

To the Western Cape Government Climate Directorate. Due: 10 October 2022

Email: deadp.climatechange@westerncape.gov.za

Comments on the WCCCRS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | DRAFT JULY 2022, using the WESTERN CAPE CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE STRATEGY VISION 2050 as a support document.

1 INTRODUCTION:

While Climate Change (CC) and the need for a Just Energy Transition (JET) are urgent realities, both have been 'politically' captured, resulting in misinformation, unrealistic expectations and broken promises. It is time to tell the whole truth. An essential part of this truth is: New technologies are simply new tools. In addition, many of the Renewable Energy (RE) technologies rely on non-renewable mineral resources, which will need a cyclical economy approach to meet future demands. On their own new technologies cannot save humanity. We need a fundamental shift in human values that inspire human lifestyles lived in balance with healthy eco-system services. The key to restoring ecosystems for our wellbeing as well as to build Nature's resilience to the impacts of CC is to understand ALL the inputs into new energy technologies to identify green washing and avoid new bad solutions and ill formed political strategies.

Specifically, a JET requires a new relationship with energy based:

- on efficient use,
- on balancing time of consumption with time of generation,
- on a mix of generation technologies which match a mix of best suited applications and appliances,
- on pro-sumers, including households and communities, complementing commercial IPPs and government PPs, and finally
- future energy is unlikely to be cheaper (stop telling us it will be) as it requires significant modernisation of the transmission network to smart grid capability with storage.

(For a sobering account of the amount and availability of raw materials to shift from fossil fuels to RE based on current energy consumption levels listen to: [Assoc Prof Simon Michaux - The quantity of metals required to manufacture just one generation of... - YouTube](#))

1.1 The WCCCRS Implementation Plan and Strategy vision appear to be comprehensive policy documents. However, their value will be in the implementation for which considerable buy in is required from numerous departments and agencies with other funding and management priorities.

Given the number of policy documents and legislation around Climate Change at various levels in government, it would be valuable to have a flow diagramme showing the levels of responsibility as well as how they interact. How would the WCCCRS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN tie in with all the other plans / policies and strategies on responding to CC. It is all very confusing for the public and some kind of flow diagramme would be most useful.

1.2 Politics around service delivery is currently a divisive issue in South Africa. CC is unlikely to be a priority for the many unemployed South Africans who are also in energy poverty. However, a JET that

includes reliable access to a range of energy sources appropriate to all, including low income households, is an opportunity to get real support for a low carbon future. But, without broadscale public understanding and support and genuine public administration commitment even the best policies will fail. (Look at the failure, nationally, of the Free Basic Energy programme from National Treasury to local authorities to provide 50kWhs of free electricity to low income households. Less than half of qualifying households receive their FBE, a sad example of a lack of administrative commitment.) Source: [Commentary: The state of free basic electricity in South Africa \(esi-africa.com\)](http://esi-africa.com)

1.3 A successful response strategy requires active support and involvement of informed citizens. In South Africa, we can simplistically be divided into people who have been struggling to access services and those who have good access but have not needed to think much about how these services are provided. Load shedding and the Day Zero Drought have increased awareness. Most citizens still have a lot to learn about the role they can and should be playing in reducing their water and energy consumption and managing waste. A proactive education campaign based on positive actions is needed to encourage people to consume with care. This requires input into the Life Orientation programmes at school, citizen awareness programmes, education of ward councillors, ward committees and civics. We can no longer use energy and water thoughtlessly, nor produce waste wantonly.

Recommendation: A tool that worked well to raise awareness in the Day Zero Drought was the weekly Water Dashboard. Develop an energy efficiency dashboard to inform the public of the amount of electricity being used in the towns and cities in the WCape as well as the percentages from different energy sources. Include data such as when the system is constrained. Educate people about not using ovens, heaters, aircon, pool pumps, geysers when energy is constrained. Educate people about not showering or flushing toilets when there is load shedding as the sewer systems can't cope. This kind of information is essential for a conscious understanding of the systems that provide our services. Include local examples of ecosystem services that build local resilience as well as accounts of systems under threat. Without a stronger understanding of how our wellbeing is directly connected to the wellbeing of Nature, too many will simply do nothing while waiting for the false promise that all we need are new technologies to 'save us'.

