

Maroondah Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020 Activities Report





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Introduction

Maroondah City Council is pleased to present the *Maroondah Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020 Activities Report* to the community. It tracks the progress, and describes actions undertaken by Maroondah City Council, the community and our partners to improve social, economic and environmental sustainability in Maroondah.

This report covers the full four-year period of the *Maroondah Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020*, combining key outcomes from the *Sustainability Activities Report Years 1 & 2 (Financial Years - 2016/17 & 2017/18)* and updates on Council's progress over years 3 & 4 (financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20). The *Maroondah Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020* is one of Council's key strategic documents and plays a key role in delivering on sustainability outcomes identified in the *Maroondah 2040: Our future together*, providing a strong foundation to deliver a more liveable and sustainable environment in Maroondah.

Some of Council's implementation highlights of the *Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020* have included:

- Through the implementation of *Council's Carbon Neutral Strategy*, Council's greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 26% on 2010/11 levels (excluding Aquanation).
- Council has committed to having the Realm extension office building 5-star Green Star Certified by implementing a number of sustainable building features including high efficiency glazing, solar PV panels, and water tank to reuse rainwater runoff.
- Council has committed to participate in the Local Government Power Purchasing Agreement project to procure renewable energy from 2021/22 for some of Council's large energy use sites.
- Collaborated on the joint Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) Energy Performance Contract project that saw energy efficiency upgrades to Aquahub, Aquanation, Federation Estate, Realm and The Rings.
- Changing the Globe street light energy efficiency project saw over 6,000 inefficient mercury vapour and high-pressure sodium lights changed to efficient LEDs saving electricity, greenhouse gas emissions and money.
- Developed Council's first *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19 - 2021/22* which outlines how Council and partners will work together towards a more climate adapted future.

- Participated in a joint regional procurement process to establish a long-term contract for processing of garden organics.
- Offered a range of community resources and programs to redirect demand on private vehicle transport by redistributing journeys to other modes, retiming or avoiding travelling altogether, including Bike It!, Walk to School and Ride to Work Day.
- Developed and adopted the *Maroondah Vegetation Strategy 2020-2030* which guides Council and the community's vision for protecting, enhancing, restoring, and creating vegetation in Maroondah's natural and urbanised areas.
- Partnered with the water industry whose key aim is to sustainably secure water for our liveability in a water-challenged future. This included partnering with Melbourne Water, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Yarra Valley Water to naturalise and enhance a section of Tarralla Creek in Croydon and surrounds.
- Commenced the process of preparing a planning scheme amendment to introduce a Local ESD Policy into the planning scheme complementing Council's existing policy that applies in the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre.
- Implemented the pilot 20-Minute Neighbourhoods project in Croydon South in collaboration with the Heart Foundation, Victoria Walks, funded through the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.
- Hosted the 'Living Maroondah: a future for our plants animals and us' symposium bringing together the community and a range of expert speakers to discuss the value of vegetation.

Council is pleased have been able to partner with a broad range of stakeholders during the implementation of the Strategy and sincerely thanks all community members for their invaluable contributions. Specifically, the Maroondah Environmental Advisory Committee has been instrumental in providing input and guidance to Council on environmental and sustainability issues and improving the environment in Maroondah.

Council looks forward to continuing this work with partners into the future, including in the development of a new Strategy in 2020/21.

Table 1: Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020 priority action status overview

Priority Action	Status
Focus Area 1 - Climate Change, Energy Efficiency, and Transport	
Continue Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) membership.	Ongoing
Implement the Carbon Neutral Strategy	Ongoing
Complete a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy	Completed 2018
Continue to rollout the installation of energy efficient street lights across Maroondah	Phase 1 completed 2015-2018 Phase 2 commenced 2019
Participate in a joint regional procurement process to establish a long-term contract for processing of garden organics	Completed 2016
Continue Eastern Transport Coalition membership	Ongoing
Accelerate the footpath construction improvement program	Ongoing
Encourage the use of sustainable transport through events, activities, and programs	Ongoing
Continue to construct walking and cycling connections that connect community facilities such as schools, shops, parks and transport hubs	Ongoing

