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COP21 PARIS – MEDIA SUMMARY

COP21 PARIS – SUMMARY OF MEDIA COVERAGE

10 December 2015

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8 December 2015

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6 December 2015

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3 December 2015

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24 November 2015

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The Australian Financial Review - Sydney office towers slash carbon emissions

Sydney's biggest landlords have shown it makes financial sense to cut emissions, lord mayor Clover Moore says.

Sydney's office towers are cutting carbon emissions by using more efficient lighting, heating and cooling. Their tenants' tablets and mobile devices are slashing power usage too.

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A city-led program covering 92 commercial buildings has already met half of the emissions reduction target that it set as its 2030 goal, lord mayor Clover Moore said.

Under the Better Buildings Partnership (BBP), modelled on a British program, the buildings that make up just more than half the CBD's commercial office space have pledged to cut their carbon dioxide emissions 70 per cent from the 2006 level of 318,079 tonnes.

Office towers in the partnership, which include 255 George St, One Shelley St, One Bligh St and One Darling Island Road in Pyrmont, had by the end of June cut their collective emissions 45 per cent already. That was an increase of 10 percentage points on the 35 per cent reduction achieved by June last year and equated to a combined saving of \$30 million a year, Ms Moore said.

"Sydney's biggest landlords have shown it makes financial sense to cut emissions," said Ms Moore, attending the COP21 Paris Climate Change conference. "The Better Buildings Partnership's ongoing success is a model for how much progress can be made when government and the private sector work together on sensible, effective climate policies."

Buildings account for about 77 per cent of emissions by the City of Sydney, which itself makes up about 3 per cent of total NSW emissions.

For the first time, however, the emissions cut includes the reductions that have come from sourcing green power or other carbon offsets. Between three and four percentage points of the total resulted from these measures, rather than the direct improvement of the buildings' emission performances, said Paul Edwards, BBP chairman and head of sustainability for developer Mirvac.

"It is a recognition that to get to a 70 per cent reduction in the future, there may be a need for us to include green power and carbon offsets so we stated that from a transparency perspective," Mr Edwards said.

But even as building owners are making their assets more efficient, changing use of IT is making their users more efficient too.

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In 2004 when Lendlease's groundbreaking sustainable 30 The Bond building was built, the replacement of desktop cathode-ray tube computer screens with flat screens was cutting the average "small power" consumption of office tenants to 22 watts a square metre, according to Che Wall, the sustainability engineer who consulted on the building and a co-founder of the Green Building Council of Australia.

Since then, the replacement of PCs by laptops and increasingly to iPads and smartphones has cut that figure to 12 watts a square metre, Mr Wall said on Wednesday.

"That's almost half of what The Bond was in just 10 years," he said. Mr Edwards said the BBP's emission cuts and reduced power usage didn't include tenants' plug-in power consumption, but it indirectly benefited through measures like reduced airconditioning.

Australian Associated Press - Sydney shows way on climate change: mayor

Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore is urging collaboration from the government to battle climate change.

Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore is calling for federal and state governments to work with Australian cities to battle climate change.

With around 80 per cent of carbon emissions produced in cities, Ms Moore believes Sydney plays a critical role in tackling global warming and wasn't willing to wait for the federal government to get on board.

She's in Paris for events on the sidelines of major United Nations climate talks, and is spruiking her city's achievements to reduce emissions and build climate resilience.

"We've got on and done it ourselves," she told AAP on Wednesday, adding the issue hadn't historically been on the federal government's agenda.

"Just because a government doesn't acknowledge climate change doesn't mean we're not going to experience it and we don't have to take action."

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The mayor says Sydney has already achieved 23 per cent emissions reductions on its way to the 70 per cent goal by 2030.

The city has slashed emissions by implementing LED lights, and extensive bike-lane network and solar energy program.

"It's really very important that cities and city leaders are part of the process here," she said.

But she'd rather Sydney didn't have to go it alone.

"Collaboration between federal, state and city local government would really give us the best outcome," she said.

The mayor is looking forward to working with the new federal minister for cities Jamie Briggs, appointed by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull after he took over the top job.

"Up until now we haven't really had a federal government who was very interested in cities," she said.

Ms Moore "desperately" wants to see a strong agreement to curb emissions and limit global warming to at least two degrees in Paris. "That's what we urgently want and need," she said.