2 DETAILED COMMENTS: Quotes in italic are from the policy documents with my comments in straight text.

The WCCRS **VISION:** *"Our Vision is to be a net zero emissions and climate resilient province by 2050, built on an equitable and inclusive economy and society that thrives despite the shocks and stresses posed by climate change."* With respect regarding NET ZERO, it is time to be honest and realistic and stop playing politics. There are too many failed commitments globally around GHG targets – this creates confusion and apathy. The technology to reach net zero is not mature enough nor affordable currently to meet a 2050 net zero target. Two important economic aspects in the WC, the dairy industry and the tourism industry based on overseas tourists will be seriously challenged by Net Zero targets. Why set ourselves up to fail with the political speak of Net Zero - rather aim to reduce emissions to a specific target – based on per capita. A per capita emissions target also raises awareness about our individual impacts and responsibilities. While I do not know what a per capita target should be – no doubt there are scientists who can determine this.

Alternative Vision: Our Vision is to achieve emissions of per capita and climate resilience by 2050. To achieve this through an active relationship with informed citizens who match their demands for goods and services with sustainable supply, based on clean energy generation, efficiency and waste reduction to build an equitable and inclusive economy and a society that thrives. ~~despite the shocks and stresses posed by climate change.~~

GUIDING OBJECTIVES:

1 Responding to the climate emergency. This is a meaningless statement. Alternative: Acknowledge a climate emergency and reflect this in all decisions regarding development and environmental management.

2 Transitioning in an equitable and inclusive manner to~~net-zero~~ emissions per capita by 2050.

3 Reducing climate risks and increasing resilience.

4 Enabling a Just Transition through public sector, private sector and civil society collaboration.

Addition No 5 Involve citizens pro-actively in a building a new relationship with energy based on efficient use, reduction in demand spikes and promotion of prosumer and community energy storage systems.

CLIMATE ACTION PATHWAY:

Improve energy (electricity) access. Grid energy as the solution for all energy needs a rethink especially at household level. Promote use of solar appliances and develop an alternative appliance industry compatible with RE.

Improved energy resilience (500MW of grid independent renewable energy installed in the Western Cape) We need far more grid independent RE between now and 2050. Province needs to promote affordable public / private and community /private partnerships as a priority. As a society we can't afford high levels of private generation with grid deflection. This will leave households who are currently on subsidised electricity tariffs with reduced ability to pay for their basic energy needs.

Revitalised rail system as part of investment in public transport. Increase non-motorised transport. Efficient new buildings & Zero organic waste to landfill by 2027. These need to happen ASAP.

Coordination of widespread electric vehicle adoption and charging network. Phase out internal combustion public transport and public fleet vehicles. Do the math on EVs before setting unrealistic targets. South Africa's current Electricity Availability Factor is way below current demand – can we afford to fast track EVs at this stage? Also, politicians aside, the jury is still out on whether or not the **current** EV technology has a lower carbon footprint than ICEs. The carbon footprint of batteries in EVs is huge, putting the CO2 footprint of a new EV above that of an ICE. It is essential to timeously set up a recycling industry for batteries and the components in all RE technologies as these contain valuable non-renewable minerals, some of which are toxic.

Initiate a Climate Assembly and include an energy transition assembly that builds community understanding and involvement from the grassroots up by co-creating practical solutions and alternatives appropriate to each community context. This will have tangible outcomes and address emissions and climate resilience.

Set up climate governance structures. Map out climate vulnerable areas at local level – sea surge, flood prone, drought and fire prone. Draw up prevention/ mitigation measures and educate and get householders to share responsibility. (e.g. Apparently, 5 houses burnt in the August 2022 Helderberg mnt fire – if householders had cleared a fire break and fire proofed their gardens this could possibly have been prevented.) Educate and involve municipal officials and ward councillors about the vulnerable areas in their ward. Strengthen Ward committee members understanding and involvement in risk mitigation.

Improve food security prospects. Increase food system resilience. Municipalities to provide support for informal food systems. YES! 27% of children under 5 years old in South Africa suffer from

malnourishment. Source: <https://mg.co.za/news/2021-02-18-south-african-children-suffer-the-slow-violence-of-malnutrition/> Prioritise food security with material support, and promotion of values that support food security by linking with gardening groups, NGOs and educational institutions to grow urban food gardening. Balance the City's densification policy with need for land for food gardening. Do not approve hard development as well as deal with land invasion on land that has agricultural value. Any extension of the urban edge for hard development needs to set aside land for food gardening.

