

**Submission
No 12**

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING SYSTEM AND THE IMPACTS
OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND
COMMUNITIES**

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The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)(1) and others (2) state that climate change is adversely affecting health and requires engagement of various sectors of society for effective action. Hence this submission agrees strongly with the Inquiry's premise that the planning system should "ensure people are protected from climate change impacts" particularly their health and that it is a responsibility of all levels of government.

This submission would like the Portfolio Committee to consider local and state government climate change adaptation plans. Climate change adaptation planning as described by the IPCC includes risk assessment, a list of actions (which could include land use management legislation, advocacy, education, funding, programs and engagement with the community) and a timeline for monitoring and evaluation.

In 2023 less than 50% of NSW's 128 local government areas has a climate change adaptation plan. Some NSW local governments, in their climate change adaptation plan, acknowledge the importance of land management planning in risky areas. For example, Penrith local government's climate change adaptation plan aims to, "Ensure land use planning systems and planning and development controls reduce community exposure to risks from known hazards, and new development and infrastructure is designed to specifications that enhance resilience." (3)

Unfortunately, many NSW local government climate change adaptation plans unlike the Penrith plan do not refer to "development approvals", "planning powers" or "land management" which suggests that many local governments do not appreciate the usefulness of these planning powers to assist in climate change adaptation. Promotion of these planning powers could be useful. Most climate change adaptation plans on the other hand routinely describe risk and identify vulnerable populations in the community such as the elderly or very young.

The proportion of local governments with a formal climate adaptation plan, varies by state throughout Australia. A higher number of climate change adaptation plans in Victoria compared to other states may be related indirectly to legislation such as Victoria's Public Health Act(4) and Climate Change Act(5) A first step to improving the planning process could thus be to increase these plans with legislation.

1. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Climate Change 2022 – Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: Working Group II Contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Internet]. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press; 2023 [cited 2023 Oct 16]. Available from: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/9781009325844/type/book>

2. UNFCCC. The Paris Agreement [Internet]. 2015 [cited Jan 23]. Available from: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/parisagreement_publication.pdf

3. Resilient Penrith Action Plan 2021-2030 Penrith City Council [Internet]. Available from: https://www.penrithcity.nsw.gov.au/images/building-development/infrastructure/resilient_penrith_action_plan__access.pdf

4. Victorian Legislation. Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 [Internet]. 24/2008. Available from: <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/public-health-and-wellbeing-act-2008/061>

5. Victorian Government Climate Change Act 2017 [Internet]. 2022. Available from: <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/climate-change-act-2017/008>