Clover Moore puts Sydney centre stage in Paris climate talks

AS the world's focus on global warming heats up, City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore has joined 150 heads of state and government at the United Nations climate change conference in Paris this week.

The mayor, who has been invited to speak at six events in five days, will be joining mayors from other global cities including Paris, London and New York, for the "most important global meeting in our lifetime".

Ahead of the talks, which will feature panels and discussions among world leaders towards binding agreements on climate change, Cr Moore said she wanted to showcase Sydney as an example of an environmentally and economically prosperous city.

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“The City of Sydney has ambitious targets for reducing emissions while also performing in the economic arena,” she said.

“Sydney is very importantly a liveable city, which is why we have the fastest growing residential population in NSW,” she said.

Cr Moore will speak at several high-profile talks, which she said are a platform to discuss successes achieved by cities around the world.

“Even though cities only take up two per cent of the world’s geography, they make up 78 per cent of the world’s emissions, with more than 75 per cent of Australians living in cities.

“If the national governments work with cities they can be really effective at achieving the goal target of keeping global warming below 2C.”

The mayor has already joined the Chinese city of Wuhan in a talk hosted by Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris, and Michael Bloomberg, UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, to discuss the role of mayors in championing emissions reduction.

Cr Moore will also be part of a panel on Friday with the mayors of Johannesburg, New York, Paris, Milan and Bogota to address low-carbon urban development and said the attention on cities showed a “real recognition of the work being done”.

The Sydney Morning Herald - Paris UN climate conference 2015: ‘Clover tells Paris the grass looks greener down here’

In Paris, the local city government is presenting a grim view of the possible impacts of global warming. It is offering visitors to the climate conference apocalyptic visions of a Venice or New York largely under water, and Stonehenge surrounded by an English desert.

Sydney lord mayor Clover Moore adopts a more optimistic view. In the French capital for a number of events held on alongside the climate summit, she has a positive story to tell, noting her city's operations are already carbon neutral and deep emissions cuts are under way as business and green groups get on with it.

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The city's top commercial landlords have cut 45 per cent of their carbon dioxide emissions since 2006, saving \$30 million a year, she said on the sidelines of the Paris . A surge in developments - almost \$4 billion in 2014 rising to \$7 billion this year - means a focus on efficiency in new buildings will also avoid future costs for energy, water and waste.

"The actions cities are taking across the world are making an incredible difference," Cr Moore told Fairfax Media, noting 75 per cent of Australians and more than half the world's people live in cities.



The performance and potential of the world's major cities has been a theme of the Paris climate summit through a series of urban events - Ms Moore attended or spoke at five - highlighting the contribution that cities can make to meeting the conference's wider goal of keeping global warming to less than 2 degrees of pre-industrial levels.

A report released at the conference found that cities - already home to more than 50 per cent of the world's population - alone had the potential to cut global greenhouse gases by about 6 per cent by 2030 - or 3.7 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide - and more than double that by 2050.

For Sydney, the goal is to cut emissions 70 per cent on 2006 levels by 2030. Although well on the way to that goal, the city's progress is being hampered by Canberra on the planning front, Cr Moore said.

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"We've been stymied by the federal government in the past in terms of getting our tri-generation precincts," Cr Moore said.

The 'tri' in tri-generation refers to output of electricity from gas-fired plants, which also produces hot water to heat buildings and also chilled water to cool them. The City of Sydney has been pressing the Australian Energy Markets Commission to allow a building with surplus power, heat or cooling to sell it to neighbours.

Aside from the cost savings, cities should be aiming to build resilience to key assets given the likelihood of more extreme weather as the planet heats up.

"How much more sense is it to have decentralised energy?" Cr Moore said, noting the alternative is to rely on power from the Hunter Valley. "You know you're going to have storms related to climate change."

Super storm Sandy's impact on New York would have been much worse without the benefit of local utilities, a practice in place in the city since the 1870s, she said.

Getting 80 city mayors together in Paris would likely generate new ways to cut emissions and save money. Cr Moore said a visit to Los Angeles in 2007 showed how beneficial LED lighting was.

