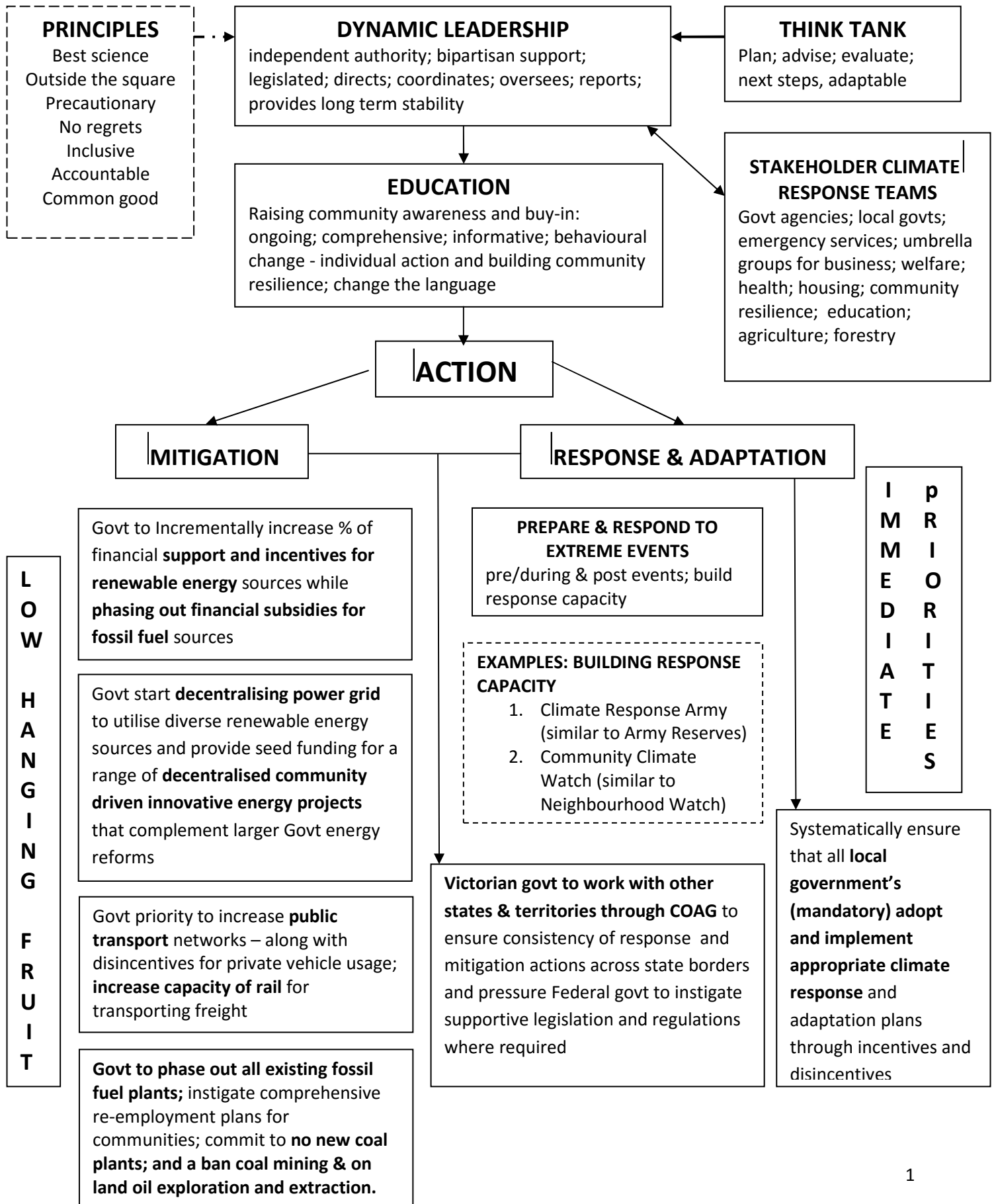


RESPONDING TO A CLIMATE IN TRANSITION -

it IS all about scale



Summary of Proposals

PROPOSAL 1: Create an **independent authority** that has **strong bipartisan support** with appropriate **legislation and regulations** to ensure its longevity; that it is publicly accountable and basically won't run amuck. This authority needs to emphasise that responding to climate change is NOT an environmental problem but a human problem. It would also be useful for the **head of the authority to be high profile, and an articulate advocate & spokesperson** for addressing the challenges of climate change in a variety of forums.

PROPOSAL 2: A comprehensive, consistent **and ongoing education program is central to the above authorities' outreach mechanism**. Individual and corporate behavioural change and buy-in is essential for mainstreaming the implementation of adaptation actions on the scale both in magnitude and time that is required. There are many government and non government sources that can provide excellent resources for the development and implementation of such a program.

