

**Local Governments Climate Sessions  
13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on  
Climate Change  
Bali, Indonesia**

**‘Local Climate Action in Indonesia’**

**Speech by The Hon Peter Garrett MP  
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts  
11 December 2007**

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning at this important session on ‘Local Climate Action in Indonesia’.

The Australian Government is committed to leading the fight against climate change. Australia’s ratification of the Kyoto Protocol was the first official act of the new Australian Government. This is a clear signal of the very high priority the Government places on climate change.

Here in Bali, Australia is working actively and constructively towards forging an equitable and effective post 2012 global agreement.

We have committed to reducing our emissions by 60 per cent by 2050 over 2000 levels.

We will also be introducing a national emissions trading system in Australia. This will put climate change at the centre of both economic and environmental decision-making.

We recognize the crucial importance of cities and local government administrations in taking action on climate change.

As a close neighbour, both geographically and in spirit, Australia’s relationship with Indonesia is especially important. This is one of the reasons why Australia is pleased to contribute to the Kemitraan Australia/Indonesia project that ICLEI is leading.

This project will help us look at how national and local governments can work together to build the capacity of Indonesian cities to deal with the

impacts of climate change. It will draw on our experience in Australia and ICLEI's experience around the world.

We also know that we must deal with the specific issues that face Indonesian local governments. We can share common experiences, but we must always be aware of local needs and conditions. This local knowledge is one of the important strengths of local governments and I look forward to seeing the outcomes from this project.

One of ICLEI's strengths is its international focus. Our challenge is to build on this strength and establish working partnerships that cut across national borders and all economic and social sectors.

The actions taken by local governments and their communities are a vital part of the solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

It is important to recognize local governments are the tier of elected officials closest to the people. They are often the first port of call for people wanting to know what they can do to help.

Through local papers, libraries, town halls and other meeting places, local governments can communicate directly with their communities.

Local leaders can and do work with their schools, businesses and residents to implement practical action on climate change.

In fact, it is local government, and their communities, that best understand the challenges facing their particular town or city. It is important that climate change measures align with the particular needs and circumstances of local communities. Local governments have the knowledge needed to tailor solutions to local circumstances. Self-evidently, local governments have a key role to play because they *are local*.

Local governments also have particular responsibilities that are crucial in the fight against climate change. City planning, transport provision and community services are key functions of local governments. These all have important impacts on our environment.

This is why the Australian Government is working with local governments through a variety of programs aimed at delivering real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Cities for Climate Protection Program Australia has assisted local governments in Australia make significant emissions reductions within their own operations, and by working in their communities. The more than 220 Australia Councils participating in the Cities for Climate Protection program cover over 80 per cent of the Australian population. To date, actions taken through the program have delivered emissions reduction of more than 8.8 million tonnes.

The Cities for Climate Protection Australia program is an effective partnership between the Australian Government, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, and local governments across the country. This partnership has generated a great diversity of actions in both large and small councils, from capital cities to rural centres.

The latest annual report highlights what councils have already achieved through the Cities for Climate Change program.

Lismore City Council in New South Wales has established the largest municipal worm farm in the Southern Hemisphere. Some 100 million worms are substantially reducing the area's organic waste and associated methane emissions.

Northam City Council in Western Australia is converting old railway housing into clean, green affordable homes for its local residents.

Noosa Shire Council in Queensland is implementing an array of transport planning and behaviour change programs to reduce emissions in the transport sector.

The Australian Government also recognises that we must adapt to climate change. We must prepare for the climate impacts that are now unavoidable.

Planning rules that recognise climate change, transport systems that are geared to future needs, and health services that meet the demands of a changing climate will be crucial. These functions are all the preserve of local

government and can make a real contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Indeed, both mitigation and adaptation actions are critical for all levels of government. On both sides of this greenhouse equation, partnerships and the sharing of best practice solutions are essential.

A strong partnership between national and local government remains key to dealing with climate change.

Much has already been learnt from actions already taken by local government, and this knowledge needs to go before a wider audience.

Most importantly, meetings like this are a good way to extend lessons learnt by local governments to other councils, communities, levels of government, and nations. They also serve to strengthen existing partnerships, produce new connections, and foster the dialogue required to identify the way forward. I wish you well in your work on this most important of environmental issues.