

Councillor Anna Reynolds
Lord Mayor of Hobart
ICLEI Race to Zero webinar

Thankyou to ICLEI for initiating this event – and to the organisers of the Race to Zero campaign which is such an important initiative. I am very pleased to be here today as a newly elected member of the ICLEI Regional Advisory Committee for the Oceania region.

The Oceania region has one of the world's largest per capita emitters – which is Australia; and some of the nations most affected by climate change – our sisters and brothers in the Pacific.

The first Climate Emergency Declaration globally was an initiative of an inner-city Melbourne council in 2016 – and since then 96 of Australia's 540 councils, representing one third of the Australian population, have declared Climate Emergencies.

The City that I lead – the City of Hobart was the first Council in our state of Tasmania to declare a Climate Emergency. Our community asked us to do this as a way of demonstrating to them that we understand the huge risk that climate change poses to our city and the well-being of our community.

The City of Hobart first committed to climate action in 1999 and we have achieved two major emissions-reduction goals: a 70% emissions reduction from 2000 to 2010 and a further 17% reduction from 2010 to 2020. In Tasmania our energy mix is underpinned by renewable hydro – but we have challenges in many other sectors.

The Climate Emergency declaration is just that – but it does send a signal both to our community and to the state and national government that we will take further steps to tackle this issue.

For many of the Councils around Australia, the declaration is important as a way to signal that the Council will be taking ongoing and concrete steps to becoming climate neutral cities.

Australian Climate Emergency Declaration councils are all engaged in some form of climate action – including replacing streetlights with low-energy, long-life globes, upgrading vehicle fleets and installing electric vehicle charging stations, working to encourage active transport and installing renewables on council and community-owned buildings

All of us will need the impetus of the Climate Emergency declarations to spur us into further action after the COVID period – it's fair to say that local government in Australia is under more extreme financial pressures as a result of the pandemic.

Cities will struggle to fund new programs – so we need to be innovative and seek new partnerships to take those next important steps.

All of us want to do more to get our community members and businesses to reduce their emissions. We also want to use our collective voices to call on State and National Governments to take stronger action and lead on climate change.

The Climate Emergency Declaration councils are using our shared support for the declaration as an umbrella under which we can now work more closely and more strategically together.

There is a newly-formed alliance of local governments and other organisations that have declared a climate emergency. This is called Climate Emergency Australia.

Then of course we have the important work of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy – that links our cities to the international work of cities around the world.

It's only through working together that we will realise the influence and action that can be taken at the city level.

Thank you