Priority Action	Status
Focus Area 2 - Green Assets and Water	
Commence a municipal wide vegetation review	Completed 2020
Develop a Green Infrastructure approach which implements objectives from: The Water Sensitive City Strategy The Maroondah Housing Strategy The Open Space Strategy The State Government's Strategy, Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2036	Commenced 2019
Focus Area 3 - Engagement, Partnerships, and Communication	
Continue to work with the Maroondah Environment Advisory Committee	Ongoing
Continue support for regional sustainability partnerships such as EAGA and EASL	Ongoing
Apply Council's Community Engagement Policy	Ongoing
Investigate opportunities to work with community volunteers, social enterprises, and businesses on sustainability initiatives	Ongoing
Focus Area 4 - Governance, Evaluation, and Improvement	
Adopt Sustainable design guidelines for council buildings and facilities	Completed 2017
Strengthen the sustainable design assessment within the planning process by providing ecological sustainable design and sustainability assessment tools and training, and investigate membership of the Council alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE)	Ongoing
Investigate the use of the Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) to improve sustainability outcome in future residential development	Completed 2016
Work with the State Government to prepare a planning scheme amendment to introduce an environmentally sustainable development (ESD) policy into the Maroondah Planning Scheme	In progress
Focus Area 5 - Funding, Resourcing, and Opportunities	
Continue to support EAGA projects that broker partnerships to achieve economies of scale	Ongoing
Continue to support the Carbon Neutral Revolving Energy Fund	Ongoing
Continue to pursue external funding opportunities for sustainability projects	Ongoing
Develop triple-bottom-line criteria for a Council pilot project	Ongoing
Continue to use Council's procurement policy to pursue sustainability opportunities	Ongoing

Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020

The *Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020* contributes to 'A Clean, Green and Sustainable Community' direction embraced by residents, business and visitors in *Maroondah 2040: Our future together*. This outcome strives to make Maroondah a leafy green community with high levels of waste diversion and sustainable approaches to infrastructure development, urban design and management of natural resources. Our community is resilient and has the knowledge, capacity and resources to make sustainable lifestyle choices.

The *Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020* was adopted by Council in July 2016 and set the agenda for Council's service delivery over the four years. It was developed through extensive research and engagement activities including community feedback received through the development of the *Maroondah 2040 Community Vision*, at council events, and from advice of the Maroondah Environment Advisory Committee. It aimed to:

- further embed sustainability in Council's service delivery to the community, and continue to lead by example
- build on and promote the sustainability efforts of many Maroondah residents and organisations
- pursue partnerships to advance sustainability
- help the community to lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

The actions contained within the *Sustainability Strategy 2016 to 2020* were captured across five focus areas:

1. Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Transport
2. Green Assets and Water
3. Engagement, Partnerships and Communication
4. Governance, Evaluation and Improvement
5. Funding, Resourcing and Opportunities.

Through the implementation of the strategy, Council strives to ensure that its decisions are for the long-term benefit of Maroondah's current and future communities and intended to inspire action and leadership on sustainability from all parties.





Focus Area 1 – Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Transport

Lead by example in addressing Council’s operational impacts in areas including more sustainable transport, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and resilience to climate change.

Achievement against targets

Target

Reduce Council’s greenhouse gas emissions by 20% below 2010/11 levels by 2020/21 (excluding Aquanation)



Achievement

In 2018/19 Council’s greenhouse gas emissions were 26% lower than the 2010/11 baseline level.

Target

2.5km of new sealed footpaths constructed by Council



Achievement

More than 9km new sealed footpaths have been constructed.

Continuing our Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) membership and hosting



The Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) is a formal collaboration of eight Councils in Melbourne's east, working together on joint programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and facilitate climate change adaptation across the region. A number of key projects were delivered over the last four years which has seen a reduction in Council's greenhouse gas emissions, and are outlined below.

As a joint EAGA project, Maroondah City Council partnered with Boroondara, Knox and Yarra Ranges Councils to initiate the first joint Energy Performance Contract program in Australia's local government sector.

A lead service provider was appointed to design, install, optimise and manage energy upgrades in an integrated model. In this model, project outcomes and energy savings are guaranteed by the energy services company. In 2017/18, \$1.8m in works were contracted to Maroondah facilities, with projected savings of \$190,000 annually. Further projects to \$2m in value were implemented in 2018/19.

Works included solar PV, heating/cooling system upgrades, LED lighting, building management systems, efficient boilers, pool blankets and voltage reduction units. Works have been completed at Aquahub, Aquanation, Maroondah Federation Estate, Realm, and The Rings.

