Dear Sir/Madam

RE: CITY OF BALLARAT SUBMISSION TO EMISSIONS REDUCTION TARGETS PUBLIC CONSULTATION

City of Ballarat welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Public Consultation process for the Victorian Government’s Interim Emissions Reduction Targets. We commend the Government on setting interim emission reduction targets, particularly as they provide a clear signal to government agencies, local government, investors and industry.

The transition of economies to low-emissions energy sources is critical to achieving carbon emission reductions. Located at the gateway to the Western Victoria Renewable Energy Zone and at the heart of the region’s major electrical distribution network, Ballarat is committed to advocating for policy development and infrastructure investment that will enable the already substantial new energy industry in the region to flourish.

Waste to energy technology has an important role to play as a renewable energy source. Investment in waste to energy technology would provide an alternative method to dispose of waste that would otherwise be destined to landfill, while allowing for energy recovery from this waste.

City of Ballarat has been advocating for the development of a waste to energy facility in the Ballarat West Employment Zone for the past five years. Over this time, it has become clear that the lack of investment in large scale waste to energy facilities in Victoria is in part due to the lack of a Waste to Energy policy, which would provide guidance and increased certainty to government agencies, local government and investors. The industry is also eagerly awaiting the release of the Circular Economy policy sometime in 2020.

The Ballarat and Grampians region has the strongest wind resource in Victoria with 3,658.3MW of the operational wind energy developments in the state (September 2018). This large and growing wind energy supply provides an opportunity to use clean hydrogen as a renewable energy source. There is currently significant momentum in the hydrogen energy sector with the development of the National Hydrogen Strategy and the Victorian Hydrogen Investment Program over 2019.

City of Ballarat’s Hydrogen City project is investigating the opportunities presented by hydrogen as a versatile energy source. This project’s focus is on producing hydrogen using renewable wind energy with a potential integration with a waste to energy plant connected to industry. This clean hydrogen could be incorporated into the whole energy system to provide power and gas to industry and households, power to transport and greater storage...
capacity to Ballarat. Converting traditional energy consumption to renewable hydrogen will lead to carbon emissions reductions. For example, Ballarat is home to a significant manufacturing industry, accounting for 22% of economic output and over 4,000 jobs. As substantial energy users, the industry is particularly exposed to volatility in the energy system. Converting the gas used by industry to hydrogen produced from the region’s renewable wind energy would provide increased certainty to industry and lead to significant emission reductions from direct combustion.

To progress the Hydrogen City project, City of Ballarat is progressing several Expressions of Interests with the hydrogen sector. The Victorian Government could facilitate the realisation of these opportunities through:

- Public Private Partnerships to help leverage commercial opportunities whilst reducing risk and attracting new businesses to the sector.
- Creating a funding model to facilitate the development of infrastructure to support the adoption of hydrogen technologies. For example, hydrogen refuelling stations both on main highways and in regional cities and towns.

The Transport sector accounts for 19% of Victoria’s carbon emissions. The adoption of zero emission (hydrogen fuel cell electric and battery electric) powered transport solutions would lead to substantial reduction in carbon emissions. The uptake of zero emission vehicles could be facilitated by increased coordination across government departments to develop a national deployment framework. This will be a major factor in the establishment of hydrogen powered public transport opportunities that cross state borders, which will achieve the goals of efficient passenger transport and carbon emission reductions. This is particularly important given the long useful life of buses and trains.

Procurement policies are an important factor affecting the uptake of zero emission vehicles into government vehicle fleets. Priority should be given to modifying procurement policies to promote the integration of zero emission vehicles into passenger vehicle fleets and public transport fleets. This could also include setting uptake targets.

Further emission reductions could also be achieved by using resources more efficiently. City of Ballarat continues to pursue its ambition to be a national leader in the circular economy, with plans for an improved, value added approach to recycling. The recycling challenges we are facing will not change in the short term. Ballarat is ready to respond to the challenge and will continue to lobby governments to convince them of the urgency of investing in Regional Victoria, allowing cities like ours to move towards genuine regional solutions to process recycling and develop markets for the resultant product.

City of Ballarat’s long established and strategic approach is to create an All Waste Interchange that combines an Advanced Resource Recovery Centre and Materials Recovery Facility alongside a waste to energy facility. This comprehensive approach to waste management means that we are well positioned to foster economic development opportunities associated with manufacturing and procurement of recycled products and resource recovery. Investment by the State Government in the vision of the All Waste Interchange will significantly strengthen Victoria’s response to managing the future sustainability of the waste and recycling industry for decades to come.

City of Ballarat is committed to creating an environmentally sustainable and liveable city. Critical to achieving this commitment is for development to meet appropriate environmental design objectives. This will be pursued through a planning scheme amendment to require developments to be assessed and meet Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles, rather than the current minimum standards required.

Several Victorian councils or shires now have comprehensive ESD policy and objectives within their planning schemes, however this has largely been left to local government to develop and enforce. Local governments across Victoria could significantly benefit from the provision of state ESD policy within both the planning and building systems, setting consistent standards for the community including developers and land owners and providing leadership to local government.

The City of Ballarat is pleased to provide this submission which highlights the important role that low-emission energy sources, resource efficiency improvements and effective
government policy have to play in achieving emission reductions. Our project teams would welcome the opportunity to closely collaborate with the State Government to progress the initiatives outlined above.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Angelique Lush
Director Development & Planning