

**Questions Submitted in Writing – Council Meeting – 26 May 2021**

**Jenny Barrett, Apollo Bay Climate Action Team**

- 1. There are emerging opportunities for regional councils such as Colac Otway Shire to partner with an urban council seeking carbon offsets in ways advantageous to both partners and to the local environment, particularly through regenerative farming operations. With other members of the local Climate Action Team, I would like to see our shire involved in such a scheme.**

**Have Councillors discussed and resolved whether they are prepared to meet with a council (for example, Maribryngong or Darebin) to explore and advance this opportunity for local enterprise development and regenerative farming in the Shire?**

***Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure***

Council is aware of some Metropolitan councils identifying drawdown opportunities to remove excess carbon out of the atmosphere by restoring and protecting their open spaces and undertaking greening opportunities within and potentially beyond their municipality. Colac Otway Shire Council has not been approached or invited by those Councils to further explore those opportunities to date. This appears to be a long term goal for metro municipalities to build a coordinated, verified and scientifically robust process to reduce and account for carbon emissions and reduce their reliance on offsets.

Council considers the state's network of Greenhouse and Climate Alliances to be an ideal platform for pursuing and exploring such drawdown programs and will be discussing how to progress such initiatives across our region with the soon to be established Barwon South West Climate Alliance and these discussions will be in terms of:

- our own communities' emissions resulting directly from agriculture in our region (>50% of community emissions);
- other community emissions in the region (energy, waste and transport);
- our own corporate emissions; and
- opportunities to assist other metropolitan councils to do the same in the future.

**Jeff Cooke, Colac Climate Action Team**

- 1. I recognize that Council has done its best in fulfilling the requirement under legislation to consult with the community. The 2050 Vision survey and the deliberative engagement process will provide a broad overview. Because climate change is now accepted as an urgent crisis and this decade needing to be one of action I ask Council to consider establishing a Climate Action Plan Committee to develop mitigation and adaptation plans for the Shire. This would form part of the Council's Plan. There is a great level of expertise within our local community that could develop the needed plan in collaboration with Council staff. With many local government's responding to the climate crisis by initiating community inclusion when will Council establish such a volunteer group for our shire?**

***Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure***

Following on from an extensive community engagement process, Council is currently preparing the Council Plan. There have been no decisions made on the Council Plan at this time. It will be released for community consultation once Council has prepared a draft Council Plan.