The Scaling Up Solar of Council Facilities project developed a business case for scaling up and refining a new procurement approach for behind the meter solar on council facilities, specifically those leased facilities. The project assessed and prioritised sites, compared technology and contracting models, and developed coordinated implementation and procurement plans. Since the project, Council installed a 10kW solar PV system on the roof of Kerrabee Centre. Kerrabee runs a social inclusion and wellbeing program and has significant daytime usage as a result, meaning that it is expected that its electricity consumption will reduce by almost 40% as a result of the project.

In 2017/18, Council participated in the Solar Savers pilot program driven by EAGA. This project aimed to deliver solar PV installations for low income households to assist in reducing energy bills, future-proofing against increasing energy costs, and access to cooling during heat waves. 23 Councils participated in the pilot Solar Savers project, with the project effectively continuing into 2019/20 and beyond. A rates recovery mechanism, whereby Council directly funds the installation of the solar PV systems for low income households and recover the costs through the Special Charges mechanism was trialed.

This mechanism aimed to reduce the barriers of access to affordable loans by low income households and overcoming the need for households to provide up-front capital. In Maroondah, 15 households participated in Solar Savers program using this mechanism. A further two systems were installed via a low interest bank loan process. Evaluation of the pilot across the 23 participating Councils showed that each participating household had an average saving of \$254 net annually for those on a council rates loan (after loan repayments). Participating households used an average of 35% less electricity year-on-year, and almost two-thirds (68%) noted that they may not, or were unlikely to have, installed solar without the Solar Savers project.

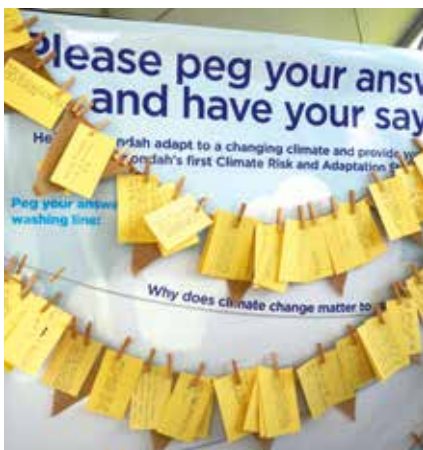
Continuing to implement the Carbon Neutral Strategy



The *Carbon Neutral Strategy and Action Plan 2014/15 - 2020/21* seeks to achieve planned, systematic and supported approach to carbon management by fostering collaboration and ownership of its principles and actions across Council service areas, mapping a path to carbon neutrality. Projects delivered over the last four years have reduced Council's operational greenhouse gas emissions by more than 4,000 T CO₂^e. Some of the highlights have included:

- Delivery of energy efficient street light program and mapping of decorative and outdoor lighting assets to identify future energy efficiency opportunities.
- Commitment to make the Realm extension building 5-star Green Star Certified.
- Delivery of the EcoDriver Program for fleet vehicle owners across the organisation.
- Development of Environmentally Sustainable Design Policy for Council Buildings and Environmentally Sustainable Design Policy Guidelines for Council Buildings to guide the sustainable development of Council assets.
- Development of a Carbon Neutral Offset Policy to guide Council's commitment to become carbon neutral.
- Delivery of the Energy Performance Contract to reduce energy consumption and demand at Aquahub, Aquanation, Maroondah Maroondah Federation Estate, Realm and The Rings.
- Installation of almost 1 MWh of solar PV on Council facilities.
- Implementation of a Revolving Energy Fund to drive the delivery of Council sustainability projects.

Completing the Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy



Following community consultation, the *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19 - 2021/22* was endorsed in July 2018. It outlines how Council and partners will work together towards a more climate adapted future, with three strategic outcomes; People, Places and Embed Adaptation. There are 26 key directions and four overarching objectives:

- Plan for and manage the risks of climate change, in particular, drainage and extreme weather events.
- Seek opportunities for partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders and the community that support climate change adaptation.
- Use the natural environment to build our adaptive capacity.
- Encourage future proofing design - foster places capable of adapting to change and responding to current and future risks.

Continuing the rollout of the installation of energy efficient streetlights across Maroondah



The 'Changing the Globe Maroondah Street Light Energy Efficiency Project' for residential street lighting was implemented between March 2015 and October 2018. During this time, 5,390 high-performance and energy efficient LED street lights were installed on residential roads, replacing inefficient mercury vapour and high-pressure sodium lights. The outcomes of this program include reduced greenhouse gas emissions, reduced energy and maintenance costs and more consistent light levels across Maroondah. Around 98% of the old light bulbs removed by the program are recycled. The project will reduce energy consumption and associated costs by around 77% and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by around 15,411 tonnes over 20 years. This is equivalent to removing 339 cars from the road each year for the next 20 years.

