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Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local Government**

File Reference: 08/3380

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts
House of Representatives
Parliament House
PO Box 6021
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

Subject: Inquiry into Climate Change and Environmental Impacts on Coastal
Communities

This Attached submission has been provided by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Services and Local Government to provide information for the above inquiry.

The submission provides information on the current work of the Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council on coordinating nationally information on climate change adaptation by jurisdictions and local government and the development of national planning and infrastructure principles.

Please contact Mr Michael Pahlow, A/g Executive Director, Local Government and Regional Development (02 6274 7664) for any further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Angley', written over a printed name and title.

John Angley
A/g Deputy Secretary

22 May 2008

Submission Information
Date Received

Submission by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government to the Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts

Inquiry into Climate Change and Environmental Impacts on Coastal Communities

Background

Local government in Australia is established and operate under State and Northern Territory legislation. The Australian Government provides significant financial assistance to local government but does not have jurisdiction over local government operational decisions, including their planning decisions.

Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council

The Australian Government participates in the Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council (LGPMC) which consists of the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Ministers responsible for local government and planning from each state and territory and New Zealand, and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).

In 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed a National Adaptation Framework, an element of the COAG Plan of Collaborative Action on Climate Change. The Framework was endorsed as the basis for adaptation responses to climate change by Australian governments over the next 5-7 years. The Framework includes possible actions to assist the most vulnerable sectors, including 'settlements, infrastructure and planning' to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Following its April 2007 meeting, COAG commissioned the LGPMC to develop a set of national planning and infrastructure principles aimed at reducing energy and water demand from land use planning and infrastructure design for implementation within all jurisdictions.

At its March 2008 meeting, LGPMC agreed to forward the draft national principles to COAG for consideration and endorsement. Subject to COAG endorsement, the States and Territories and local government agreed to consider how the national principles could be used most effectively, such as by including them as strategic principles within state and territory planning frameworks, and/or in the objectives or preamble to planning legislation.

The LGPMC is also coordinating a report addressing the extent to which planning and development systems promote resilience to the impacts of climate change and discourage decision that increase vulnerability. The report provides an overview of the strategic land use planning initiatives underway in each jurisdiction and across local government.

The Building Ministers Forum has been engaged in complementary work on the building design aspects of responding to climate change and the Forum reports to COAG in conjunction with the LGPMC on this issue.

LGPMC also agreed to support development of a nationally consistent sustainability tool for the assessment of building which supports the targets set by signing the Kyoto protocol in terms of measuring a reduction in CO₂ emissions and water usage. Priority will be given to the application of a tool to residential development.

Most of the work undertaken by the LGPMC Council has been provided to COAG but has not as yet been considered by COAG. Until COAG has considered the material and agreed to its release, it must remain confidential to COAG processes.

While the climate change work undertaken for COAG does not target coastal communities directly, it has broad application and relevance to coastal areas.

LGPMC has resolved to advise the COAG Working Group on Climate Change and Water of its work in this area.