

CLARE & GILBERT VALLEYS COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN SUBMISSION

Introduction

Due to absence from home because of business commitments, I was unable to attend either of the community forums. Accordingly, I present the following comments.

Because of time limitations I have had to be brief, however some of my comments have already been conveyed to Council in previous submissions on a range of topics. The list below is not in any particular order of priority or preference.

The focus of my comments is on climate change impacts, energy security, water resources for survival, local food security, and building a relationship with the developing world. If we don't give, we don't get.

Strategic Plan comments

1. Monitoring and performance measurement

- ◆ To my knowledge this is not carried out, or if it is I am not aware of the "Action Plan" and "Operational Plan and Budget" that are described briefly in the existing SP
- ◆ There is no point having a plan if its success or otherwise is not being monitored, measured, reviewed, and amended --> "rinse, repeat"

Priority – critical

2. The 5 core principles

- ◆ all need revision to be in step with contemporary natural resources constraints, declining energy security, declining water supply --> look to the real world scenarios in the next term of the SP
- ◆ need to invoke a strong sustainable living and sustainable business ethic
- ◆ need to provide less emphasis on Clare becoming a "regional centre" - this is a pipe-dream that diverts energy and focus from how to create a truly sustainable society – acknowledge our limits of population
- ◆ reduce the number of strategies to a manageable level --> there are far too many in the existing SP which has resulted in under-achievement or just being forgotten
- ◆ focus on building real assets that benefit the most number of people (see below)

Priority - critical

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3. Develop and implement objectives and strategies that elevate the priorities of water conservation, energy supply mix, food security, total resource recovery of wastes
- ◆ as the basis of the local economy, focus on agricultural systems that require no imported resources (e.g. water from the Murray River, reduced reliance on groundwater) --> establish strong links with the N&Y NRM Board
 - ◆ extract maximum value from wastewater and stormwater resources --> investigate, implement strategies
 - ◆ refocus support for household sustainability --> the energy crunch is coming!
 - ◆ examine the whole energy demand-supply mix and energy security and implement strategies to hedge against system failure --> liquid fuel security is at an extremely low level (3 days for petrol & diesel in SA - you won't hear any government talking about that)
 - ◆ determine Council's real energy consumption and adopt strategies to reduce its carbon emissions by 20% in the next 5 years --> an achievable target
 - ◆ establish Council's ecological footprint and adopt strategies to reduce its impact
 - ◆ investigate and implement changes to street lighting to reduce energy consumption
 - ◆ establish a sustainable living centre for resources and education purposes – or provide support to community representatives --> use the defunct Clare Fire Station site (there is already a group prepared to establish such a centre)
 - ◆ establish total resource recovery of wastes and waste conversion at source (i.e. at the household scale) --> the proposed waste transfer station needs to incorporate a different model of waste management
 - ◆ establish a regional business to manage so-called “uneconomic” wastes and e-waste
 - ◆ use existing private waste facilities and different approaches to waste management

Priority – very high

4. Think global, act local

- ◆ apply this adage --> it's time to move from the “promote” “enhance” “work towards” “support” language of the existing SP to a “do it” plan --> reduce the number of strategies
- ◆ we are now in a climate change realm, and this should be a principal focus of the new SP --> impacts are predicted across the whole of civilised society and the natural world --> examine the impact at the regional level
- ◆ establish structures (i.e. engage the people) to plan and implement strategies around climate change --> the next 5 years (the life of the SP) will be critical to the future
- ◆ connect with federal and state government programs to maximise the introduction of CC strategies
- ◆ establish a co-operative partnership with a developing country's region/community, donate to this region/community --> if individuals can do this, why can't Council?

Priority - critical

5. Community and institutions

- ◆ provide consistency of engagement with the community, build relationships, try different approaches --> past attempts at community engagement have failed for various reasons; goodwill exists, but it needs to be embraced --> this is a management issue

- ◆ be unconventional, take risks --> don't wait for people to come forward, go out and make contact and seek their help
- ◆ incubate sustainable small business enterprises --> could use the defunct Clare Fire Station building as an enterprise site
- ◆ amalgamate the functions of Mid North Regional Development Board and Council to serve the regional community (look at overseas models) --> adopt a different model for delivery of triple bottom line outcomes
- ◆ re-write Council's Development Plan in a new format --> the present template is outdated, cumbersome, and complex, and Planning SA needs to change its whole approach --> make this a concerted priority
- ◆ demand the best designs and the most energy-efficient housing possible --> establish Council policies accordingly, require developers, home owners and builders to meet these standards
- ◆ establish and implement a comprehensive Assets Management Plan --> this has been talked about for more than 5 years with little to show
- ◆ Council's organisation and staff establishment needs to be reviewed impartially --> prominent gaps exist. Appropriately skilled people are necessary for the monitoring, assessment, and review of the SP.
- ◆ Borrow the best from other Councils --> get out and see what's happening around the nation

Priority - high

6. Environment

- ◆ be involved in environmental change challenges --> acknowledge these and plan accordingly
- ◆ establish and sustain local environmental management committees --> joint effort needed with N&Y NRM Board
- ◆ partner with organisations to establish tree plantations on vacant road reserves and under-utilised Council land --> carbon offset scheme, carbon sequestration, form co-operatives
- ◆ in conjunction with landowners, implement rehabilitation work along degraded watercourses --> act as catalyst, bring the NRM Board on board!
- ◆ get involved in National Tree Day and International Environment Day --> there is presently a gap in action
- ◆ connect with businesses about waste reduction and energy-efficiency

I hope these comments are helpful in framing the new Strategic Plan.

Sincerely



Des Menz

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