During 2019/20 this project was expanded to target Major Road Lights (Category V lights). 930 high-pressure sodium and mercury vapour lights were replaced in 2020, saving approx. 500 T Co₂^e annually in greenhouse gas emissions, and over a 60% reduction in energy consumption and associated maintenance costs.

Participating in a joint regional procurement process to establish a long term contract for processing of garden organics



Council joined, in partnership with the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group, in a regional procurement process. Through a tender process, preferred contractors were identified. The MWRRG was established in 2014 as a Victorian Government Statutory Body responsible for coordinating and facilitating the delivery of waste management and resource recovery across metropolitan Melbourne. This includes solid waste, construction and demolition waste and commercial and industrial waste.

Continuing the Eastern Transport Coalition (ETC) membership



Council participates in the ETC, whose main role is to advocate to Government to obtain better public transport options for the Eastern region. Advocacy over the last four years has focused on the establishment of a comprehensive review of bus services throughout eastern Melbourne, articulated by a Bus Network Issues and Opportunity Report, submissions on expanding Melbourne's free tram zone, and collaborating with stakeholders to inform strategic responses and collaboration on major transport projects.

A regular social media campaign, 'Commuters Count', has built the ETC profile by providing regular updates to commuters on key public transport news and topics. It is a platform for people to show support for key transport projects for the region.

Accelerating the Footpath Construction Improvement Program



Maroondah's Principal Pedestrian Network identifies a comprehensive network of streets that require new footpaths to be built, based on the routes that pedestrians use more often on their journeys. Council uses this to proactively plan for their construction. Works are prioritised by the pedestrian demand, the type of road, location relative to various facilities in the community, and proximity to public transport. Over the last four years, Council has made significant improvements in the network, and continues to allocate funding to support the delivery of the program.

Encouraging the use of sustainable transport through events, activities and programs



Council offers a range of community resources and programs to redirect demand on transport by redistributing journeys to other modes, other than the private vehicles, retiming or avoiding travelling altogether. The programs give easy to access to accurate Maroondah specific information on public and active transportation, and include:

- The Maroondah Digital Map - an online platform showing the complete transportation networks for the City of Maroondah. Accessible by all device types, it helps the community to plan, travel, explore and experience the services, sites and opportunities in the City of Maroondah. Since the 2017 launch, the map now attracts, an average of 76 daily visits.
- Our early years and primary school active travel initiatives - these include road safety incursions; Walk to School Month; National Ride2School Day; and the Bike It! Competition. Council partners with VicHealth, Road Safe Eastern Metro, Bicycle Network and neighbouring Councils, to deliver the initiatives annually. Over the last four years the average school participation for National Ride2School was 11, Walk to School was 14, road safety was 6 and Bike It! was 3.
- A 2019 pilot for a public transport education session at Mullum Mullum Primary School. The program was delivered in partnership with Metro Trains and PTV and was successful, with the school very supportive of the initiative and the outcomes. It will continue to be offered to select schools based on assessed need.
- Direct support to Great Ryrie and Heathmont East Primary Schools to develop Active Travel Plans.
- A committed support of National Ride2Work Day. Breakfast is served to cyclists of all ages and abilities in the Ringwood and Croydon Town Squares. Council supplies businesses with vouchers and resources to host their own breakfasts. The event's greatest attendance was in 2017 when 190 cyclists participated. Cyclists are consulted on key current and future cycling projects at the event and the feedback informs planning of the cycling network, infrastructure and facilities.

Continuing to construct walking and cycling connections



Council has continued to construct walking and cycling connections that connect community facilities such as schools, shops, parks and transport hubs. These include the Box Hill to Ringwood Bicycle Trail constructed in Ringwood; Carrum to Warburton Trail works underway in Croydon; land acquisition and upgrades to Tarralla Creek Trail; and the completion of Stage 1 upgrades to Heathmont Trail.

Seven councils of Eastern Melbourne developed the *Eastern Region Trail Strategy*. Endorsed in 2019, the Strategy and action plan gives a coherent and aligned framework to deliver high quality, connected and distinctive trails across the region. The priority pipeline project for the City of Maroondah is the Ringwood to Croydon Trail link that connects the Box Hill to Ringwood Trail to the Carrum to Warburton Trail. A concept plan for the cycling link was developed in 2020.

