

The following programs are priorities for implementation under Darebin's Community Climate Change Action Plan in 2009/10. These actions are included in the draft 2009/10 budget that is currently available for community comment.

1) Large Scale Roll-Out of Environmental Technologies.

The Climate Change survey undertaken in 2007 indicated that the key barriers for people to take action are cost (49%); knowledge and information (23%); and time (23%). In the same survey residents indicated that providing rebates was one of the most desirable ways for Council to support them to take Climate Change Action. A bulk roll-out of environmental products can address these barriers by:

- reducing total costs through aggregated purchasing power;
- removing the barrier of upfront costs via long term financing options - paying off the product through the energy savings achieved
- Council goes through a process on behalf of residents to select the best value products options and installers against established selection criteria - addressing the barriers of time and information
- Council promotes and provides clear information about the process and the selected options - also addressing the barriers of information and time.

Discussion of issues and opportunities of this program were presented in the Council Report '*Broad scale energy and water program options*' on 20 April 2009.

Actions:

Officers continue discussions with MEFL and Yarra Council and where applicable contribute to and participate in their feasibility studies on these issues.

Cost: \$20,000

Council commence a procurement process (EOI or partnering) to identify provider/s to supply, install and finance solar hot water systems or energy efficient alternatives, with payment methods including no up front cost and quarterly payments commensurate with anticipated savings. Partnership opportunities with other NAGA Councils will also be scoped to maximise outcomes and reduce costs.

Cost: \$70,000

2) Darebin Climate Wise Business Program

The commercial and industrial sectors contribute around half of the municipality's greenhouse emissions. State and Federal legislation and supporting programs target very large emitters, there are only a handful of these in Darebin.

Many smaller businesses and industrial premises have significant opportunities to improve their energy efficiency and to reduce operating costs - for most businesses, taking climate change action also needs to make good business sense. The format proposed is a program model that is being used by Hornsby Shire Council and Fairfield City Council in NSW and has recently been launched by the City of Knox in Victoria. An energy efficiency consultancy is engaged to deliver the program via an expression of interest process. This company (Global Sustainability Initiatives has been engaged by Hornsby, Fairfield and Knox) conducts free energy assessments for businesses and identifies energy efficiency measures with less than a five year financial payback. Full energy audits may be conducted for larger businesses on a cost basis where more detailed analysis is beneficial. Businesses that wish to proceed after reviewing the list of options available to them pay a registration fee (\$250)

which is then deducted from the cost of any measure/s they proceed with. Cost efficiencies are achieved by bulk contracting for energy efficiency works, with the engaged consultancy working closely with professional associations in tender processes. For example the cost of retrofitting with energy efficient lighting is reduced by bundling a number of businesses together and tendering this work in bulk.

Hornsby Council achieved good take up rates with 99 businesses signed up within the first six months. Analysis of opportunities identified for emissions reductions in 94 businesses that have participated in the program totalled around 1300 tonnes CO₂e - or an average of almost 14 tonnes per business. If a fraction of these identified opportunities are implemented this will be a great result. Knox launched their program recently and had around 60 businesses attend the event and sign up.

Councils do not pay the program deliverer directly but promote the program and assist with achieving business sign ups. Other councils have indicated a two day a week officer commitment, particularly in the program set up phase. Capacity for this additional time commitment is not currently available within the Economic Development Unit nor the Environmental Strategy Unit, where the program would naturally sit. It is recommended that a two day per week part-time officer be appointed to co-ordinate and promote the program. A two day per week officer could add value within Economic Development by working on other environmental programs and initiatives to encourage and progress sustainable business in Darebin.

Action:

Council engages a part-time Sustainable Business Officer to co-ordinate and promote the Darebin Green Business Program including:

- ***run the expression of interest process to appoint an energy efficiency consultancy to deliver the program***
- ***promote and sign-up businesses to the program***
- ***scope and trial the application of this model to industrial premises***
- ***monitor, review and report annually on the success of the program***

Cost: \$40,000.

3) Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Members of the Community

The elderly, those in poor health, people on low incomes, the unemployed and those that are socially isolated will be the most vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change and rising energy costs. The Federal Government is offering cash packages to low income households to cover the cost implications of the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme but with competing demands to pay rent, bills, purchase food etc it is unreasonable to expect that those living in poverty will be in a position to prioritise energy efficiency works that will save money over the medium and longer terms. The barriers of cost, information/knowledge and time will be more severe for the disadvantaged. Targeted programs are needed to effectively reach low income households and remove barriers to energy efficiency implementation.

Three pilot programs currently under development will help inform the best model for unrolling an energy efficiency fit-out to disadvantaged members of the community:

- Darebin's Impact of Older People and Climate Change program funded by DHS will pilot the assessment of insulation, application for the \$1600 rebate and topping up of inadequate insulation in the homes of frail elderly receiving HACC services from Council. Draft sealing may also be pursued.

- The Energy and Water Taskforce program coordinated by Sustainability Victoria and delivered in Darebin by Low Energy Supplies and Services (LESS). LESS will retrofit up to 200 low income households in the south of Darebin including concession card holders in private rental accommodation that are experiencing rental stress and pensioners renting or in their own homes. Retrofits include insulation and draught sealing and provision of pelmets and curtains where applicable in living areas.
- The Moreland Energy Foundation Ltd (MEFL) Energy Hub program in partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence will be piloted in 200 homes later this calendar year. Indicative costs are around ~\$800 per household.

The 2009/10 roll-out that would be informed by these pilot programs would look at targeting low income renters in the private market (the Department of Human Services is working on retrofits of public housing); and working with agencies such as Spectrum to target frail elderly and vulnerable people within CALD communities.

Action:

Officers review the results of both of the above programs and on this basis commence roll-out of an energy efficiency program to low income/concession card holder households.

Cost: \$80,000.

4) Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities - Pilot Program

Darebin is one of the most diverse municipalities in Victoria. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD) communities can be disadvantaged in their access to mainstream information and support for taking action on climate change. Some CALD communities are highly engaged in some environmental and conservation practices eg water harvesting and food production and have a lot to offer the broader community; others have experienced dislocation and hardship and have more pressing and immediate needs than tackling energy efficiency opportunities. Effective programs to reach CALD communities need to be developed in partnership with those communities and be delivered in a culturally relevant way.

A grant submission has been lodged for the 'Talking My Language' program which would work with one CALD community in Darebin to translate relevant environmental information and deliver a seminar to the community in the relevant language. Community champions will be supported and encouraged to promote the program and environmental actions. \$72,000 has been sought under the Sustainability Accord to deliver the program across three Councils - funding is highly competitive however and Darebin may not be prioritised due to our high level of success in accessing grants from the Fund in the past. The program could be delivered in Darebin for \$25,000 and would be a great way to scope opportunities for effectively working with Darebin's CALD communities on a more ongoing basis.

General translations, media releases to CALD newspapers and access to Council's multilingual line will be included in program development according to ongoing requirements.

Action:

The 'Talking My Language' program be piloted with one Darebin CALD community initially

Cost: \$25,000