

Chairman's Introduction

My name is Roger Taylor, I am Chair of Transport for Melbourne and would like to welcome you to this forum round table - The Future We Must Plan For.

Before I start I would like to convey a message from our president Nick Low 'Unfortunately my family and personal circumstances prevent me from participating today. But I would like to add my warmest welcome to the distinguished presenters at this most timely forum, and to the audience who plainly care strongly about the current environmental crisis, which as I am sure you will learn during the forum, extends beyond even the coming catastrophe of climate change'.

Planning for this forum started last year, when this country was in the middle of one of the most severe droughts on record. Since then we have experienced bushfires on an unprecedented scale and intensity, followed by floods, the collapse of the fishing industry off the east coast of Tasmania and a pandemic that is delivering crippling social and economic impacts. The events of the last year have provided unexpected and severe shocks most policy makers and planners never anticipated. So it is timely to ask what future we must plan for.

Although TfM's primary interest is in transport, today's topic will be of interest to everyone, including policy and decision makers in business and government at all levels, so we have invited people from a wide range of backgrounds to attend. Covid has restricted the number of people who could attend today so we have decided to run this as a round table and have invited people to join the speakers and participate in discussion following the formal presentations by our speakers.

Whilst many people will argue that technology will play an important role in determining our future, it has been very clear for a long time that environmental change will be the dominant factor that shapes our future and that in turn is strongly influenced by human activity.

It is true we do have a climate emergency, and our first speaker Prof David Karoly will discuss this but it goes much deeper, and that will be the subject of our second presentation by Prof Will Steffen.

This will be followed by a presentation on the politics of change and discussion about how we may respond.

We will then have two presentations from Adam Bandt and Sally Capp followed by a round table discussion with the panel followed by question time when we will invite questions from the audience.