Council's 20-Minute Neighbourhoods project conducted in 2018, identified opportunities to improve walkability to the Eastfield shopping centre. Council is pursuing discussions with key road, water and infrastructure authorities to implement the recommendations. The intention is to expand the 20-Minute Neighbourhoods project to other neighbourhood activity centres throughout the City of Maroondah.



Focus Area 2 – Green Assets and Water

Lead by example in protecting and enhancing the natural systems, features and water resources that are vital to the sustainability of our local environment.

Achievement against targets

Target		Achievement
Maintain the average area of natural or semi-natural area across the City of Maroondah (metres squared - c.f 2011)	➔	This target is difficult to measure without further quantification of the baseline values and methodology (which are not available). The targets and indicators that have been included in the <i>Maroondah Vegetation Strategy 2020-2030</i> will provide more appropriate measurement of 'green assets' into the future.
Target		Achievement
Reduce Council's annual use of potable water by 5% by 2025 (from 2015 data)	➔	Council's potable water consumption increased by 29% from 2015/16 baseline. The review of the <i>Water Sensitive City Strategy in 2019/20</i> will provide an opportunity to review and drive further action towards achieving this target by 2025.

Completing the Maroondah Vegetation Review



Council has completed the *Maroondah Vegetation Review*, culminating in the adoption of the *Maroondah Vegetation Strategy 2020-2030* in March 2020. The strategy establishes Council and the community's vision for protecting, enhancing, restoring, and creating vegetation in Maroondah's natural and urbanised areas.

Three key outcome areas direct action to help create a greener and leafier Maroondah for health, wellbeing, childhood development, community resilience, ecosystem services, amenity, and biodiversity:

Outcome 1: A more liveable Maroondah

Outcome 2: More nature throughout Maroondah

Outcome 3: Council support

Through these outcomes Council aims to provide more tree canopy cover and other vegetation that is healthy, long-lived, and is the right vegetation in the places it is needed most for reducing heat vulnerability, alleviating stress, mitigating flooding, encouraging outdoor activity, optimising habitats for indigenous flora and fauna and providing new opportunities for people to connect to nature.

Implementation of this strategy is now under way, with a mix of actions to improve the protection and condition of existing vegetation, and addition of new vegetation in key locations. Several of these involve amendments to the Maroondah Planning Scheme. Others involve identifying where the best opportunities are for improving habitat connectivity to encourage more nature throughout Maroondah, and for greening and cooling our suburbs to make Maroondah even more liveable.

Working on developing a blue-green infrastructure approach for the Croydon Structure Plan



Blue-green infrastructure is an emerging response to help deal with the challenges of population growth, resource constraints, and community wellbeing needs. In this approach, urban vegetation is not just used for beautification but also for its ability to reduce damage from stormwater flows, conserve energy in nearby buildings, improve air quality, increase biodiversity and minimise the urban heat island effect. Council has commenced a review of the *2006 Croydon Town Structure Plan* and will be considering the role of blue-green infrastructure for this area. A background paper that identifies issues and opportunities to apply a blue-green infrastructure approach in the Croydon Major Activity Centre area is currently being prepared, and has the following related objectives:

- Create an understanding of characteristics of blue-green Infrastructure and its benefits at the neighbourhood and municipal level,
- Identify issues in Croydon Major Activity Centre area that could be addressed by applying blue-green infrastructure principles and guidelines.
- Identify a range of high-level opportunities for incorporating blue-green infrastructure through land use planning and capital improvement projects in Croydon Major Activity Centre.



Focus Area 3 – Engagement, Partnerships and Communication

Encourage community participation and partnerships with key stakeholders for greater involvement in sustainability issues and promote the adoption of more sustainable lifestyles.

Achievement against targets

Target

Improve the community's satisfaction with Council's performance in relation to consultation and engagement



Achievement

Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey results show that community satisfaction in consultation and engagement has remained stable at 58 out of a possible 100 over the life of the strategy.

Working with the Maroondah Environment Advisory Committee



The Maroondah Environment Advisory Committee (MEAC) was established to inform and advise Council on environmental and sustainability issues and Council's role in improving the environment in Maroondah. Council renewed the Terms of Reference for MEAC and a new committee was appointed in 2019 for a four-year term.

The committee goals include:

- Advancing the environmental sustainability 'key directions' of Maroondah 2040.
- Advising Council on the implementation and review of key strategic documents and actions, including the *Sustainability Strategy*, *Waste Strategy* and *Maroondah Vegetation Strategy*.
- Involving others in the community in sustainability initiatives.

