off investing resources in client care vs. spending on sustainability (e.g., water recycling in a nursing home)
- Funding and staff – shortages mean less available services
- Sector is already overstretched, will become overwhelmed
- Cost of providing community care to go up (food, transport, energy costs, upgrading vehicles and building to deal with heatwave e.t.c.)
- Increased demand for our services due to unmitigated climate change with no commensurate funding increase
- Cost of adapting service provision to cater for health needs
- Financial hardship from rising prices = extra demand on community services
- Volunteering will drop due to increased costs (eg. petrol), sector is dependent on volunteers.

AFFORDABILITY + ACCESS TO REBATES

- Adequate resourcing for the community sector (e.g., insulation, hot water replacement costs for community housing orgs)
- COST: affordability of not just bills but tanks, solar panels and transport, impact of carbon price on affordability of food, goods, petrol.
- People in rental properties or caravans unable to take adaptive action, landlords have no incentive

ACCESS AND EQUITY

- Disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable populations (frail / people with disability)
- Equity issues relating to different “special needs” or “communities of interest” groups (e.g. ethnic communities having access to CC info in languages other than English)
- Lack of participation in CC discussions by vulnerable populations (eg. elderly, children, NESB, homeless)
- Sharing the burden: consideration of equity in the CC adaptation responses in the CCAP (ensuring the costs and impacts of CC are shared as evenly as possible in the community)
- Energy under-consumption health impacts (e.g., people suffering in the heat b/c they are concerned about their ability to pay their air con bills)
- Need to work with people who find it difficult to advocate for themselves
- Need to ensure that policy and strategies don't compound existing disadvantage
- Trade-offs in balancing human and environmental impacts
- Potential for alternative employment opportunities if training provided in advance
- CALD communities will have families in more vulnerable countries – global concern and potential environmental refugees
- Design of public spaces needs to provide appropriate environments
- Most air-conditioned places are not “public” spaces but shopping malls – kids often moved on
- Questions arise about ‘environmental inheritance’ rights
- Future focus can disguise/distract from immediate impacts

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

- Insufficient compensation to low income households : for increased energy + other costs due to CC mitigation efforts
- Rising food prices = increasing food insecurity
- Impacts of prices going up: food, fuel, housing and ‘life’
- Disconnections and energy hardship / rising energy prices
- Cost of adapting rental properties that are below EE standards

EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES

- Assistance not reaching many of the most vulnerable (e.g., people housed in unlicensed boarding homes, caravan park residents and homeless people)
- Provision of info on EE and CC impacts that targets ethnic communities
- Relevance: “the poor in my community cannot connect with the issue when already disadvantaged”
- Relevance of programs such as rebates / green loans to low income communities

HEALTH

- Adapting to the impact of a hotter environment
- Mental health
- Elderly health: heating and cooling issues (including limited financial ability and/or resistance to access heating/cooling)
- Homeless have high exposure and very low adaptive capacity

COAL

- Existing policies around coal compound problem

OUTLYING ISSUES

- Agriculture is a big employer of low-skilled / unskilled workers. Water scarcity may mean a big drop in the availability of this type of work in rural and regional NSW
- Shift / transition of population due to changes in environment – ‘urban refugees’

Key roles / suggested actions for the NSW Gov’t

GOVERNMENT ROLES

- Need clarity on who takes carriage of what – clear up confusion between Commonwealth, COAG, State government roles
- Coordinating responses between levels of gov’t – fed, state and local
- NSW CCAP should focus on adaptation over mitigation.
- Seek agreement on roles between commonwealth and state and articulate this in the CCAP
- Health impacts more closely aligned with information about climate change
- Collaborative development of policies and procedures to assist service providers cope with changes to service provision
- Better health and food service provision to elderly, disabled and mentally ill
- Leadership
- Heat wave warning system and associated social marketing campaign
- Government should lead by example – reduce own emissions, sustainable procurement policies
- Strong regulations to address inefficient use of energy by industry and commercial sectors, not just private responsibility
- Climate change policies should be more than media releases
- Reporting every 12 months to the public (not like the State Plan)
- Understand and help community understand need for urgent and strong action
- Advocate to Cwlth for stronger targets, eg. Garnaut – 5% is not enough

HOLISTIC/HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

- Situate the CCAP within holistic framework that recognises the relationship between social and environmental issues
- Human rights must be incorporated to ensure all people have equitable access to the resources they need to adapt
- Don’t assume all citizens are equally able to access/invoke their rights
- Also consider intergenerational equity in development of legislation and policies

STOP BAD PRACTICES

- Stop subsidising polluting industries
- No new coal mines – inconsistent with mitigation goals

- Close down coal power stations over time and move to renewable energy

FUNDING

- Increase community service funding and training
- Dedicated gov't "slush fund" specifically to finance equity
- Grants for community organisations to assist them to become energy efficient
- Funding of community services indexed to a suitable price index (i.e., reflecting costs faced specifically by the community sector)
- Cooperatively develop and invest in local strategies ("not just pilots!")