PROPOSAL 3: Victorian govt to **continue working with other states & territories through COAG and individually** to ensure consistency of a comprehensive range of response and mitigation actions across state borders and pressure Federal govt to instigate consistent and long term supportive legislation and regulations and funding where required

PROPOSAL 4: Victorian government systematically ensure that **all Victorian local government authority's (mandatory) develop, adopt and implement appropriate climate ready response and adaptation plans** through incentive and disincentive mechanisms

PROPOSAL 5: Victorian govt to investigate the feasibility of **creating a Climate Response Army**. The structure could be similar to that of the Army Reserves. This CRA would be part of CFA or additional, where volunteers would not only be involved in the immediate event but also in the longer term physical rebuilding phase. It would also cover broader needs of individuals such as emotional and mental wellbeing to assist rebuilding community resilience to future events.

PROPOSAL 6: Victorian govt to investigate the feasibility of **creating a community based Climate Watch network within communities located in areas of high vulnerability to fire or flooding**. The structure could be similar to that of Neighbourhood Watch. Groups would form a partnership between local council and emergency services. Such a network would be especially aware of the more vulnerable in their community and ensure they are accounted for and assisted when necessary. It would also provide a mechanism to increase community ownership for its own positive response to events and post recovery rather than relying on outside sources to "fix it".

PROPOSAL 7: Victorian Govt to incrementally **increase % of financial support and incentives for renewable energy** sources while **phasing out financial subsidies from fossil fuel** sources

PROPOSAL 8: Victorian Govt to start **decentralising power grid** to utilise **diverse renewable energy sources** and provide seed funding for a range of **local community driven innovative energy projects** that complement larger Govt energy and grid reforms. Renewable energy sources also need to be used **for large scale community heating opportunities**.

PROPOSAL 9: Victorian Govt to prioritise the implementation of a **fully integrated public transport network** – along with disincentives for private vehicle usage; **increasing the capacity of rail** for freight both intrastate and interstate

PROPOSAL 10: Victorian Govt to **phase out all existing fossil fuel plants**; instigate comprehensive re-employment plans for communities; commit to **no new coal plants**; and a **ban coal mining & oil exploration and extraction**.

PLEA Network's Climate Change Information & Resource Site

<http://www.pleanetwork.com.au/>

Coordinator: Hazen Cleary

Phone: 0408 690 493 Email: hmc433@hotmail.com

EXPLANATORY NOTES: A way forward stage 1



AN ANALOGY: “Climate change” is a train that has always been in perpetual motion chugging along sometimes with a bit more speed but on the whole working on cycles of variance over thousands of years.

Somewhere in the recent past humans decided to move from the carriages into the engine cabin and started to stoke the fire and as we stoked the train started to pick up speed. After enjoying the ride for awhile some of us looked up and saw the scenery whizzing past and started to think that this speed may not be the best....move on a few decades and now there is a raging debate taking place in the engine cabin about if/when we should stop fuelling the engine and start slowing down the train. However the fires are still being stoked at an ever increasing rate and the speed of the train has gathered its own momentum.....

Move on some more and at Paris a line has been drawn in the sand where it has been decided that it would be a good idea for the train to slow down to a manageable pace. However because of the momentum that has already been inbuilt into the train it is becoming obvious that such an arbitrary line will be overshot with a near impossible task required to stop the train and reverse if the goal is to be achieved.

In the face of adverse conditions, people might feel tempted by two radically different options -- hunker down and wait for conditions to improve, or press on and hope for the best. Currently a lot of people are doing both. However these options will neither get us out of trouble nor prepare us for a future radically different to what we are used to. Humans caused the problem, humans are going to suffer the consequences and humans are the solution. It is a human problem NOT an environment problem.

I offer the following for consideration in the development of a more holistic way forward in responding to the long term ramifications of our changing climate. Nothing below is new as there has been and continues to be much written on the “how to...” There is no need to reinvent the wheel just pick the spokes required for the situation. Please note that for the purpose of this exercise I include “mitigation” as part of “adaptation” in its risk reducing capacity.

DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP – good governance not politics

STATUS QUO: Currently there is no comprehensive leadership happening in regard to responding to our changing climate at either state or federal government level.

ISSUE: Politics and ideology gets in the way of good governance; the very nature of parliament is adversarial along party lines and it is common practice, once a new government is formed to shelve or discontinue policies of the previous government, no matter how successful or needed they may be. The possibility of a change in direction every election cycle provides no long term stability to the community or business.