Sydney's introduction of LED lights for all its streets and parks has cut emissions by 40 per cent and is saving \$800,000 a year, Cr Moore said. As for this conference, the most promising avenue for Sydney to explore may be Stockholm's urban renewal efforts that have "negative emissions", she said.

Sydney council's events to achieve carbon neutrality cost it \$40,000 per year in offsets, with the audit and certification costing \$30,000 a year.

Nature - Cities bask in spotlight at Paris climate talks

As national negotiators debate how to cut greenhouse-gas emissions, local leaders point to significant climate action.

Some describe it as groundswell of action to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions, others as a lush field of grass-roots initiatives. Cities, provinces,

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regions and businesses around the world have come together and promised to clean up the airborne pollutants that curl out of smokestacks and exhaust pipes — even as nations' efforts to forge a new climate treaty have stumbled over the last decade.

Mayors meeting in Paris say that sheer numbers give cities the power to make a difference. Just over half of the world's 7.2 billion people live in cities, and this proportion is projected to swell to almost two-thirds by mid-century. Local leaders, betting that huge investments will be made in extra construction for fast-growing cities, are forming compacts to build in a cleaner, low-carbon way.

An analysis published last week by researchers at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, found that the ambitious local commitments to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions add up to more than the global emissions of the iron and steel industries. Promises put forward by leaders of 228 cities alone would offset as much CO₂ every year as is emitted by South Africa.

Bottom-up action

“Policies at the local level can make a huge difference,” said former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, a United Nations special envoy for cities and climate change. “Local leaders are doers.”

The work of these doers was on full public display in Paris while negotiators representing 195 nations huddled together — often behind closed doors — to hammer out a plan to curb greenhouse-gas emissions.

Celebrations, some bankrolled by Bloomberg's charity, Bloomberg Philanthropies, put mayors and other city managers in the limelight for their work on the incremental, if mundane, steps needed to reduce the carbon emissions associated with modern life: implementing improved building insulation, energy efficiency and waste management.

Amid dramatic lighting and soaring music at La Gaîté Lyrique arts centre on 3 December, Clover Moore, lord mayor of Sydney, was recognized for working with businesses on low-emission apartment buildings, energy-saving lighting and air conditioning. “We've reduced emissions by 23%” from 2006 levels, Moore says, on the way to a 70% reduction by 2030. “It's happening.”

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Stockholm received an award for a low-emission residential development that is part of the city's plan to go fossil-fuel-free by 2040. Nanjing, China, won a prize for rolling out a fleet of electric buses and taxis; Washington DC got one for buying more wind power; and Johannesburg, South Africa, was recognized for issuing a green bond to finance a biogas energy plant and other projects.

Gregor Robertson, mayor of Vancouver, Canada, beamed as he accepted an award for a campaign to make his city the greenest on Earth. He lives in housing built as the part of the athletes' village for the 2010 Winter Olympics; the complex warms its buildings through a heat exchange with its own sewerage system.

"It's been a challenge to make progress without the national government," says Robertson. Under former premier Stephen Harper, a champion of Alberta's oil-sands development, Canada withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol climate treaty in 2011. But last month, Canadian voters ousted Harper, a Conservative, in favour of Justin Trudeau, a Liberal politician who champions climate-change action.

This bottom-up climate-action movement, organizers say, has grown from frustration over world leaders' failure — at least so far — to craft a global game-plan to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, despite agreeing on a 'framework' to do so at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Pomp and circumstance

Under UN rules, no sub-national leaders, as they are called, have a seat at the negotiating table for the main climate agreement. So they held their own events — ones offering more glitz and glamour, with speaking roles for actors such as Robert Redford, Leonardo DiCaprio and Mélanie Laurent. "We reject the label sub-national," said Washington State Governor Jay Inslee, pumping his fist in the air. "We think we are super-nationals. We are rockin' on this issue."

At the climax of the day-long Climate Summit for Local Leaders at Paris City Hall on 4 December, participants rose to their feet, clapping and swaying to the song 'Give Us Hope', sung by the angelic voices of the Children's Choir of Île-de-France.

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Various groups have compiled lists of accomplishment and promises. At its 20th annual climate talks in Lima last year, the UN launched its own official tally, called NAZCA (the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action), after the series of mysterious ancient lines etched into the ground of the Peruvian desert. So far, more than 2,200 cities, 150 regions and 2,000 companies have registered carbon-reducing goals as part of this initiative.

