

Persuading Decision-makers to Adopt Climate Adaptation Measures Now

Some thoughts on how to get the 'Now' aspect of the No Regrets Charter to be Operationalised ... Now

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The Big 4 Basic Problems/ Hinderances

- Climate change is a gradual process with really substantial impacts only likely to be felt in the medium to longer term
- Resources (funds, reputations, social capital, political capital, physical capital, staff, information) are limited now and there is much pressure to use them to address current problems/deficits/needs
- Significant observable gains associated with some/many adaptation measures undertaken now may only show up in meaningful ways in the medium to longer term
- There is uncertainty regarding how severe/large will be the impacts, 'here' (in our city), and when they will be felt the world is a complex place

Fundamental Aspects of the No Regrets Charter

- Process
 - The basic principles
 - Start doing now
 - Precautionary principle approach
 - Integrated and collaborate approach
 - Holistic sustainability approach
- Outcomes (principles in practice)
 - Setting out good outcomes with regard to:
 - Urban density
 - Porous paved paths
 - Urban form
 - Urban financial governance
 - Public space design
 - Waste management
 - etc

The Real World

“ Who knows, I might not even be alive in 20 years time”

*“Climate change ... what climate change ... man-made climate change ... you must be joking ... it's a whole load of b*****t ... dreamed up by the pointy heads and tree hugging and namby pamby dogooders”*

“Where am I going to get our next meal from ... the kids are starving”

“Wot ... gimmie a break, I godda get elected next year”

“Sorry, but the budget has been committed already”

“I'd never say this publically and don't ever quote me ... I'd deny ever saying it ... but I owe that guy big time and he really needs that land ... down there right next to the river ... for shack farming”

Some Practical 'Now & Soon Tools/Tactics' to Encourage Implementation of Adaptation Measures ... Now (1)

- Propose adaptations for the medium-longer term which can have now/short term benefits ... eg flood protection measures; improving emergency response mechanisms; better monitoring systems; better communication channels to citizens; etc
- Status gain ... create conditions for leaders/pioneers to be recognised as trailblazers/leaders
- Set up an award scheme and/or a ranking scheme
- Showcase good/best practice
- Build social pressure ... maybe include shaming, but be very careful here
- Communicate effectively ... messages tailor made for the audience (eg no jargon for citizens, for politicians couch within the current hot issues, etc)
- Publicise wins at various spatial scales metro / city / neighbourhood / household

Some Practical 'Now & Soon Tools/Tactics' to Encourage Implementation of Adaptation

Measures ... Now (2)

- Minimise threats
 - Start small and build > mainstreaming the adaptation changes
 - Show low risks associated with proposed adaptation measures
 - Set adaptation measures to come into effect in a fixed 'reasonable' amount of time
 - Build in flexibility
- Build a support base amongst influential groups/leaders (champions) and then leverage the support
- Highlight opportunities for business & for the public sector
- Leverage crises eg floods, famines, disease spreads, heat waves, etc
- Leverage big picture narratives eg SDGs
- Show links between negative events/circumstances and climate change .. but be careful to hold with the evidence and not to make claims which are not backed by facts
- Take on the sceptics/deniers ... use arguments which are based on science/evidence/reasonable assumptions, but also ones which touch on emotions
- Have clear milestones with focus on short term and put in place good monitoring arrangements ... hold decision-makers & key implementers accountable for non-compliance
- Empower early adopters ... create the champions of the future

