

**Environmental Reference Group Meeting  
3 December 2007  
Committee Room One, Wellington City Council  
Minutes**

**Present:**

Councillor Wade-Brown (Chair)  
Councillor Pannett  
Ralph Chapman  
Debbie Firestone  
Chris Horne  
Ian Hunter  
Dave Kettell  
Tushara Kodikara  
Ruth Paul  
Ian Shearer

**Apologies:**

Mike Ennis  
Liz Hibbs  
Murray McLea (GWRC)  
Nicky Karu (WCC Treaty  
Relations)

**WCC Officers:**

Jim Ebenhoh (Strategy)  
Zach Rissel (Policy)

**Climate Change Update**

Zach Rissel, Policy Advisor, gave a presentation on the Climate Change Action Plan due to be considered by the Strategy and Policy Committee on 5 December.

The discussion was lengthy and wide-ranging. Some of the comments and questions from members of the group included:

- The Council should set a date for carbon neutrality for its corporate activities, perhaps by 2012.
- Carbon credits should be bought within New Zealand where possible, to help New Zealand meet its emission reduction goals.
- The Council should consider reaching its 80% reduction target earlier than 2050, to retain leadership relative to other places.
- More aggressive transport initiatives are needed, including opposition to Transmission Gully and other roads like the Grenada-Gracefield link, and considering the embodied energy in vehicles and roads.
- Economic growth can be at odds with the carbon-neutral vision.
- Project West Wind would generate less power than stated in the Climate Change Action Plan, and Meridian has acknowledged this.
- The status of household wind turbines under the District Plan should be clarified.
- Any subsidy or incentive for solar water heating could potentially be applied to other sustainable technology like household wind turbines.
- Cost/benefit analysis will be difficult because the price of carbon credits will vary over time.

- The Plan must be reviewed annually.
- Ambitious but realistic targets are required.
- The importance of external influences (e.g. the price of oil) and the cost of adaptation needs to be acknowledged.
- This will need to be linked to consultation on community outcomes as part of the next LTCCP, with a sufficient budget to achieve the carbon-neutral goal.
- Youth involvement is desirable in the consultation phase.

## **Membership and Terms of Reference**

The group discussed the current vacancies and asked Council officers to advertise for expressions of interest from potential new members in December – January.

The Terms of Reference for the group were discussed, with members making the following suggestions:

- Allow for a non-Councillor chair, and for co-chairs.
- Meet roughly every two months, with provisional dates set in advance.
- Consider limiting membership to three-year terms.

Jim Ebenhoh said he would try to get an ERG report-back onto the Strategy and Policy Committee (SPC) agenda for February 2008, which would include the proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference. Jim Ebenhoh agreed to circulate a tracked-change version of the Terms of Reference, for the group's approval, before taking it to SPC.

## **Information-Sharing and Announcements**

Members shared information on upcoming events, including:

- Gordon Brown (UK Prime Minister) has announced that by 2016 all new buildings in the UK will have to have zero net energy requirements.
- Closing dates for submissions on WCC documents include:
  - 7 December: Central Park restoration plan.
  - 14 December: Adelaide Road long-term future.
  - 19 December: Suburban Centres (District Plan).
- 6 December: Regional Land Transport Committee meeting at GWRC.
- 8 December: Gecko (Victoria University's student environmental association) has organised a Climate Change Day of Action in Civic Square.
- 9 December, 10:30am: Makara Estuary work bee.
- 13 December – 10 February: Herbarium Amoris photo exhibition at the Botanic Gardens' Treehouse.
- 18 February: Trees in the Urban Environment at Victoria University's Murphy 101 (Wellington Botanical Society meeting).
- 21 February: Symposium by Victoria University on carbon-neutral electricity.

## **Next Meeting**

The group agreed to meet again in early February. Possible topics include the Northern Reserves Management Plan, and selecting new ERG members.