

Public Forum 25th September 2023

Seniors Climate Action Network Support for Council Adoption of Draft Net Zero Carbon Plan

I am Sue Novell, from Seniors Climate Action Network. We have a membership of over 400 and had over fifty five people attending our last public film screening event at the Dunedin Library.

We are, like the young people, deeply concerned about how our current trajectory is causing us to rapidly approach and in many cases already overshoot the limits of what the planetary resources and environment can sustain. Excess carbon emissions and the consequent climate emergency are one example, which is already having drastic consequences.

We therefore applaud the Draft Zero Carbon Plan as an important first step for Dunedin to do its part. We most strongly urge the council to adopt it immediately and to its maximum recommended extent.

When it comes to considering the financial implications, we repeat what must be said over and over again: the costs of not adequately addressing the climate emergency and the other environmental crises, will be far higher than the immediate financial cost of addressing them. Do not choose the cheap option. The cheap option will turn out to be the most expensive in the end.

Discussions of Council policy often refer to the need to stick to core business. The many positive co-benefits listed in the plan are the very definition of core business for any council - improvement of the quality of life for its citizens.

We therefore also applaud the work to date and the ongoing development of the City Portrait using the superb methodology of the Doughnut Economics model to guide the path of our city towards increased wellbeing within planetary boundaries.

The great advantages of this model are

1. First, It not only takes into account what is needed to increase people's wellbeing, but also takes into account limits that must not be exceeded for

human well being and indeed survival. These limits - or planetary boundaries - include the level of pollutants such as climate warming gases, nitrates and plastics, loss of biodiversity and exhaustion of non-renewable resources etc.

2. Second, it provides an easily understood visualization of performance relative to these two equally important aspects of what policy should deliver. Such clear communication of the targets, and how the policies are performing, is very important to keep the dual goals front of attention of both citizens and our elected representatives.

Voting against adopting the plan to the fullest extent is voting against increasing maximum quality of life for the people of Dunedin in the long run, and leaving future councils and the people in an impossible position.

Please act as quickly as possible and allocate maximum resources to this, so we can progress faster to a healthy, vibrant and most resilient city.

Thank you