UNLEY COUNCIL DRAFT CLIMATE AND ENERGY PLAN

RESPONSE FROM UNLEY VOICES FOR CLIMATE ACTION

This submission has been prepared by Unley Voices for Climate Action in response to Council's draft Climate and Energy Plan. Our submission includes ideas gathered at a community climate forum in March 2021. The following 74 Unley residents have endorsed our submission. Questions about this submission can be directed to uvforca@gmail.com or Andrew Boorman 0420370925

Name	Suburb	Name	Suburb
Alice Crawford	Parkside	Lyn Hall	Unley
Amélie Mullarkey	Black Forest	Malcolm Robertson	Unley
Amanda Nettlebeck	Parkside	Marijana Tadic	Fullarton
Andrew Boorman	Parkside	Mark Fischer	Unley
Andrew Harvey	Unley	Mary Heath	Goodwood
Ann Doolette	Wayville	Mary-Rose Alfonsi	Black Forest
Anna Lulka	Fullarton	Maureen Graney	Parkside
Annie Gleeson	Black Forest	Natalie Fuller	Unley
April Goddard	Parkside	Neven Marovich	Fullarton
Ariane Mueller Menendez	Parkside	Oriane El Jammal	Parkside
Ashley Campbell	Black Forest	Peter Lee	Parkside
Barbara Pocock	Parkside	Peter Tonkin	Parkside
Brendan Schulze	Unley	Philip Pointer	Unley
Caroline Murphy	Fullarton	Philip Henschke	Malvern
Chris Murphy	Fullarton	Dr Robyn Wei-Lyn	Parkside
David Elliot	Goodwood	Rosalind Martin	Parkside
David Hart	Parkside	Sal Humphreys	Goodwood
David John	Unley	Sam Kruckenmeyer	Hyde Park
David Lindley	Parkside	Sandra Crowe	Parkside
Elise Francis	Millswood	Sean Mullarkey	Black Forest
Fabienne Benoist	Parkside	Sean Williams	Parkside
Gabrielle Bond	Unley	Sharon Hetzel	Parkside
Gary Swarbrick	Parkside	Snezana Swarbrick	Parkside
Georgie Hart	Parkside	Sorakeate Sonsiri	Millswood
Greg Franks	Parkside	Stefan Gabrynowicz	Parkside
Hannah Graney	Hyde Park	Stephen Marlow	Parkside
Ian Crowe	Parkside	Stuart Gonda	Parkside
Jamie Weatherill	Hyde Park	Tandanya Allain	Hyde Park
Jane Bange	Parkside	Tessa Leon	Parkside
Dr Jasper Lee	Wayville	Torborn Van Heeswijck	Unley
Jennifer Callanan	Parkside	Tracey Kermond	Unley
Joel Hatcher	Hyde Park	Trish Fairley Jones	Parkside
John Wishart	Parkside	Triton Tunis-Mitchell	Parkside
Katrina Lucas	Parkside	Vasso Fessas	Parkside
Lauren Murphy	Hyde Park	Victoria Wade	Goodwood
Les Birch	Clarence Park	Wendy Braund	Unley
Linnell Barelli	Parkside	Wilton Braund	Unley

1. Our proposal

1.1. We congratulate Council for developing a plan to reach net zero emissions for its operations.

1.2. **We recommend** that Council lead other Local Governments in reducing emissions by:

- Achieving net zero emissions from 1 July 2022 by purchasing offsets against Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions and seeking formal certification under the Australian Government's Climate Active Program;
- Eliminating Scope 2 emissions before 2030 by switching to 100% renewable energy in the next LGA bulk purchase electricity contract due on 1 January 2023;
- Reducing Scope 1 emissions more rapidly by bringing forward capital expenditure where low emissions technologies are currently available, such as LED lighting and solar panels;
- Achieving reductions in Scope 3 emissions by rethinking asset management planning practices and where possible deferring high emissions projects until suitable alternatives are available;
- Ensuring that decisions by Council across all its policies and procedures are consistent with reducing not increasing emissions;
- Increasing funds allocated in the draft 2021-2022 budget for a 'Series of Community Workshops - Getting to Net Zero, Affordably' - that will feed into a Community Emissions Reduction plan to at least match funds spent in the development of the Council's Climate and Energy Plan; and
- Engaging the community in governance and accountability arrangements in implementing the Plan.

2. The Case for net zero by 2022

2.1. All of us, particularly in the developed world, have contributed to the current climate crisis. We must now all do what we can to step back from this crisis.

2.2. We are already experiencing adverse weather events from our warming planet. The earlier and faster we reduce emissions the more likely we will meet the Paris target to avoid climate catastrophe.