Climate change IS here now and IS long term. Putting into place major adaptation measures require long term commitments e.g. transforming power grids; upgrading public infrastructure; creating comprehensive public transport networks. The ramifications of our changing climate on all aspects of

society both direct and indirect are not going to go away for a very long time they are only going to escalate.

PROPOSAL 1: Create an **independent authority** that has **strong bipartisan support** with appropriate **legislation and regulations** to ensure its longevity; that it is publicly accountable and basically won't run amuck. This authority to emphasise that responding to climate change is NOT an environmental problem but a human problem. It would also be useful for the **head of the authority to be high profile, and an articulate advocate & spokesperson** to address the challenges of climate change in a variety of forums.

Purpose: Advise; direct; coordinate; oversee and report on the state's (this means collectively the government; private sector and community) response to climate change and the necessary measures that need to be undertaken to ensure a responsive, comprehensive and consistent message/direction that encourages the confidence required for all major players and the broader community to start working together to build capacity and resilience within all our communities. Overall it is created to devise the best mechanisms for comprehensive implementation.

Foundation Principles: The problem of climate change is complex and subject to considerable uncertainty which often leads to those in authority not to act at all. However, not acting is not an option. Therefore the following principles would form the foundation for the decisions of the independent authority to be made:

- **Climate adaptation needs to start here and now:** Adaptation to climate change requires very long-term goals, and its success may only be able to be perceived a generation hence. Adaptation therefore requires time. It needs continually to be enhanced and has to be developed over longer time-spans than electoral periods. This means that action implementation needs to begin now to make changes relevant to long-term adaptation.

- **Climate adaptation needs a 'no regrets' or precautionary approach:** The discrepancy between the necessity of pursuing long-term objectives and meeting short-term political purposes can be overcome by 'no regrets' measures. Having no regrets does not mean business as usual, but rather taking a precautionary principle to future risks. 'No regrets' measures are steps which include improving the quality of life today in relation to long-term adaptation to climate change. In this way we can counter uncertainty about how serious climate change will be, and heighten acceptance for the measures that need to be taken. As a general rule, costs of measures such as these are considerably lower than the consequential costs of climate change will be.

- **Climate adaptation needs an integrated and participatory approach:** Climate change will impact on virtually all fields of community life and environment. Adaptation policies therefore require close co-operation between differing disciplines and planning fields, overcoming the tensions between them. Planning strategies should, as a matter of principle, be constructed in such a way that they take into account possible future effects of climate change and at the very least leave the way open for adaptation measures. Climate adaptation requires an inclusive approach. Business and civil society need to be included. This idea does not relieve politics and 2 public administration bodies of responsibility. What is at issue is not the shuffling of responsibility, but on the contrary involving others in responsibility.

- **Climate adaptation needs to be based on the best available science and research:** As climate change progresses and the science improves its accuracy in forecasting, these new insights need to be incorporated into the on-going decision making process.



Above principles adapted from "[No Regrets Charter](#)"

Key Components: Two key components of this authority would be:

- 1) **“Think Tank” advisory group** that would be regularly reviewing latest science and research and adding this into the continuous development cycle of plan; do; review; improve. Think Tank members would be gathered from all major sectors that have a proven track record of innovation; flexibility and commitment to a team response for climate action.
- 2) **Stakeholder Climate Response Teams** made up of representatives of key govt. agencies; local councils; umbrella groups for: emergency services; business; welfare; health; community resilience; education; agriculture, forestry. Primarily for coordinating partnership action implementation; reporting progress and working through implementation issues.

COMPREHENSIVE, ONGOING OUTREACH/EDUCATION
ignorance & denial is not helpful

To enable change to take place in a society it does not necessarily depend on EVERYONE being actively engaged. What is needed is that the vast majority have a basic understanding of the necessity for change and they do not actively work against such changes. i.e. they are aware and buy into the necessity for such changes. To obtain this broad-brush awareness and buy in requires EDUCATION.

STATUS QUO: Currently the majority of the community have only mainstream media to gather their climate change information which is: often biased; sensationalised; has little substance; where facts become distorted into the option of belief (!); where rhetoric dressed up as action is but a political football for many unrelated reasons – confusing everyone. It is either portrayed as doom and gloom or you can have your cake and eat it too – you can’t! They are currently a passive recipient and possibly on the whole unwilling as well – they do not want to hear about things that they see as being out of their immediate control or relevant to their more direct day-to-day concerns.