Over the last four years, MEAC have been an important link between Council and the community providing guidance and technical expertise in the development of key policy directions, in the development of strategic Council documents and in advocating for sustainability projects within the community. Some of these actions have included:

- Developing the *Council Plan 2017-2021*, *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19-2021/22*, and *Carbon Neutral Strategy & Action Plan 2014/15-2020/21*.
- Providing input into the preparation of a draft *Waste Strategy*.
- Assisting in the preparation of flagship projects for the *Vegetation Strategy 2020-2030*.
- Providing technical expertise on topics such as neighbourhood character, weed management, heritage, and biodiversity.
- Providing advice and direction on the development of ESD in Council Buildings Policy, Greening the Greyfields project and the design phase of the Re-imaging Tarralla Creek Project.

Continuing support for regional sustainability partnerships such as the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) and Eastern Alliance for Sustainable Learning (EASL)



The Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) is a formal collaboration of eight Councils in Melbourne's east. EAGA is committed to responding to the challenges of climate change through the delivery of programs that aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout the region, and provide support for regional adaptation to climate change impacts.

EAGA consists of the following member Councils:

- City of Boroondara
- City of Glen Eira
- Knox City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Monash City Council
- City of Stonnington
- Whitehorse City Council
- Yarra Ranges Council

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Councils provides a framework to guide collaborative work, defines the roles and obligations of the host and member councils, and establishes an agreed membership funding commitment. Maroondah City Council currently hosts the Executive Officer, the Solar Savers Program Leader and Program Officer.

The Eastern Alliance for Sustainable Learning (EASL) is a collaboration of five member councils (Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges) who work with schools and early year providers to promote lifelong learning and action that improves the health, wellbeing and environmental sustainability of local communities.

The following program initiatives summaries highlight that EASL has demonstrable value in communicating sustainability knowledge to the education sector across the five council areas:

- The biennial Learning for Sustainability Conference is a valuable information and networking forum. The February 2020 conference was sold out with attendees appreciating the access to high profile key note speakers and experts in thematic workshops.
- Teacher and educator professional development and networking events are the most valuable activity for incorporating sustainability in schools. Since 2016, on average 22 teachers and educators have attended the personal development sessions. Teachers and educators from the City of Maroondah constitute 18% of the total attendance.
- Establishment of a Reference Group in 2019 to serve as an advisory body on EASL activities and events.

Applying Council's Community Engagement Policy



Council's *Community Engagement Policy* was adopted in August 2015 and is a formal expression of Council's commitment to engaging the community through the use of appropriate, effective and inclusive practices.

Our Community Engagement Toolkit is being used in conjunction with our *Community Engagement Policy*. Council has also put a number of staff through the comprehensive International Association for Public Participation community engagement training to further improve Council's capacity to undertake high quality community engagement. Over the last four years, the development of a number of key projects and strategic documents were informed by extensive community consultation. Some of these are discussed below.

Key engagement activities for the *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19-2021/22* included development of a discussion paper and supplementary materials, internal steering committee, survey, engagement activities at Maroondah Festival, and feedback through the Maroondah Environment Advisory Committee. The engagement program aimed to:

- cultivate positivity and gain stories and narratives by localising and personalising climate change information; in effect reducing psychological distance
- make visible actions undertaken by the community to foster social diffusion
- act as a vehicle for public consultation and invite comment on the discussion paper.

Respondents to the engagement identified that climate change is an important issue, and that Council should be leading by example, working collaboratively and sharing lessons to adapt to the challenges of climate change. Outcomes of the engagement informed the development of the strategy and key directions.

During the development of the *Maroondah Vegetation Strategy 2020-2030* an Issues and Options Paper was prepared which built on the community's views collected in 2017 at the Maroondah Festival, and input from key staff through a series of focus groups.

This document was released for public comment at the free community symposium 'Living Maroondah: a future for our plants, animals and us' in February 2019. This event attracted 130 people to hear from a range of expert speakers that brought many of the issues into focus.

Feedback on the Issues and Options Paper helped Council better understand which vegetation issues were most important for our community, and their preferred options for Council to pursue. This feedback then informed the directions and actions set out in the *Draft Maroondah Vegetation Strategy* released for public comment in August 2019. The feedback received confirmed support for the directions proposed, and helped refine and improve the suite of priority actions identified.

For the Greening the Greyfields pilot project, a number of engagement methods were used to both inform the community about the project, and to consult to obtain feedback on public aspirations, specifically in relation to the future of neighbourhoods.

