

17 September 2019

Hugh Davenport
By email: fyi-request-11028-bcc5294c@requests.fyi.org.nz

Customer Services
P. 03 353 9007 or 0800 324 636
200 Tuam Street
PO Box 345
Christchurch 8140
E. ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz
www.ecan.govt.nz

Dear Hugh,

**Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (“LGOIMA”):
Request for Information**

I refer to your email dated 21/08/19 requesting information regarding Environment Canterbury’s response to Climate Change. Your request has been referred to me for reply.

Your request stated:

“Since you declared a climate emergency, I would like to know what tangible steps you have taken to improve the climate change problem. I would also like to know what steps you have planned for the immediate future, with timelines and action points required.

For all of those actions made or planned, I would like to see data showing how it improved (or will improve).

If no actions have been made or planned to date, I would like to request the reason why the council declared an emergency then did nothing to follow through with that declaration.”

Environment Canterbury was the first Council in New Zealand to declare a climate change emergency. Whilst this declaration under New Zealand law does not carry statutory or legal weight for future Council decisions or policy; recognizing a ‘climate emergency’ provided an opportunity for Council to further highlight that we take climate change seriously and that we have long acknowledged the importance of, and urgent need to address, climate change issues.

We include consideration of climate change in all that we do, and have worked over an extended period towards:

- robustly and visibly incorporating climate change considerations into Council work programmes and decisions
- providing strong local government leadership in the face of climate change, including working with regional partners to ensure a collaborative response
- advocating strongly for greater Central Government leadership and action on climate change
- increasing the visibility of our climate change work
- leading by example through monitoring and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

Steps taken in response to climate change

Whilst much of our climate change related work is engrained within our ongoing work programmes, some examples of specific and/or notable steps are listed below:

Steps taken
Climate Change Integration programme established through the Long-Term Plan 2018-2028 with the purpose of 'supporting our communities to become more risk literate and resilient to climate change'.
New climate change webpages on the ECan website to better highlight climate change issues in Canterbury and our work to address the likely effects.
Commissioned organisational carbon emissions reporting.
Achieved a 26% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per staff member since June 2010.
Installed a 114 panel, grid tied solar system on the roof of our Tuam Street office, with the potential to generate over 34.2kWh of electricity per year.
Leasing of five electric vehicles.
Through the Regional Public Transport Plan, the Council agreed a target to, as far as practicable, transition the bus fleet to carbon zero by 2030, with all new vehicles zero emissions by 2025.
The Council submission in July 2018 on the Our Climate Your Say: Zero Carbon Bill consultation acknowledged "the importance of and urgent need to address climate change for the benefit of current and future generations". It also called for a strong framework and a net zero target approach to all gases.
The Council signed the Local Government Leaders' Climate Change Declaration in 2018.
Conducted a literature review of relevant climate change impacts to the Canterbury Region – this was finalised since the declaration and is being presented to various stakeholders and our Territorial Authorities.
Assisted local councils in developing adaptation plans for areas that are expected to be significantly impacted by climate change in the future.
Through the Mayoral Forum - established a Regional Climate Change Working Group, and associated Steering Group (first meeting held in July).

Steps ongoing in response to climate change

Steps ongoing	Achievement since declaration?
Long term monitoring to support climate change science, including for the coastal environment, water, land and river flow rates – this also includes the recently completed Halswell scheme review that showed significant climate change related impacts.	Yes – including work regarding Patiti Point ¹
Conducted modelling in the coastal zone of climate change induced hazards, including modelling historic rates of coastal erosion future projections, coastal screening and advice provision to Territorial Authorities.	Yes, as above
Supported the Canterbury Region to adapt to the effects of climate change through building high quality flood protection (stopbank) schemes, such as recently completed Whakamāiri Flood Protection Scheme (WFPS).	Yes - completed the WFPS that protects over \$8billion worth of assets
Leading a bid to Government for \$1.3 billion in public transport investment to help grow patronage, thereby reducing the reliance on cars and associated greenhouse gas emissions.	\$2m funding has been secured to develop this business case
Support the transition to more efficient home heating, with the Canterbury Air Regional Plan rules and subsidies requiring and supporting households to upgrade to Ultra Low Emission Burners and heat pumps.	Yes, including through ongoing work with Healthier Homes Canterbury ²
Aim to purchase our own electric vehicles starting 2019/20, and to achieve 50% of our passenger vehicles being pure electric by 2022.	
Travel reductions by encouraging our staff to share taxis or use buses where appropriate; and video conferencing as an alternative to face-to-face meetings where possible.	Yes, ongoing
Assisting local councils in developing adaptation plans for areas that are expected to be significantly impacted by climate change in the future.	Yes – including work regarding Patiti Point as above
Conduct ongoing organisational emissions reporting every three years to track progress and inform further action.	First report published ³ with subsequent work continuing

¹ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/timaru-herald/news/114982939/no-known-solution-for-escalating-patiti-point-erosion#comments>

² <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/air-quality/home-heating/healthier-homes-canterbury-information-for-ratepayers/>

³ <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/get-involved/news-and-events/2019/positive-emissions-report-sets-tone-for-behaviour-change/>

Steps underway/planned in response to climate change

Steps underway/planned	Achievement since declaration?
Review existing processes to better ensure that climate change is robustly and visibly factored into Council decision making.	Yes, including initiating a pilot of a new decision-making process to ensure climate change is visibly and fully incorporated into our work
Undertake an initial regional climate change risk assessment by June 2020.	Yes – a request for proposal has been issued in collaboration with our regional partners
Identify opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport across Canterbury.	
Continue to advocate firmly to Central Government for urgent action in the face of climate change, including progressing the Zero Carbon Bill and implementing the recommendations from the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group's Final Report.	Yes, we submitted at the select committee for the Zero Carbon Bill ⁴
Increase the visibility of our climate change work, including providing quarterly updates on key matters.	

The Waimakariri flood protection scheme will significantly improve the resilience of Christchurch City, Waimakariri and Selwyn districts to impacts from flooding, including from events exacerbated by climate change. More information regarding this scheme and our other climate change related initiatives can be found on our website^{5,6}.

You will be aware that if you are not satisfied with this response you are able to refer this matter to the Office of the Ombudsman under s27 (3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. Further, please be advised that we now put LGOIMA responses that are in the public interest onto our website. No personal details of the requester are given, but we do summarise the essence of the request alongside the response. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Margaret Meehan in the first instance (margaret.meehan@ecan.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



Andrew Parrish
Acting Director Strategy and Planning

⁴ <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/get-involved/news-and-events/2019/submission-on-climate-change-response-zero-carbon-amendment-bill/>

⁵ <https://ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/climate-change/>

⁶ <https://ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/river-and-drain-management/waimakariri-flood-protection-project/>