2.3. The Australian Academy of Science says that our current emissions trajectory will take us to 3C warming by 2100. Their report describes the harms for humans and living systems in Australia if this happens. (*The risks to Australia from a 3C warming world* Australian Academy of Science 2021).

2.4. The current plan reduces emissions by 140 tonnes of CO2/annum. This is equivalent to the annual emissions from about 8 Australians (16.8 tonnesCO2e/person/year *https://ourworldindata.org/co2/country/australia?country=~AUS*). Council must and can reduce emissions at a faster rate, and where this is not currently possible there is a moral and environmental imperative to purchase accredited offsets.

2.5. The Plan does not but should compare the financial costs and benefits of simultaneously purchasing offsets and accelerating emissions reduction strategies over the years to 2030. There will be additional up front costs but there will also be savings through lowered energy and fuel bills. The cost of offsets will reduce in subsequent years as appropriate technical and design solutions are found.

2.6. The cost of purchasing offsets (estimated in the Plan at $20/tonne) for all current Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions (3,616 tonnes) is $72,320/annum, which is 0.14% of the Council budget. (Note: current ACCU price is $18/tonne, which is a total offset cost of $65,088). We believe Council can bear this cost.

2.7. Our approach to emissions reduction gives Council a plan that demonstrates ambition and leadership. Carbon neutrality by 2030 can be easily bettered. Council's emissions are 1% of estimated total emissions from the Unley community. Through our recommendations, Council's plan will set a benchmark that will challenge our community to significantly reduce the remaining 99% of emissions.

3. Scope 1 Emissions (Direct emissions by Council from fuel, diesel and gas)

3.1. The plan states that the Council will spend money on an electric vehicle pilot. (Years 1-2 of the Plan). We question this given the technology is proven for light vehicles. Council should switch to electric vehicles as these become available which may be sooner than years 3-5 of the Plan. We acknowledge that early adoption may incur additional costs.

3.2. The plan indicates that the swimming pool is to be converted from gas to electricity from 2027-2030. We question whether this change-over could be made earlier to reduce emissions and, if powered by solar panels, also reduce energy costs.

4. Scope 2 Emissions (Indirect emissions from electricity)

4.1. The draft plan notes "there are already clear cost effective alternatives in the market for Scope 1 and 2 emissions." **We recommend** Council accelerate the trajectory for emissions reduction illustrated in Figure 2, by bringing forward expenditure on these items to the earliest opportunity, rather than over ten years.

4.2. For example, building and street lighting and solar PV are indicated as being installed over the period 2022-2030. Installation of these should be brought forward. Although capital costs may be higher, earlier installation will reduce total electricity charges and emissions.

4.3. **We recommend** Council transition to 100% renewable energy as soon as possible, rather than defer this until 2030. The current plan states that it will use 100% renewable electricity by 2030, based on the state government's target for the South Australian grid. We understand Council purchases its electricity through a bulk purchase arrangement with the LGA that expires on 31 December 2022. Council should advocate to other LGA members for the new contract to offer 100% renewable electricity.

4.4. **We recommend** the plan indicate the net benefits and costs in reducing emissions. Including this information will better illustrate the commitment being made to reach net zero as well as longer term financial and environmental benefits.

4.5. Although urban street trees cannot be used as Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs), it should not stop Council from using trees as a Scope 2 emissions mitigation strategy.

4.6. **We recommend** the Plan be much more proactive in quantifying both the CO2reduction through trees and the reduction in electricity usage through an expanded tree canopy. Maintaining and building our public and private tree stock should be viewed as a carbon reduction pathway (in page 8 of the Plan) and as an energy usage reduction strategy for Scope 2 emissions.

4.7. The Council's Tree Strategy is therefore an important part of the Climate and Energy Plan. We support Council continuing to find means to reverse the decline in our urban tree canopy.

4.8. **We recommend** Council also consider other natural ways to cool urban and city environs. For example, including nature in building and urban designs with "green" rooftops for multi-story developments, more use of permeable rather than hard surfaces, more trees planted in shopping centre car parks etc.

4.9. New developments along main roads should have green areas along the footpaths. New buildings should not extend to the footpath boundary but be set back at least 5 m to allow for significant greening. This amenity would encourage pedestrians who would not be squeezed between traffic and buildings.

4.10. The plan lists Council achievements to date in reducing emissions. Although precise data is not available, Council could indicate the extent to which progress has already been made. For example the percentage of street lights converted to LED, and solar PV installed as a percentage of an overall target.