One unique aspect of the engagement process was the use of participatory place audits in the pilot precincts. Drop-in sessions were used to understand the key issues facing the neighbourhood and to provide an overview of the project, and assess interest of residents and landowners to participate in future stages of the project.

A creative arts engagement program, Tarralla Flow, delivered hands on community events that captured community values and experiences along Tarralla Creek as part of Council's community engagement for the Re-imagining Tarralla Creek Project.

These events were delivered in partnership with key community groups, such as Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, and strengthened Council's understanding of the community's vision for the Tarralla Creek, which directly influenced final design. The Changing Nature of Tarralla Creek project, funded through the Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning, Caring for Our Local Environment Grant program, seeks to bring together community to learn more about the natural environment in and around Tarralla Creek in Croydon, and enable them to apply citizen science techniques to monitor changes in nature as the creek undergoes its significant physical transformation under the Re-imagining Tarralla Creek project.

The 20-Minute Neighbourhoods Pilot Program involved an extensive community consultation program run from July to November 2018. This consultation involved the following:

- Face-to-face community engagement sessions to gather data through a holistic liveability survey highlighted key community-perceived liveability gaps for Croydon South.
- Development of a CrowdSpot tool to augment the liveability survey and provide place-specific feedback on the neighbourhood. Through this interactive online tool, participants were asked to identify their favourite spots, issue spots and idea spots within the precinct.
- Delivery of a Croydon South Community Day on 8 September 2018 at the Eastfield shopping centre. The day featured stalls supplied by Council, Melbourne Water, local community groups, school and kindergartens, the local cricket club and four local businesses. The event was attended by approximately 300 people with activities including placemaking activities, project consultation, children's rides, tractors, balloon art, seed potting, science experiments, music performances and craft activities.



Working with community volunteers, social enterprises and businesses on sustainability initiatives



Council has investigated several opportunities to engage the community on sustainability initiatives, including:

- **Environmental Upgrade Finance.** Council resolved to offer Maroondah businesses access to an environmental upgrade program to assist businesses improve their economic and environmental performance. Council is undertaking steps to commence the project. It involves a three-way agreement between the business owner, council, and lender, called an Environmental Upgrade Agreement. A lender provides upfront capital for commercial property owners to improve their building's environmental performance, which the business then repays quarterly through the council rates system. Council then forwards the repayments to the lender. It provides an incentive for building owners to upgrade their infrastructure and improve the value of their property. If the property is leased the building owner can share the repayments with their tenants, allowing tenants to benefit from reduced operating costs, and owners to improve the value of their asset.
- **Sustainable House Day.** Each year, Council supports Maroondah residents with highly sustainable homes through participation in Sustainable House Day. This aims to promote these homes to the wider community and share learnings of how others can embrace more sustainable practises in their homes.
- **Natural environment community groups.** Several environmental community groups are active in the Maroondah municipality. These groups are mostly volunteers who contribute many hours to preserve and maintain the local natural environment. They are supported by a full-time position within Council's Bushland Team to provide support and advice to volunteers from 'Friends' groups, schools, and residents contributing to the protection, creation, enhancement and care of patches of natural vegetation in Maroondah.
- **Earth Hour.** Council continues community education and awareness raising during Earth Hour events. To celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Earth Hour in 2017, Council hosted a series of free community workshops and displays at Realm and Ringwood Town Square. This included workshops and displays on sustainable gardening, transport and home initiatives.



Focus Area 4 – Governance, Evaluation and Improvement

Establish key indicators and monitoring processes to raise staff awareness of their roles in, and benefits of, sustainability. Strategically promote performance of greater sustainability within Council and the community through sustainable design in the built environment.

Achievement against targets

Target

Increase in community perception of Council's performance in relation to environmental sustainability



Achievement

Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey results show that community satisfaction with Council's performance in relation to environmental sustainability has remained stable at 65 out of a possible 100 over the life of the Strategy.

Strengthening sustainability in the planning process



Council uses the Sustainable Design Assessment in the Planning Process (SDAPP) and Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) to assess the sustainability of planning applications. The SDAPP program refers to the inclusion of key environmental performance considerations into the planning permit approvals process in order to achieve more sustainable building outcomes for the long-term benefit of the wider-community.

Council subscribes to use the BESS Tool to support ESD outcomes in the planning scheme. Planning applicants can use BESS to demonstrate how a proposed development will incorporate environmentally sustainable design.