REGIONALISE RESPONSES

- Strong representation to commonwealth gov't of local NSW geographical impacts of CC (e.g., in south west of the state)
- Being sure of the impact of CC on all sectors of the community

RETROFIT / REBATES

- Low-income households to receive energy audits with tips on behavioural change and basic refits
- Adequately fund retrofit for low income households (incl. renters)
- Tailor rebate incentive schemes to include / prioritise access for those most affected
- Install tanks / panels etc. first, then offer buyback options (reverse rebate)
- Retrofit all public and community housing properties
- Public housing to be retrofitted to be minimum: insulated, double glazed, drought stopped. Solar water / heat pump as appropriate
- Public housing stock and surrounding urban design can be used as models for private enterprise
- More free audits for households and business.
- Install energy monitors in every house
- Roll outs of energy audits to include community organisations to improve accessibility of programs to vulnerable communities

STRONG ACTION FROM COMMONWEALTH

- "Criticise the federal gov't on the appallingly inadequate 5 – 15% reduction target for GHG"
- "Lobby the feds through COAG and other avenues for a better CPRS target"

INDEXING / ENSURING EQUITY

- Index water and energy rebates and vouchers to a price index reflecting the costs faced by low-income households
- Increase energy and water rebates + broaden eligibility criteria to all Commonwealth health care card holders
- High energy users to be charged higher fees for their energy to subsidise lower income people
- Brotherhood of St Lawrence report on energy efficiency – all government people working on CC and social impacts should read this:
http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/KPMG_national_energy_efficiency_program_low-income_households.pdf

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Improvement to public toilets in terms of energy / water efficiency, locality and safety
- If vouchers are required to pay energy bills, provide insulation, solar hot water etc. so bills reduced next time round
- Adaptation programs to take account of demographics: e.g., funding more bike paths but does this recognise ageing population and more mothers with prams on paths?
- Incorporate urban design for CC mitigation and adaptation
- Incorporate “cool public areas” in urban design guidelines
- More seating in public spaces with shade
- Reduce concrete, and therefore run-off potential
- Upgrade BASIX but also make useful for all building types
- Enforce solar passive design, water efficiency/recycling in building codes
- Review LEPs that prevent people from building in a sustainable, efficient way (ie. BMCC)
- Change legislation on grey water to enable more people to utilise
- Implement sewerage treatment system (eg. in Austria) so water can be pumped to rural areas for re-use.
- Make cycling safe v- integrated planning

RESEARCH

- Allocate resources to NGOs for research / data collection so that NGOs can measure the impacts of CC on client's well-being

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

- Energy audits or low-income earners
- Provide opportunities for disadvantaged (particularly ethnic communities) to learn about EE behaviour
- SIESTA idea: change in behaviour ... encourage siestas to deal with heat + stagger demand on services like transport
- Availability of climate change mitigation and adaptation info in languages other than English and also appropriate to vulnerable communities
- Education should not be alarmist / alienating – fund NGO sector to do this

CONSULTATION

- Listen to advice from NGO sector so resources are appropriately targeted
- NGO sector can be a key partner – implement the Compact (Working Together)
- Consult with vulnerable communities and take on board their input
- Develop strategies to facilitate children and young people's participation
- Bring the whole community with you – inclusive, listening, local

FUND GREEN TECHNOLOGIES

- Subsidise public transport / energy efficient transport as well as RE technologies
- Training and opportunities for 'green' jobs in rural and regional NSW
- Better, cleaner and more affordable public transport would be good and would reduce emissions

- Fund development of sustainable energy technologies

HEALTH

- Ensure hospitals and ambulance services capable of meeting increased needs from heatwaves and disasters
- Improve air quality, esp. in areas with high rates of asthma

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- Make public transport more reliable and frequent to increase usage
- Public transport needed outside Sydney