

Submission

2017 REVIEW OF CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES DISCUSSION PAPERS

**Submitted by: The Australian Association
for Environmental Education Inc.**

Introduction

This submission is made by the executive of the National professional association whose key mission is to:

Connect through education to advance understandings and actions in relation to environmental and sustainability issues across communities and sectors

The Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) sees climate change as the most significant sustainability challenge of our time and consequently sees these policies, programs and frameworks as a positive contribution.

However, the current set of the Australian Government's Climate Change policies is not maximizing their potential or effectiveness as they consistently lack an educational, community engagement and behaviour change dimension. In addition, the Association sees the target as set too low and seeks Australian Government leadership to meet the expectation of our members by setting a 60% reduction on 2000 levels by 2030 and carbon neutral by 2046.

AAEE believes this is an achievable and economically, environmentally and socially responsible for Australia course of action.

Our organisation and members:

- Understand that climate change is real and occurring now
- Want to see effective government policy in this area
- Are seeking to include climate change in their education, engagement and behaviour change programs

On this last point AAEE states that the Australian Government's Review of Climate Change Policies documents lacks strong and significant policy direction to help people, organisations and the community to fully understand the need and urgency of action, identify points of entry for all Australians to participate in actions. An example of this being a 'halving of per capita emissions' is explicitly identified in the introduction to the document. However, the policy matrix presented, except for 'Households, small to medium size business and the built environment' exclude specific community and individual emissions reductions behaviours and climate change understanding. This is a significant lost opportunity.

In summary, the policies framework:

- Needs an education and engagement focus, including explicit reference to Climate Change education through the Australian Curriculum and sustainability skills through trades and training institutes

- Needs to include specific community engagement messaging for behaviour change approaches that are specific for the various policies and actions
- Has a strong focus on industry and technology and regulatory frameworks, however ignores the other levers the government has including community engagement, consumer knowledge and individuals' purchasing power
- Should explicitly include the role of research and the communication of findings to the Australian community to raise the overall level of understanding and action
- Needs to include strategies that provide multiple points of entry for households, local government, community organisations, SME's to understand and act at personal, household, community and organisational levels to participate in learning, behaviour change and capacity building
- Must include specific integration and explanation of relationship of commonwealth and state/territory policies and actions. This will create greater clarity and understanding of the complementarity of policy settings
- Targeted and specific climate change education and behavioral response materials needs to be developed for the Australian context. An example of the style of materials includes the UNESCO Bangkok Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education¹.

Comments in detail and responses to Discussion paper questions.

Australia's Paris target

AAEE response to Questions. The policies need to include:

- A clear science evidence and risk management approach needs to be the foundation of Australia's commitment to long term emissions reductions
- Long term emissions goals need to be communicated in a range of ways to appeal to the understanding and engagement of more people in the community, including clear multi-modal communications on achievements of targets
- Reporting on progress emissions reductions needs to be in formats that allows community wide understanding of the reductions, implications and our achievement relative to other nations.

Electricity Generation

AAEE response to Questions. The policies need to include:

- Clarity and commitment regarding the short term energy mix from both fossil-fuel and renewables with a transition plan.
- A pathway for community investment in renewable energy generation for those who do not have a property that allows investment

¹ Education sector responses to Climate Change <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002153/215305e.pdf>

Households, small to medium-sized enterprises and the built environment

AAEE response to Questions. The policies need to include:

- The role of Local Government in mitigating the impacts of Climate Change and how they contribute to building resilient communities. As a provider of a significant number of services to house-holds and community Local Government needs a specific role in Climate Change mitigation and adaptation as a community capacity building and engagement process.
- Consumer choices can contribute to a reduction in climate change in areas of household construction and appliance choice specific industry targeted training and education programs are required at all levels of the supply chain from materials sourcing through to manufacture, retail sales and installation to reduce the carbon footprint of products and the energy they consume over their lifespan.

Resources, manufacturing and waste

AAEE response to Questions. The policies need to include:

- Changes to industry and manufacturing processes is dependent on technology improvements and cultural change. Policies need to value the role of research and evaluation in understanding new processes and their efficacy in reducing our carbon footprint. AAEE sees a significant role for evaluators and planners to assist in the identification and adoption of new processes and supporting the cultural and organizational shift required.
- Educating the community on materials life cycles and creating value around recycling, upcycling, and avoidance strategies is critical.

Transport

AAEE response to Questions. The policies need to include:

- Greater emphasis on active transport and public transport as planning features of all new greenfield developments and retro-fitting / integrating of active transport into re-zoned or redeveloped locations.
- Specific inclusion of behavior change messaging around active transport for local and short trip. This is important for Local Government sustainability educators, schools, small business and households.
- Local government planning considerations for car sharing, short term cycle hire, end of trip facilities in new developments and refurbished buildings and the inclusion of bike infrastructure / lanes.

Land and Agriculture

AAEE response to Questions. The policies need to include:

- Development and delivery of training events that demonstrate new technologies and approaches to reduce fuel and energy consumption on farms

- Clear communication processes about how the rural sector can be further engaged in carbon sequestration and training for the rural sector of what carbon farming techniques are suitable for different agricultural enterprises and contexts.

Research, development, innovation and technology

AAEE response to Questions. The policies need to include:

- Integrated research and communication strategies in order to increase the quality and level of knowledge and understanding the Australian community has in relation to Climate Change and the role Australia is playing in managing climate change risk through participation in international programs and taking action in Australia.
- Enhancing the role of science communication and citizen science approaches communication
- Identification and development of technologies that are appropriate for scaling down to community level with appropriate entry points as well as systems that allow for community understanding of and investment in new technologies

In summary, the Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) sees the specific need for education and training, engagement and behavior change to become integrated into these climate change policies to provide a more coherent and inclusive set of actions.

Significant progress toward stronger set of target will be achieved through appealing to the wider community. Our Australian population overwhelmingly agrees climate change is real and happening now, these policies must include additional ways to communicate strategies, actions and behavior change mechanisms if they are to maximize their effectiveness.

Regards



Mark Caddey, President, AAEE

On behalf of the AAEE National Executive

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