

### PIA POSITION

Climate change is occurring, and planning has a crucial role to play in dealing with the anticipated impacts. Whether it is a result of natural or human activity the effects of climate change are global and there is scientific consensus to support the imminent threat global warming poses.

The CSIRO projects even if all greenhouse gas emissions ceased today, the Earth would still be committed to an additional warming of 0.2–1.0°C by the end of the century, which will have significant social, economic, and ecological impacts for Australia<sup>1</sup>. Mitigation policies have been quick to respond to the long-term reduction of green house gases in the atmosphere. However, mitigation activities alone are not enough to protect us from the effects of changing climate. There is strong agreement by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that despite current mitigation activities and related sustainable development practices, global greenhouse emissions will continue to grow over the next few decades<sup>2</sup>. In the meantime, the community must learn to adapt to the foreseeable changes while continuing strategies to actively reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The planning profession is in a unique position to assist the community in understanding and adapting to the expected consequences of climate change. Adaptation measures help to reduce the implications of the most serious consequences of climate change which include eg. greater flood risk, more extreme weather conditions, water shortages, and changes to ecosystems and micro-climates. Planners are also in the position to actively work on mitigation issues and guide changes to environmental behavior such as, promoting energy and water efficiency, sustainable land management practices, incorporating efficient energy use in buildings, and including climate change information in environmental assessments.

**PIA supports the following action to ensure planners can continue to implement adaptation and greenhouse abatement strategies.**

- **Include climate change in long term strategic planning, to enable communities to better adapt to future climate variability.**
- **Consolidation of relevant, reliable and consistent data and information. Commonwealth and State Agencies can assist with dissemination and compilation of climate change information to planners and decision makers.**
- **Adopting consistent timeframes and long term timescales to provide planners with meaningful targets. Need for National targets for achievement by governments, through policy and**

- **Committing to current carbon trading agreement concepts. PIA supports the benefits of government participating in International treaties to achieve greenhouse gas reduction through measures such as carbon taxes and trading arrangements.**
- **Implementing Climate Risk Management Programmes into existing planning and decision making frameworks.**
- **Incorporating climate change into tertiary and professional training for planners.**
- **Adaptation should be done at all levels, including the local/household level. Adopting a national framework for adaptation with scope for locally adaptive strategies.**
- **Preparation of regional and local assessments of climate change trends, vulnerabilities and adaptation options, and make sure that the findings are accessible and relevant to affected stakeholders, eg. By effective engagement and communication. It is essential that planners have a clear understanding of the different regional and local variations and cross border strategies.**
- **All government bodies, including local governments, to urgently audit the climate related risks in their areas of responsibility and consider appropriate remedies, including communicating their findings to each other and other stakeholders including planners.**
- **Strengthen support for water-sensitive urban design; protection of reliable productive agricultural land; natural resource management; energy efficient built environments and urban form; public transport provision; risk based land use planning responses to environmental hazards; and other strategies to reduce vulnerability to climate change.**

## **POLICY PRINCIPLES**

Uncertainties in the severity of climate change consequences, and the likelihood of the projected impacts occurring is sufficient to warrant changes in the planning and management of our cities and regions. Regulatory drivers to plan for climate change already exist and there are many decision making frameworks that can be used to facilitate and implement adaptation options.

Risk management approach is required to deal with the variability and uncertainty about climate change. Different climate change scenarios provide environmental projections, dependant on human behavior, economic growth and technological change.

## **POLICY PRINCIPLES *(cont)***

technological change. By incorporating risk management into a range of state and local land use and development policies, planners can contribute to the abatement of greenhouse gases.

Planners should adopt a precautionary approach in relation to climate change and have an important role in identification and implementation of adaption options. The development of adaption responses to climate change relies on information from global climate models, climate projections and impact assessments, but effective integration of this information with the knowledge and tools of planning and other practitioners and sectors will be essential.

Litigation is an area of concern for Planners, especially those who work within local governments. Therefore it is necessary to develop accessible and robust policy and regulations that would provide clear guidance on climate change<sup>3</sup>.

Access to data and resource sharing will play an important role in developing appropriate adaptation responses. Commonwealth and State agencies can assist with dissemination and compilation of climate change information to relevant planners and decision makers.

Targeted engagement and awareness raising is essential to encourage key stakeholders to recognize and take responsibility for managing the risks and responding to any opportunities arising from climate change.

Stakeholders, including planners, will need to work in close partnership with climate change experts and other researchers (and vice-versa) to improve knowledge of the implications of climate change for urban and regional communities and the opportunities for an effective response. PIA supports the commitment as a profession to continuing development of planning policy, legislation, research and evidence based research, in order for planning to keep abreast of science and the latest knowledge and research on climate change.

As planning is by definition a forward thinking exercise and is linked to many affected areas of decision making, the planning profession is relatively well positioned to take a lead in tackling many aspects of climate change.

## **PIA ACTION**

PIA is committed to being a major participant in climate change adaption and advocacy for support for planners. Nationally PIA is working with the Australian Greenhouse Office, delivering training programs and policies to assist planners understand and implement appropriate responses to climate change. In conjunction with the CSIRO and the AGO, PIA is a key contributor to a series of online information resources providing the building and development sector good examples and information on sustainable development.

## **POSITION STATEMENT DERIVES FROM:**

PIA SA Division Position Statement – Climate Change

PIA Livable Cities (2004)

Final Report: The Delivery of Training Seminars to Planning Practitioners on the Impacts of Climate Change, June 2007, PIA.

## **RELATED REFERENCES**

IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group III, Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change, 2007.

Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Climate Change Scenarios for Initial Risk Management Guidance, CSIRO, 2006.

<sup>1</sup>Climate Change Impacts on Australia and the Benefits of Early Action to Reduce Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Feb 2006, Preston, B. L. Jones, R.N. CSIRO.

<sup>2</sup>IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group III, Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change, 2007.

<sup>3</sup>Final Report: The Delivery of Training Seminars to Planning Practitioners on the Impacts of Climate Change, June 2007, PIA.