

Linking local and global climate change action:

A Roundtable to support collaborative climate change action in Australia

Summary of Roundtable discussion and outcomes

Canberra, 27 March 2019

Goals for the Roundtable

- Introduce GCoM to important stakeholders in Canberra
- Discuss opportunity for national framework for local climate action, and the building blocks for an effective pan Australia approach
- Commence national consultation process on options for wider adoption of GCoM in Australia

The agenda for the Roundtable is attached.

Attendance

The Roundtable involved 30 participants from a wide range of organisations with strong interests and capabilities in climate change action. Representatives from all tiers of government participated, from the Australian Government Departments of Environment and Energy, and Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government and the Victorian Government Renewable Energy Advocate, and the Australian Local Government Association and ICLEI with national local government roles. Research organisations participating included the University of Canberra, the Australian National University, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, and Future Earth Australia. Key stakeholder groups participating included the Australian Industry Greenhouse Group, Doctors for the Environment ACT, Investor Group on Climate Change, Climate-Kic, Urban Synergies Group, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, ACT Council of Social Service, the EU-delegation and the Planning Institute of Australia.

A visiting representative from the EC Clima, Daniel Waterschoot, also joined the Roundtable and provided a European and global perspective on the significance and value of the GCoM.

Summary of discussion

The Roundtable discussion was informed by the draft Policy paper which was circulated with the Agenda.

The Roundtable participants recognised the opportunity and merits of Australia participating in a bottom-up global framework for local climate change action, and there was unanimous support for the consultation process on pathways for the adoption of the GCoM across Australia. National consultation was also seen as timely with the roles of sub-national actors highlighted as critical in contributing to the goals of the Paris Agreement, and growing awareness of a local sense of urgency in the need for climate change action.

The detailed Roundtable discussion was summarised under four key themes: benefits to communities, challenges to be addressed, opportunities, and who else needs to be involved in the national consultation.

Benefits to communities

- Clarity on benefits (or the value proposition of the initiative) key to communication of GCoM and its anticipated uptake. This includes the value of recognition and clarity on potential resources available
- Benefits regarding climate change adaptation and climate risk management particularly evident across Australia
- Strong potential for economic benefits from renewable energy investment and uptake. Significant capacity for jobs in regional Australia, and benefits to supply chains and skills
- There are also benefits from engagement and contribution to the global ambition and network
 - The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which administers the Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program with a five-year \$75 million (CAN) Canadian Government funded program supporting 600 municipalities, is an example of how national government can resource and assist local government delivery of climate related initiatives

Challenges to be addressed

- Accounting methodology – how best align and have consistency with national greenhouse accounting measures as well as between councils as appropriate, and demonstrate additionality (not duplication)
- How best to engage with the currently disengaged?
 - Need to consider the barriers to engagement for local governments and how they vary
 - Explore potential of sharing information, particularly peer to peer, and the role of local leaders in addressing barriers
- Importance of being mindful of local government roles in Australia's federation. There are constraints in local roles and capacities, and leadership also needed in other spheres of government
 - The role of State Government is critical to determining the value of the GCoM reporting framework as they have primary coordination of policies, plans and resourcing that applies to local government
 - The Roundtable recognised that many Councils need help with transitions, including financial resources and capacity building, and that wider community ownership is also required
 - It will be valuable to identify key common issues and interests across local governments, as well as impediments to their uptake, and develop tailored approaches to address them

Opportunities (for links and partnerships)

- The Roundtable agreed that with an appropriate focus and approach the GCoM could drive effective collaboration and deliver tangible outcomes that build on state and federal government measures
- Potential to link to and draw on current leading initiatives involving Councils such as Regional Organisations of Councils in both climate change adaptation and mitigation, and taking note of the 100 Resilient Cities Initiative
- A number of bottom-up partnerships for climate change action have longevity and a record of achievement, for example the Peron-Naturaliste Partnership of nine local governments in

Western Australia, the Western Sydney Group of Councils, and the Victorian Greenhouse alliance structure

- There is a strategic potential to align GCoM with community health and well-being goals. This is supported by a synergy between liveability in cities. Examples exist including in sustainable hospitals and health services,
 - The wider community also places a high priority placed on addressing increasing risks to health in a changing climate
 - The potential for links to living infrastructure was noted as part of enhancing the liveability of cities and resilience to climate impacts
- Australia has several examples of best practice in climate change mitigation and adaptation at the local scale, which can be communicated nationally and contribute to a global program

Who else needs to be involved in the national consultation?

- The Roundtable identified multiple groups that could add value to the proposed national consultation, in addition to the obvious focus on State Government, and supported further engagement with:
 - AIGN and business and industry
 - Youth e.g. the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, wider community groups, and unions for example with interests in outdoor workers
 - Australian Government agencies – national endorsement of framework recognised as valuable
 - Renewable energy industry – including both the RE 100 for leadership roles, and smaller regional enterprises relevant to local government initiatives
 - Finance sector
 - Indigenous groups

Other key points made by Roundtable participants included:

- Variability in local governments needs recognition, including through tailored communication, specific approaches and support
- Clarity useful on where cross-jurisdictional collaboration required for example where information sharing is needed, and where economies of scale required
 - It was noted for example that achieving outcomes in the uptake of electric vehicles needed partnerships that cross jurisdictions and local government boundaries
- There is a need for more effective approaches that integrate climate change plans and actions into core social, economic and development strategies and measures. While separate action plans are needed to articulate the nature and breadth of responses required, integration is increasingly being recognised as essential for effective implementation

Next steps

The key next steps in the national consultation process are meetings in each state and territory to be facilitated by ICLEI, and then a major national Roundtable most likely in June 2019 organised by CURF under the direction of ICLEI Oceania as part of this program.

This short record of the roundtable has been forwarded to participants with an invitation for further input. Participants of the March Roundtable may also be invited to the June national Roundtable.