Achieve universal access to basic services as a fundamental requirement for a resilient population. YES! This requires a new financial model for Local Authorities. Need pressure on CoGTA, SALGA and National Treasury to address inadequate management and funding for service provision as a priority. Ms Dlamini Zuma of CoGTA announced on Cape Talk radio on 27 Sept that few municipalities were able to fund their service responsibilities to their residents. She said a new funding model is required as the current funding model of selling services to generating revenue to provide services does not consider the large numbers of residents who are unable to pay.

ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTATION

Continue with efforts at removing alien vegetation infestation. Timber and plant fibre from alien clearing has potential for a range of uses including furniture, fire wood, heating pellets, biochar, cement and fibre building materials. NB to establish public private partnerships to develop these as commercial opportunities so that clearing generates additional value products and is self-funding.

Manage ecosystems, wildlands and the conservation estate. Expand natural systems in urban environments (or utilise ecological infrastructure approaches where this is not viable) and restore their functioning to reduce vulnerability to climate change and its effects. Educate the public about the essential role of ecosystems in urban areas so that these are not seen as wasted land, that should be used for housing or other hard development.

River Health: Restore the ecological functioning and water quality in our watercourses. Across the country, the authorities have failed our from rivers and wetlands by diverting sewage effluent into them.

Fire Management: Identify residential areas at risk from fire and run educational programmes about maintaining fire breaks, fire prevention and fire response.

ENABLING A JUST TRANSITION THROUGH PUBLIC SECTOR, PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY COLLABORATION.

Climate Change is a human rights issue and also a human responsibility issue. It is important to determine a GHG emissions range per capita, possibly along the lines of an acceptable carbon footprint and encourage people to live within that measure. Also, to encourage people to 'off-set' high emissions through identified relevant local carbon capture and /or environmental restoration projects.

Community Resilience: Design innovative energy service delivery for low-income communities, particularly looking at cleaner fuels and alternative energy technologies. YES! But also encourage high income communities to adopt energy efficient technologies. Need a range of solutions for all.

Skills Development: Upskill municipal staff such as street cleaners and electricity and water meter readers etc. to see and report infrastructure problems in their areas. Also, to look for and report on opportunities to reduce waste (report leaking meters & sewer spills, report areas with high amounts of recyclables in city bins etc)

Energy Security: consider the WC, NC and possibly the EC shifting to a different time zone to lower the residential consumption peaks and therefore reduce the need for OCGT peak load generation and large amounts of battery storage.

Middle- to high-income households need access to information on residential PV systems. Also promote an understanding of the financial and environmental costs of Time of Use of peak electricity and incentives to shift peaks. Offer community managed battery storage for SSEGs to reduce the SSEG demand on grid energy when the sun is not shining.

Middle- to low-income households need assistance with reduced reliance on fossil fuels. Encourage and possibly subsidise the uptake of solar water systems. Develop community alternative energy demonstration projects and show how community grids or micro grids combined with mixed energy sources and alternative energy appliances may provide more reliable and safer energy than traditional 'ESKOM' grid energy.

The following entities need to be formalised or established in the province:

- A Climate Assembly.
- A Technical Climate Change working group. This to include focus on Energy Efficiency.
- The Climate Change Knowledge Exchange – with an energy consumption Dashboard (amount and type of energy) for the public to access, by area.

3 CONCLUSION:

Humans battle to process and prioritise long term and intergenerational threats, so CC is not likely to be seen as a priority given the many service failures and high unemployment in South Africa. That said, the prioritisation of providing services to all based on restoring our ecosystems, new green jobs, phasing out fossil fuel dependence and promotion of genuine green technologies could rebuild our shattered communities, physically and emotionally. The WCCCRS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN provides a framework for action. How to ensure that it doesn't become another dormant document? Will there be genuine governmental support with genuine commitment from administrators to achieve implementation? A key to success is active programmes to raise public awareness and understanding of benefits to inspire active citizen involvement including holding government agencies accountable. An honest leadership approach says we need to clean -up government to root out corruption and incompetence, that we need to clean up or replace polluting industries and we need citizen behaviour change that reduces our individual eco-footprints. All this is essential to address CC and restore biodiversity for a healthy planet for all.

Every day is Earth Day – Let's live this.

Kim