5. Scope 3 emissions (Indirect and embodied emissions from products and services purchased by Council)

5.1. We commend Council for identifying Scope 3 emissions in the plan and note that a working group is to be established to identify reductions in Scope 3 emissions. **We recommend** Council use the findings from this work to set an ambitious target for the annual reduction of these emissions. This will also help reduce the amount of funds spent offsetting emissions.

5.2. 100% renewable electricity supply will eliminate emissions from electricity embodied in water.

5.3. Roads, paths and stormwater make up almost 80% of these emissions. **We recommend** the working group not only consider the procurement of alternative less carbon intensive materials for these works but also investigate:

5.3.1. if current road and pavements design practices can be changed to reduce the amount of hard surfaces in the urban environment;

5.3.2. deferring non-essential work until alternative low emission materials are available;

5.3.3. whether the asset maintenance and replacement cycle can be lengthened without compromising safety or amenity.

5.4. We commend the proposal to develop and implement sustainable procurement policies based on, and showing support for, the principles of a Circular Economy. **We recommend** these policies make allowances for a premium to be paid for low emissions products and services. When low emissions alternatives are not currently available but are anticipated in the near future, procurement should be postponed where practical.

5.5. Further to the above, Council develop and implement a Circular Economy Policy and implement it on all material procurement.

6. Governance

6.1. **We recommend** Council establish a broadly constituted community climate advisory group (and a separate business based group) to engage the wider community in supporting the plan and developing ideas for further action. The Council is connected with community groups such as the Bicycle Users Group and the Tree Group that have an interest in climate related issues. We anticipate the Living Young Reference Group would also be engaged with this issue. Unley Voices for Climate Action is another local community group with members very engaged in this issue.

6.2. Although there are very significant challenges in responding to the climate emergency we believe positive environmental and social outcomes can be achieved by engaging the community to identify innovative, collaborative and creative approaches to emissions reduction.

6.3. **We recommend** Council ensure that the decisions it makes, about its own operations and more widely in the community, reduce CO2e emissions. Where emissions cannot be reduced, this should be reported and justified.

6.4. **We recommend** the Plan clearly state how other plans and strategies approved by Council are relevant to emissions reduction (eg the Walking and Cycling Plan, Integrated Transport Strategy, Waste Management and Tree Strategies) and indicate that these will be implemented in line with the objectives and targets in the Climate and Energy Plan. This will show Council is comprehensively reducing emissions and how the community can support this objective.

6.5. **We recommend** Council determine whether funds it holds with banks or other financial institutions are being used in emissions intensive industries. Ethical banking and investing is readily available. Information on 'ethical' investment products is available via the Responsible Investment Association Australia.

7. Accountability:

7.1. We note the plan provides for an annual report on the Council's carbon footprint.

7.2. **We recommend** reporting is made against annual emissions reduction targets and the extent to which these are achieved and is publicly available. The report should be at a sufficiently detailed level to assess the impact of relevant policies and strategies.

7.3. Council should also consider reporting on the budgetary impacts of reducing emissions.

7.4. **We recommend** Council develop a communication strategy to ensure businesses and residents are informed about the Council's plan, strategies and progress towards net zero emissions.

8. Advocacy

8.1. **We recommend** Council advocate to state and federal governments for funding and infrastructure to support the reduction of climate emissions including innovative approaches for reducing Scope 3 emissions.

8.2. We encourage Council to use its influence directly, and collectively through the Local Government Association, to advocate for strong action on climate mitigation.

8.3. Implementing Council's sustainable procurement policies is an opportunity for Council to advocate to suppliers for low emission materials and services that are consistent with circular economy principles.

8.4. **We recommend** Council assist businesses and residents to take action to reduce emissions by publicizing available information and resources.

9. A plan for the reduction of emissions in our community

9.1. We understand the Climate and Energy Plan is about emissions reduction for Council operations. However, in our consultations with residents, community emissions reduction measures have been identified and these are included below.

9.2. Council's 2021-2022 draft budget indicates that funds will be available for a 'Series of Community Workshops - Getting to Net Zero, Affordably' - that will feed into a Community Emissions Reduction plan. We commend Council for this initiative but believe funding committed to this work should be at least equivalent to that spent on the Climate and Energy Plan.

9.3. The main areas for emissions reduction in the community are transport, electricity, stationary energy and waste. Ideas for that could be considered as part of a plan for emissions reduction could include the following.

Supporting and recognising emissions reduction in the community

9.4. "Take the Pledge" to reduce personal annual emissions by a nominated amount. People sign up to their pledge on a website and report on progress. Data such as current carbon footprint, car mileage, energy usage could be entered and reduction targets specified. Changing behaviour can reduce emissions without spending money on capital items. This could include reducing annual distance travelled by car, increased use of public transport, tree planting, home energy savings etc. In this way early adopters are identified and recognised. This can lead to sharing and exchanging information between businesses and residents and encouraging others to take similar action.

