8.3 VICTORIAN LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY ACCORD
(ENV1)

Submitting Councillors: Crs Lake, Lo, Perri, McGill

RECOMMENDATION

That Council agrees to join the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord and commits to the principles of the Accord by working with the State Government to:

• build a common agenda through dialogue and partnerships on key policies, legislative proposals and significant programs;
• establish shared local goals and priorities;
• develop joint approaches to long term strategic resource allocation and funding;
• pursue alignment and cooperation in the service delivery of relevant environmental sustainability initiatives; and
• improve procedures for regular, effective evaluation and review.

In joining the Accord, Council commits to an implementation process in conjunction with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, which includes:

• the exploration of regional approaches to local sustainability priorities and issues, and
• the development of a process for the strategic delivery of State and local resources to progress local implementation actions.

That Council endorses the signing of the Accord with the State Government, represented by the Minister for Environment.

INTRODUCTION

With the development of Council’s Environmental Sustainability Road Map, it is timely for Council to consider joining the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord and enhance the current networks and funding opportunities available with membership.

This report seeks Council’s approval to join the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord.

BACKGROUND

The Victorian Local Sustainability Accord is a partnership between the Victorian State Government and Local Governments on environmental sustainability. The Accord aims to strengthen co-operation efforts between State and Local Governments and work together to:

• Explore and develop local climate change measures;
• Build Victoria’s capacity to adapt to climate change and adjust to carbon pricing;
• Act to reduce our overall levels of vulnerability to climate change.

The Accord principles are that through joint actions, Local Governments and the State Government will:
• Build shared understanding - demonstrate understanding of the common agenda to create true partnerships and involved communities;
• Establish shared local goals and priorities - create a culture of collaboration and exchange to establish shared goals and clear responsibilities, conducted with trust, respect, timeliness and accuracy;
• Develop long term strategic resource allocation and funding - develop joint approaches to funding allocation that meet delivery expectations and acknowledge resource capacity and constraints
• Pursue alignment and cooperation in service delivery - increase communication between and within levels of government for delivery of environmental sustainability and climate change programs, particularly for outcomes relevant to both spheres of government
• Improve procedures for regular, effective evaluation and review - ensure progress towards environmental sustainability, increase understanding of climate change and continually develop mechanisms for incorporating feedback into future planning

The Accord has also established:

• A process for discussion between the Victorian Government and each individual local government;
• A formal strategic direction for Victorian Government commitments to local government through the Sustainability Fund, linking the Fund more strategically to local capacity issues and delivery of agreed local sustainability objectives;
• A state-wide Victorian Local Sustainability Advisory Committee to engage the Minister for Environment and Climate Change and resolve issues between local governments and the State Government;
• Strategic learning and information exchange networks, which build on and support existing networks.

Joining the Accord requires Council to resolve to commit to the Accord principles and actions, outlined above and notifying the Department of Sustainability and Environment of Council’s commitment.

FINANCIAL

By joining the Accord, Council is able to apply for funds from the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord funding program. The current funding opportunities are –

• Individual Grants - supporting resource-constrained, predominantly rural councils. This is a non-competitive process for grants of up to $45,000. These grants are designed to support eligible councils to implement activities identified in their environment strategy (or other relevant documents) and build their capacity to deliver sustainability outcomes and adapt to climate change.
• Partnership Grants - fostering innovation and collaboration. This is a competitive process for grants of up to $250,000. These grants are designed to foster innovation and collaboration between local governments to address climate change and sustainability issues of common concern.
• Regional Grants - supporting rural partnerships. This is a competitive process for grants of up to $600,000. These grants are designed to support regional groupings of
non-metropolitan councils (and other relevant organisations) to work with communities to adapt to climate change in support of regional strategic plans.

Possible projects are currently being investigated, with the most likely opportunity being under the Partnership grants section.

**CONCLUSION**

It is timely, with the development of Councils Environmental Sustainability Road Map for Council to join the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord and build on the information exchange networks and funding opportunities that are available through membership.