

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

**TO:** Environment & Planning Committee

**FROM:** Michael Higgins, Environment & Planning Committee Chair

**REFERENCE:** S611

**SUBJECT:** **CHAIR'S REPORT – REPORT EP09/07/15** - Report prepared for meeting of 16 July 2009

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Upon reading our agenda for today, it appears that the Environment & Planning Committee has hit the ground running, now that the Budget Process is complete. The issues scheduled will likely require a full day.

The TRMP sections on Natural Heritage, and Pt IV, Rivers and Lakes are out for consultation as draft papers and public awareness of them is picking up. It will be helpful if Councillors could attend ward meetings on the Rivers and Lakes paper in order to gain an appreciation of opinions held by those with an interest in the issues.

I attended the David Wratt presentation on climate change in the Council Chambers. The outcome of the presentation was a confirmation of the direction being taken globally on this issue. Clearly, scientists who are of the opinion that atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels are resulting in climate change, intend to work towards regulation that will result in massive change to our society. The change will result from the pricing of carbon into our everyday cost structure. For some, the cost will be greater than it is for others, and I in my opinion the only people likely to make money out of this will be consultants and the growth of the 'knowledge economy'. Those who produce from the land or factories will pay the price through a reduced standard of living.

I have read Ian Wishart's book "Air Con". He is a talented investigative reporter and has brought together scientific opinion that outlines identified climate change over centuries, and though recent decades in different areas of the globe. Clearly, much of what is happening is normal and not driven by Green House Gases at all. Mr Wishart documents the changing locations of temperature stations around the world, and the resulting change in statistics which are the foundation of scientific advice. The things Mr Wishart is saying make good sense, and have not been answered by the scientists who are promoting climate change regulation. David Wratt in answer to a question, simply rubbished the author and did not adequately deal with the issue of "Heat Islands" in which the temperature stations exist, nor with the ice volumes of the Arctic and Antarctic.

I recommend that staff dealing with policy on this matter read Wishart's book in order to evaluate the issues he raises. I recommend the read for Councillors as well because we need to be real in our judgments. The issue of sustainability of the earth is another matter, and the use of carbon is relevant to that subject with the potential to contribute to our communities' wellbeing. In my opinion it is important to keep the issues of sustainability and climate change separate, less we fall into a cashflow trap that is not sustainable.



Michael Higgins  
**Chair, Environment & Planning Committee**