How many of these goals are encompassed in national climate pledges on the negotiating table? The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency estimates the overlap at 70%. Thomas Hale, a political scientist at the University of Oxford, UK, who is tracking this movement, says that estimates vary widely. “We really don’t have the science yet.”

At one point this week, the litany of action plans gave way to an action hero: former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. After talking up his “million solar roofs” initiative, Schwarzenegger, a Republican, praised the achievements of his successor, Democratic governor Jerry Brown.

Schwarzenegger called for an end to partisan politics, saying that onslaughts of wildfires, droughts and ferocious storms show that it is time to get real on climate change.

“This is not the movie world. We have no visual effects, no scriptwriters who help us write better endings,” he told city officials, who were using smartphones to snap his picture. “It’s our time to march forward relentlessly like a terminator. We will not stop. We will not rest. We will not give up.”

The Economist - Local policies can combat emissions where international ones fall short. The mayors' turn.

“INTERNATIONAL agreements don’t matter to mayors,” reckons Michael Bloomberg, a former mayor of New York. City bosses are busy enough dealing with problems on their own patch, and are much closer to their electorates than national politicians are.

You might expect, therefore, that they would be paying little attention to the international climate talks currently being held between national leaders in Paris under the auspices of the UN.

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In fact, hundreds of mayors are in town—and striking side deals of their own.

More than 180 countries are gathered in Paris, and their pledges, it seems increasingly clear, will not hold global warming to the maximum 2°C rise above the level in pre-industrial times that politicians from around the world have set as their aim.

The science behind this limit is hazy. Once chosen as a safety-barrier intended to save the world from catastrophic warming, research increasingly suggests that vast damage will occur long before it is breached. And breached it almost certainly will be.

What is needed is to aim for “zero emissions”, says Malte Meinshausen, a scientific advisor to the German Environmental Ministry. But total global emissions are still rising. Even holding them steady would be tough given the growing global population: each year the world is home to 83m more people, meaning additional demand for transport, heat and light.

By 2030 cities will house more than three-fifths of the global population. Cities already account for about three-quarters of energy-related greenhouse-gas emissions; over the next 15 years mayors will oversee a growing share of such pollution.

Given the political difficulties of passing environmental regulations at the national level, the importance of what mayors do to protect the environment will increase accordingly.

What mayors promise during campaigns, their cities’ residents pressure them to do once in office, says Mr Bloomberg. It is this “real accountability” that, in his view, means mayors could end up galvanising green policies.

According to a new report from C40, a club for cities keen to be green, including Hong Kong, London and Rio de Janeiro, since 2009 its members have adopted almost 10,000 green policies, such as introducing a congestion charge to cut traffic.

Other policies that mayors can influence including promoting energy-efficient building and transport, upgrading waste facilities to capture

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methane, pushing recycling schemes and setting tough standards for office and commercial lighting.

A recent report from the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, which researches the economic impacts of climate change, reckoned these and other urban measures could reduce annual energy costs around the world by almost \$1.6 trillion by 2030.

This calculation assumed that energy prices would rise by 2.5% above inflation each year; in recent months oil and gas prices dropped to their lowest quarterly average since 2010.

But there are other reasons, besides the fear of climate change, cities should cut back on emissions. Tackling smog would save many urbanites' lives: simply breathing the air in Beijing does harm comparable to smoking 40 cigarettes per day.

Some city bosses are already persuaded. Clover Moore, Sydney's mayor, boasts that her city is saving A\$800,000 (\$587,000) a year thanks to LED lights in its streets and parks.

Mr Bloomberg says that offering loans to change boilers in large buildings that run on heavy oil to more efficient, cleaner gas-fuelled ones has had a big impact on New York's emissions; overall they dropped by 19% between 2005 and 2013.

And on December 4th more than 400 mayors gathered at a meeting in Paris to pledge impressive pollution cuts by 2030: according to an analysis by the World Resources Institute, a research group, they could end up reducing greenhouse emissions by 740m tonnes a year—more than Mexico's current total emissions.

Even if the Paris talks culminate in a disappointing deal, they are drawing attention to the risks of climate change. And the more worried ordinary citizens are, the more likely they are to insist that their mayors keep their green promises.