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Australia's first Regional *Low Carbon Growth Plan for Greater Geelong* shows financial benefit of a lower carbon future

A practical plan for how Geelong can achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and build a low-carbon economy will be released today.

The ClimateWorks Australia report shows Geelong could reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 6 per cent by 2020 at relatively low cost through a range of targeted actions using existing technology and without changing the business mix or making significant lifestyle changes.

ClimateWorks Executive Director, Anna Skarbek said the report identified a range of opportunities, across all sectors, to reduce emissions while continuing to grow the local economy and saving businesses and households money.

"We are pleased that Geelong has taken a leadership position in being the first city in Australia to develop a Regional Low Carbon Growth Plan for building an economy wide low carbon future," she said.

"The plan clearly sets out actions local government, industry, business and individuals can take to reduce Geelong's greenhouse gas emissions at the lowest possible cost.

"It has been developed as part of an innovative sustainability covenant between Victoria's Environmental Protection Authority and the City of Greater Geelong, with input from major Geelong employers such as Shell, Ford, Alcoa, Boral Cement, Godfrey Hirst, LyondellBasell and Terminals.

"Under this plan, Geelong can create jobs and opportunities in waste management, vehicle upgrades and building efficiency that could generate net savings of \$60 million a year across the region."

Ms Skarbek said under the plan, Geelong could reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 1 million tonnes by 2020 at below \$50 per tonne. A further 330,000 tonnes of reductions can be achieved for a higher average cost of \$65 per tonne.

Together, this offers a 6% reduction below 2000 emission levels, equivalent to eliminating the emissions produced by all of Geelong's households each year.

"Interestingly a 6% reduction is greater than the national bipartisan emissions reduction target," she said.

"The reduction in emissions can be achieved by generating local power using cleaner technologies and implementing energy efficiency measures."

Ms Skarbek said the plan showed what could be achieved when government, business and the community worked together to take action on climate change.

“The debate on climate change has become too negative and many people are becoming confused about what can be done to reduce emissions. This plan provides Geelong with practical steps to reduce its emissions and shows that acting on the recommendations can save participants money and can bring investment into the local region.”

Key findings of the Low Carbon Growth Plan for Greater Geelong include:

Weighted average cost of abatement in 2020 by sector

Sector	Average Cost*per tonne of CO₂e	Examples of Opportunities
Industry	\$ 6	Cleaner power such as cogeneration and medium scale solar, changing fuel sources, energy efficiency through improved processes and equipment upgrades, improved control systems and processes in the mining, petroleum and gas and chemical sectors and replacement of cement clinker with waste bi-products.
Buildings	-\$105	Upgrading lighting, appliances, equipment and insulation, improving heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems, reduce energy loss from open refrigeration or insufficiently insulated ovens and water mains, reduce oversized and unnecessary equipment and use cogeneration energy for large community, retail and commercial buildings.
Power	\$38	Build a waste to energy plant that transforms waste into a combustible fuel like synthetic gas, further develop the geothermal energy project to create more renewable energy.
Transport	-\$118	Shift to more efficient cars, light commercial vehicles, buses and trucks, convert existing vehicles to LPG and change driving behaviours to reduce acceleration and encourage more walking, cycling or public transport use.
Forestry	\$ 30	Improve soil carbon sequestration, remove weeds and control feral animals to promote forest growth
Agriculture	\$ 11	Improve soil carbon sequestration, reforest less productive agricultural land with timber plantations.

* Negative numbers indicate a net financial savings

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*ClimateWorks Australia is a non-profit organisation that aims to facilitate substantial emissions reductions in the next five years in Australia by working with government, business, industry groups and the community via a collaborative action based approach. It was formed through a partnership between the Myer Foundation and Monash University and has international links with the US-based ClimateWorks Foundation.