ISSUE: There is no comprehensive ongoing messages’ going out to all communities on the realities of our changing climate – neither the very real impacts that are being felt and the escalation of these impacts nor the responsibility that humans (where all have a place in responding) have to mitigate and adapt to them. It is still being categorised as an “environmental” issue and therefore boxed into the often fringe green issues that might be “nice” (save the polar bears or change the light globes) but REALLY don’t affect the “ordinary folk” and their lifestyle. WRONG!

PROPOSAL 2: A comprehensive, consistent and ongoing education program is central to the above authorities’ outreach mechanism. Individual and corporate behavioural change and buy-in is essential for mainstreaming the implementation of adaptation actions on the scale both in magnitude and time that is required. There are many government and non government sources that can provide excellent resources for the development and implementation of such a program.

MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED?

<http://www.pleanetwork.com.au/communication/>

<http://climateoutreach.org/>

<http://talkingclimate.org/>

A FEW KEY ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

Becoming climate ready - it IS all about scale where physics and chemistry don't bargain

This section is not meant to be a comprehensive listing of mitigation and adaptation actions as there are already many documents available covering such basics for all levels– it is not rocket science – the only difficulty seems to be in translating such plans into implementation on the ground and for them to survive the electoral cycle. The following are a few points I consider essential in getting up the momentum for an ongoing scaling up of actions across all sectors of our state and communities.

ISSUE: Climate change is still being dealt with as a single issue localised environmental issue. It is not in the same category as saving the forests/saving the whales/even dealing with the ozone hole. It is all pervasive with multi sources, compounding impacts. It is ALL about scale and the current actions that are on the table, at all levels are not up to the task. We wish to have our cake and eat it too.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

PROPOSAL 3: Victorian govt to **continue working with other states & territories through COAG and individually** to ensure consistency of a **comprehensive range of response** and mitigation actions across state borders and pressure Federal govt to instigate consistent and long term supportive legislation and regulations and funding where required

MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED?

Please note COAG's narrow climate change focus – water; RET; energy efficiency

https://www.coag.gov.au/water_climate_change_and_the_environment

National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (released 2 December 2015):

<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/3b44e21e-2a78-4809-87c7-a1386e350c29/files/national-climate-resilience-and-adaptation-strategy.pdf>

Landcare vs Green Army: <https://theconversation.com/another-broken-promise-budget-switches-landcare-for-green-army-26818>

PROPOSAL 4: Victorian government systematically ensure that **all Victorian local government authority's (mandatory) develop, adopt and implement appropriate climate ready response and adaptation plans** through incentive and disincentive mechanisms

There are many local governments across Australia that have taken seriously the message of what a changing climate might mean for their jurisdictions – but there are also many that believe that it is not a priority for them or just pay lip service to the concept. To ensure consistency of response across the state ALL councils need to develop, adopt and implement response and adaptation plans that cover the whole of their jurisdictions. The Victorian government is the authority to ensure that this happens.

MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED?

<http://www.pleanetwork.com.au/building-resilience/cities-responding/>

<http://www.acelg.org.au/news/local-resilience-climate-change>

PREPARING & RESPONDING TO EXTREME EVENTS

Most communities can survive and recover from a “100 year event” however they are unlikely to recover from a “100 year event” that could re-occur every 5 or 10 years.

The saying, “you are only as strong as your weakest link” is very apt when trying to find ways to adapt/build community resilience in the face of climate change impacts. As report after report highlights the already vulnerable sections of our communities will be the first and hardest hit by climate change impacts and the least able to prepare and “bounce back” i.e. those in poverty; displaced; facing violence (in all shapes & forms); financially stressed; inadequately housed; inadequately situated; inadequately employed; suffering ill health; the old and the young.

For greater climate change resilience to be achieved the long standing issues of the “vulnerable” need to be seen as a priority and be addressed appropriately. This is why the sectors of education; planning; welfare; housing and health need to be actively engaged in the climate change response. By NOT addressing the issues of the more vulnerable in our communities it not only increases the extent and cost of resources employed during an extreme event and post event recovery but also ensures that people caught in these situations are unable to be part of the solution as they have minimal additional reserves to do so.

Research is showing that eastern Australia has seen the years with long and severe fire seasons becoming more frequent. Along with this are the implications of increasing length of fire seasons in other countries, especially in the US. The longer seasons mean Australia's system of sharing firefighting aircraft with the United States is in danger, as the seasons are overlapping as some of Australia's key firefighting aircraft are leased from overseas and are contracted to fight fires in the US. 'The fire seasons of both hemispheres and demand for critical shared firefighting aircraft will increasingly overlap, challenging such arrangements.

