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**Submission: Inquiry into Climate Change and Environmental Impacts on Coastal Communities**

**Cr Natalie Stevens**  
**Pittwater Councillor and Sydney Coastal Councils Group Executive member.**

Climate Change is the issue facing us today. Our responses will determine the future of generations. Urgent and effective action is required. Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

**Re: EXISTING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

**Climate Change Policies and Action Plans:**

Pittwater Council is currently formulating a Climate Change Policy and Climate Action Plan as part of their Strategic Plan. Due to the urgency and magnitude of action required regarding Climate Change it is imperative that, at least, all Australian Councils are statutorily required to formulate and implement Climate Change Policies and Climate Action Plans.

**Recommendation:** The inquiry recommends that all councils are statutorily required to formulate and implement Climate Change Policies and Action Plans.

**Re: THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF COASTAL POPULATION GROWTH AND MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF COASTAL RESOURCES**

**Mitigative Infrastructure:**

There exists an urgent need for increased federal funding of mitigative infrastructure such as adequate and integrated public transport, footpaths and cycleways. Council budgets are inadequate to address the infrastructure requirements of local communities and Section 94 funding does not cover already built areas.

**Recommendation:** That the Federal government increase federal funding for the urgent implementation of mitigative infrastructure.

**Sustainable Communities:**

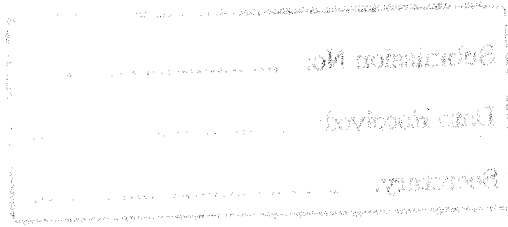
It is imperative due to climate change that we ensure that our communities are sustainable. In order to foster sustainability, we need to ensure that our communities have a local focus regarding food production, employment opportunities and essential services. This would dramatically reduce the production of greenhouse gases.

**Recommendation:**

That Councils are required to conduct sustainability audits of their communities and identify what is required to ensure their local government areas are sustainable communities. Also new release areas are required to be sustainable communities and the sustainability of urban sprawl is examined.

**Sustainable Energy Resources:**

Coal production contributes a large percentage of our greenhouse gas emissions and is unsustainable.



**Recommendation:** That the Federal Government increase funding of renewable energy research and production, reinstate the MRET research and funding, ban new coal fired power stations and convert existing coal fired power stations.

**Incentives:**

Incentives are required to ensure sustainable use of coastal resources.

**Recommendation:** That the Federal Government review existing incentives to ensure sustainable use of coastal resources.

**Re: THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON COASTAL AREAS AND STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION, PARTICULARLY IN RESPONSE TO PROJECTED SEA LEVEL RISE**

Local Councils require leadership, in particular regarding a benchmark standard measurement of sea level rise, in order to effectively plan regarding sea level rise.

**Recommendation:** That the Federal Government develop and legislate a sea level rise standard planning mechanism that allows for local variability and regular review in response to climate change science.

**Re: MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE COASTAL COMMUNITIES**

**Climate Change Research and Education:**

There is an urgent need for local research regarding climate change in coastal areas, as some of the effects of climate change are subject to regional and local variability. Australia has an opportunity to be world leaders in this research and application of research solutions.

Community Education regarding climate change is an urgent part of the solution of addressing climate change. Climate Change Research and Education programs could be facilitated with existing Environment Centres and could be linked with nearby Universities. The education syllabus of schools could have an addition of sustainability as a subject to ensure children and young people are educated about this important subject matter and their minds are stimulated to help develop solutions.

**Recommendations:** That the Federal Government establish Climate Change Research and Education Programmes in coastal areas throughout the country.  
That sustainability is added as a subject to the education syllabus.

**Re: GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COASTAL ZONE**

The Federal Government has the opportunity to lead and influence internationally, as well as domestically about governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone regarding climate change and related coastal zone issues. It is imperative that coastal zone management has an integrated and holistic approach to ensure its effectiveness.

**Recommendation:** That the Federal Government facilitate the integration and where necessary, the initiation of governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone in the international and domestic spheres.