

Section: MOTION ON NOTICE 24 February 2009

Item: 10.010/09 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

SUMMARY

I propose that the following report and notice of motion be adopted by Council.

PROPOSED MOTION

That Council propose a motion to the June 2009 ALGA National Assembly as follows:-

1. "That ALGA lobby the Australian Government to have the Council of Australian Government's convene a National Climate Change Adaptation Task Force to address the recommendations of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering report concerning impacts of climate change on Australia's physical infrastructure."
2. That Council make representations to its Federal parliamentary representatives in support of the intent of this conference motion.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION - 10.010/09

(Crs Comben/Hughes)

That:

Council propose a motion to the June 2009 ALGA National Assembly as follows:-

1. "That ALGA lobby the Australian Government to have the Council of Australian Government's convene a National Climate Change Adaptation Task Force to address the recommendations of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering report concerning impacts of climate change on Australia's physical infrastructure."
2. That Council make representations to its Federal parliamentary representatives in support of the intent of this conference motion.

Voting recorded as follows:

For: Councillors Williamson, Comben, Dinham, Howe, Hughes, McKenna, Simmons, Tiley, Toms

Against: Nil

BACKGROUND

In late 2008 the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) reported upon a study it had undertaken which concluded that the impacts of current climate change projections have the potential to significantly challenge the capacity of some of Australia's physical infrastructure. ATSE argued that action needs to be taken at the national level to ensure that appropriate adaptation measures can be implemented to meet these challenges.

ISSUES

The ATSE report makes six recommendations. The primary recommendation is that the Council of Australian Governments should convene a National Climate Change Adaptation Task Force to provide appropriate national policy solutions to climate change adaptation by considering the expected consequences of climate change. The other recommendations suggest how the Task Force should develop such policy. Comprehensive risk assessment studies are recommended and the focus of initial attention is recommended to be upon authorities such as this Council in low-lying coastal areas with responsibility for physical infrastructure and vulnerability to climate change.

There is also a recommendation to improve data collection and modelling of events such as extreme rainfall, hail and cyclones. Another recommendation concerns facilitating the study of important legal liability issues.

As a coastal council with responsibility for valuable infrastructure on the coastal fringe, this issue is naturally one of significant import for Council. It is important that the Federal

Government request COAG to establish the recommended National Climate Change Adaptation Task Force so that the various recommendations can be addressed. This Notice of Motion proposes a motion to the National Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association in these terms, and also representations through Council's federal parliamentary representatives seeking support for the ATSE recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

Councillor Ian Tiley

Date: 4 January 2009