Education

9.5. A community education and support program is needed to provide engage residents in how to reduce their emissions. This could involve experts in the field as well as ongoing sharing of practical information and ideas between residents and businesses.

9.6. The Stephanie Alexander program in schools involves students growing, cooking and eating their seasonal produce. Schools that are not part of this program could be encouraged with help from residents to

participate in one or more of these activities through their school or community garden.

Active transport

9.7. Most primary school children are driven to school. The Council's Walking and Cycling Plan and Integrated Transport Strategy is having positive results – for example, as noted in the Mayor's quarterly circular, St Thomas School Goodwood has 100 of its 400 students riding to school. Safer walking and cycling routes/ traffic management practices should be developed for every school to reduce car use for school drop-offs and pick-ups. Local school buses to transport students from home to school would also reduce car use. A funding partnership to provide local school buses between the City of Unley and the SA Government should be explored over the next 12 months.

9.8. We suggest the Walking and Cycling Plan and Integrated Transport Strategy be reconsidered to determine if they are suitable for mass rather than marginal uptake by residents. These strategies will need higher levels of funding if there are to be significant increases in participation.

9.9. Messages to shop locally should be integrated with active transport amenity and infrastructure. Routes to local shops must be conducive to residents walking, cycling or using e-scooters.

9.10. The vast majority of cars driven by commuters have only one occupant. Car-pooling scheme may be an attractive option for some residents.

9.11. On Census Day 2016 in the City of Unley, 61.3% of people travelled to work in a private car, 11.0% took public transport and 8.9% rode a bike or walked. Our community needs to consider what changes can be made to reduce the use of the private car and its impact on our living and working environments.

Electric vehicles

9.12. There is currently only one public EV charging point in Unley. Council should develop a plan in conjunction with residents and businesses to determine suitable locations for extra charging points.

9.13. Our near city location is well suited to increases in the use of light-weight electric transport options such as eScooters and other e-mobility devices. This form of transport with reduced speed, low environmental impact and positive benefits in taking cars off the road should be encouraged.

Energy

9.14. Council could explore whether it or another intermediary can facilitate group purchases of solar panels or 100% renewable electricity for residents and businesses?

9.15. Council could examine a scheme whereby solar panels are purchased for low-income residents with capital outlays repaid by the resident through bill savings over a five to ten year period.

9.16. Council could educate and help residents to transition from gas to full electrification. Council could also consider how a ban on new gas connections can be effected.

Trees

9.17. The Council's Tree Strategy aims to increase or at least maintain the current tree canopy. We support the Council continuing to examine how trees can be planted, protected and nurtured. In the past there was a scheme for residents to Adopt a Tree and also the greening of street verges. The Council could examine how these or similar schemes can be revised and expanded to engage more residents.

Waste

9.18. The volume of waste produced is largely determined by the amount and nature of consumption. Most messaging about waste does not deal with consumption from which waste is generated.

9.19. Council strongly promotes recycling but that is the last step in the waste hierarchy before disposal. There needs to be more emphasis on showing leadership in procurement practices consistent with current thinking on circular rather than linear economies. That is eliminating future waste rather than managing it at a later date. This policy would also emphasise material reduction and reuse (ie circular economy).

9.20. Since 2003/04 solid waste generated in South Australia has steadily increased from about 3.3 million tonnes per year to about 5.2 million tonnes in 2018/19. This is an increase of about 58% in only 15 years. Whilst population growth has been a contributing factor, the primary driver is the increasing waste intensity of economic activity. The 2018-19 Recycling Activity Survey Report prepared for Green Industries indicates that in SA, per capita waste generation increased by 37% since 2003-04 and that the tonnage of waste per $1 million of Gross State Product (GSP) has increased by just over 20% during this time.

9.21. Council could consider how it can better support and promote local industry, circular economies, and initiatives like the Unley Repair Cafe, Buy Nothing project, Adelaide Waste Collective and other community groups or initiatives focusing on consumption and waste.

9.22. The Council should give clear information on its website and to users who book hard rubbish collections, about how this rubbish is treated and where relevant, alternative options for reuse such as freecycle or gumtree or recycling.
9.23. Waste is separated in the home but not generally on the street. Separate FOGO (food organic, garden organic) green bins should be provided next to waste to landfill (& recycling) bins.
9.24. The Council should consider conducting an audit of its hard rubbish services to determine whether collected material is effectively sorted for reuse and recycling and not only sent to landfill.