

Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation  
Productivity Commission  
LB2 Collins St East  
Melbourne, Victoria, 8003  
Via email: [climate-adaptation@pc.gov.au](mailto:climate-adaptation@pc.gov.au)

8<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Re: Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation – Draft Report Submission**

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The purpose of this letter is to provide a submission from the Gippsland Climate Change Network Inc. (GCCN) in response to the Productivity Commission's *Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation – Draft Report*. This submission provides a background on the GCCN, and then provides some general comments in response to the *Draft Report*.

**GCCN Background**

Formed in 2007, the GCCN is an incorporated not-for-profit network of approximately 50 diverse member organisations across state government departments and agencies, local government, private businesses, education providers, community groups and other organisations, covering the six local government areas across the Gippsland region in eastern Victoria. The GCCN works to provide a forum for action to mitigate and adapt to climate change through its three delivery pillars of Informing, Connecting and Acting. The GCCN has been actively involved in preparing Gippsland to adapt to the impacts of climate change, by providing information sharing and networking services for those working in the adaptation sector across Gippsland.

Gippsland as a region is exposed to climate change both directly and indirectly. Directly, climate change will impact communities, the environment and the economy, through reduced rainfall and increased temperatures, more severe weather events, increased risk of bushfire, rising sea levels and biodiversity loss. Gippsland's key economic sectors are underpinned by Gippsland's natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, which will also be impacted by climatic shifts attributed to climate change. Indirectly, Gippsland's residents will be impacted by increased energy costs, resulting in increased food and travel costs. A large amount of activity is underway to assist the region to adapt to climate change, from NCCARF to ARC research projects working with the community to ensure equitable and resilient adaptation, to adaptation within the agricultural and other industry sectors.

**General Comments**

The GCCN supports the undertaking of the Productivity Commission in developing this comprehensive draft report. The following presents a summary of feedback received by the GCCN in response to this report, summarized in some overarching general comments.

There is agreement that the respective roles for each sphere of government, and other stakeholders, needs to be better defined. Whilst there is agreement that local government will need

to play a major role is assisting communities to adapt to climate change, as they understand and are connected to these communities, there needs to be adequate resourcing and support for this role by both State and Federal government. The *Draft Report* does not adequately identify the support that will be provided to local government, who are already under resourced, to help them meet this obligation.

Within Victoria, it was flagged in the *Land & Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change White Paper*, that the role of local government needed to be better defined, and that the role of State bodies such as Catchment Management Authorities and Coastal Boards could be reassessed and some responsibilities devolved from local government to these merged entities. However, even though this issue was raised, this proposal was not followed through on, so the issue still persists.

The Federal government needs to continue and build upon its role as a leader in climate change adaptation, through resourcing local initiatives, and leading research agendas (which have a practical implementation focus). Further to this, there needs to be recognition at all levels of policy development and program delivery that managing the potentially highly disruptive impact of climate change on our future economy and national well being is dependent upon a political bi-partisan approach for policy and program delivery. Climate impacts in the near future are real and highly disruptive and as such, must not devolve into a political contest, and need to be based on best practice, ethical scientific evidence. Ensuring a robust framework is established to manage climate adaptation will ensure this.

There is agreement that due to the uncertainty surrounding change to the frequency, intensity, location and timing of extreme weather events a risk management approach is required based on adaptation policies and programs. The proposed approach of developing a priority set of low regret reforms and actions is a good one. This approach is best suited at a regional level, whereby resources can be pooled, but a thorough understanding of local issues and communities still exists. The Greenhouse Alliance network across Victoria, of which the GCCN is a part, provides a great example for dealing with these issues across local and State government, as well as the private and community sectors, at a regional level. This will provide a good delivery model for engagement, education, planning and delivery.

## Conclusion

With regards to the information requests and engagement approach of the Productivity Commission related to this report, it seems that many questions are aimed at the community, who in reality will not be aware of this report or read through its 300 pages of content. The GCCN would be happy to facilitate local consultation on this report if the Productivity Commission wishes to visit the region.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the *Draft Report*.

Regards

Scott Ferraro

Executive Officer  
**Gippsland Climate Change Network Inc.**

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