Along with this will be an ever increasing demand on the volunteer force that is the backbone of immediate response to extreme events. Currently, employers of volunteers release their staff at their own cost, and self-employed volunteers forgo personal income and time. For how long will this arrangement be feasible? Today, CFA has over 1,200 brigades and close to 60,000 members – but how many are active, fit and up to date with training? As the danger of volatile fires increase are these volunteers fully prepared? As the number of extreme events increases this will also put further strain on the volunteer resources. To build resilience and response capacity before and after an event will also require resources for a longer duration than what has been generally considered adequate in the past.

PROPOSAL 5: Victorian govt to investigate the feasibility of **creating a Climate Response Army**. The structure could be similar to that of the Army Reserves. This CRA would be part of CFA or additional, where volunteers would not only be involved in the immediate event but also in the longer term physical rebuilding phase. It would also cover broader needs of individuals such as emotional and mental wellbeing to assist rebuilding community resilience to future events.

NOTE: *The Climate Response Army has nothing to do with the Federal Government’s “Green Army”. It is not about children planting trees.*

MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED?

http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/fm_files/attachments/volunteer_and_career/volunteers/2015_5500-cfa-volunteerism-strategy-web_67147.pdf

<http://www.defencejobs.gov.au/army/reserve/what-is-the-reserve/>

PROPOSAL 6: Victorian govt to investigate the feasibility of **creating a community based Climate Watch network within communities located in areas of high vulnerability to fire or flooding.** The structure could be similar to that of Neighbourhood Watch. Groups would form a partnership between local council and emergency services. Such a network would be especially aware of the more vulnerable in their community and ensure they are accounted for and assisted when necessary. It would also provide a mechanism to increase community ownership for its own positive response to events and post recovery rather than relying on outside sources to “fix it”.

THE LOW HANGING FRUIT OF MITIGATION ACTIONS

The following are but the basics of what needs to be done – they are the low hanging fruit, no regret actions. I will leave higher hanging fruit for another time.

PROPOSAL 7: Victorian Govt to incrementally increase % of financial **support and incentives for renewable energy** sources while **phasing out financial subsidies from fossil fuel** sources

MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED?

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-11/coal-oil-and-gas-companies-receive-4-billion-dollar-in-subsidy/5881814>

<http://priceofoil.org/content/uploads/2014/11/G20-Fossil-Fuel-Bailout-Full.pdf>

PROPOSAL 8: Victorian Govt to start **decentralising power grid** to utilise **diverse renewable energy sources** and provide seed funding for a range of **local community driven innovative energy projects** that complement larger Govt energy and grid reforms. Renewable energy sources also need to be used for **large scale community heating opportunities.**

MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED?

<http://www.pleanetwork.com.au/building-resilience/new-energy-sources/#futuresystems>

<http://www.pleanetwork.com.au/building-resilience/new-energy-sources/#germanyexample>

<http://www.energypost.eu/german-grid-operator-can-handle-70-wind-solar-storage-needed/>

<http://www.energypost.eu/electricity-network-changing-fast-australia-heading/>

http://worldbioenergy.org/sites/default/files/wfm/Fact_sheet_CHP.pdf

And how quickly things can change with a change in government:

<http://www.climatechangenews.com/2015/08/24/denmark-minister-seeks-to-water-down-climate-goals/>

PROPOSAL 9: Victorian Govt to prioritise the implementation of a **fully integrated public transport** network – along with disincentives for private vehicle usage; **increasing the capacity of rail** for freight both intrastate and interstate

MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED?

<http://www.pleanetwork.com.au/building-resilience/recreating-a-city-for-a-changing-climate/#peopleoutofcars>

<https://theconversation.com/how-to-build-light-rail-in-our-cities-without-emptying-the-public-purse-39255>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-31/wa-expert-to-push-for-light-rail-in-advice-to-federal-government/6902388>
<https://infrastructure.gov.au/rail/inland/>
[https://infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/publications/files/Trends Infrastructure and Transport to 2030.pdf](https://infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/publications/files/Trends_Infrastructure_and_Transport_to_2030.pdf)

PROPOSAL 10: Victorian Govt to **phase out all existing fossil fuel plants;** instigate comprehensive re-employment plans for communities; commit to **no new coal plants; and a ban coal mining & oil exploration and extraction.**

MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED?

<http://content.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2015/07/united-states-phases-out-200th-coal-plant-momentum-renewable-energy-grows>
https://coalactionnetworkaotearoa.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/jobs_after_coal_may2104_lowres.pdf

MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED?

If you require further clarification on the above proposals please contact:

PLEA NETWORK Coordinator: Hazen Cleary
Phone: 0408 690 493
Email: hmc433@hotmail.com
PLEA Network's Climate Change Information & Resource Site <http://www.pleanetwork.com.au/>