To enable the use of these tools, SDAPP fact sheets and guidance is available on the Council's website to assist planning applicants, and BESS and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) training sessions have been delivered to Council's Statutory Planning team.

In addition, a part-time ESD Officer role (0.4 FTE) was resourced in 2019 to support this process. This is in addition to existing statutory ESD requirements for the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre in the Maroondah Planning Scheme, and current efforts to develop a Local ESD Policy in the Maroondah Planning Scheme for the municipality.

Council has been a member of the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) since August 2016. CASBE is an association of Victorian councils committed to the creation of a sustainable built environment within and beyond their municipalities. Benefits of membership include leveraging group knowledge, technical skills, and access to resources, training and local government advocacy.

Preparing a planning scheme amendment to introduce a Local ESD Policy into the Maroondah Planning Scheme



Council is committed to creating an environmentally sustainable city and has commenced progressing an ESD Local Policy that will encourage environmentally sustainable development throughout the municipality. It will build on the environmentally sustainable design objectives currently required for new developments in the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre within the Maroondah Planning Scheme.

In 2019, Council commenced the process of preparing a planning scheme amendment to introduce a Local ESD Policy into the planning scheme. A background report is currently being finalised that justifies the need for a Local ESD Policy and recommends the criteria for applications to meet ESD requirements. Council will then seek authorisation for public exhibition of the amendment from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

From here, community members can make submissions on the Amendment before being considered for gazettal under the Planning and Environment Act. It is anticipated that the Local ESD Policy will be formally part of Maroondah's planning scheme in 2020/21.



Focus Area 5 – Funding, Resourcing and Opportunities

Optimise available resources for sustainability projects and seek external opportunities to complement Council resources.

Supporting EAGA projects that broker partnerships to achieve economies of scale



The Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) implements joint initiatives that provide economies of scale and enable projects typically beyond the reach of individual Councils. The effectiveness of this collaborative partnership is demonstrated in approximately \$2.30 return through project-based savings for every \$1 invested.

Highlighted projects delivered by EAGA over the last four years include:

Delivering the Solar Savers project



In June 2016, the EAGA and its partners secured a \$0.76m Victorian Government grant through the New Energy Jobs Fund to deliver the Solar Savers project.

The grant assisted in supporting the operational costs of delivering the shared service on behalf of 24 participating councils within four greenhouse alliance regions. The pilot project supported the installation of 434 solar systems to low income and vulnerable households across the participating municipalities between October 2016 and June 2019.

These systems will produce approximately 1.6 MWh of power and save 1749 tonnes of CO₂-³ emissions annually. Program evaluation showed that participants' main reasons for installing through Solar Savers were financial, including the value of the systems and the lack of upfront costs, and trust in the offer because it was a program run by Council.

The aim of the pilot project was to demonstrate that:

- solar can provide low cost energy throughout the day meaning that householders could cool their homes during heatwaves without fear of 'price shock'
- councils can facilitate private-sector investment within a community segment traditionally viewed as high risk to investors by establishing partnership finance models with the banking sector
- a shared services approach to project implementation enabled access to dedicated capability and thereby reduce resource requirements and risks to councils.

Scaling up solar on Council facilities



In December 2017, EAGA secured \$63,000 funding through Local Government Victoria's Collaborative Council Sustainability Fund Partnership Program to implement a project to develop a business case for scaling-up and refining a new procurement approach for behind the meter solar on council facilities.

The project assessed 50 sites across 5 LG areas, compared technology and contracting models, and developed coordinated implementation and procurement plans.

Delivering a joint Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) program



Since 2016, EAGA has been delivering a joint EPC program – the first of its kind in the Australian Local Government sector.

The program aims to reduce energy consumption and operational costs by approx. 30% in council owned buildings and facilities. Under the EAGA model, councils benefit from a joint procurement approach, with the project facilitated by a shared staff resource, hosted at one of the participating councils.

Maroondah was part of Tranche 1, along with the City of Boroondara and Yarra Ranges Council, with each Council now each capturing approx. \$200,000 annually in savings and 1,500 tonnes of abatement from energy conservation measures implemented in the project. Collectively, the Councils invested almost \$6.4m in energy efficiency upgrades across 28 of the region's most emission intensive facilities.

Delivering a Local Government Power Purchasing Agreement



The Victorian Greenhouse Alliances have established a Local Government Electricity Contract Working Group to help Victorian councils save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through their electricity contracting.

The Working Group is developing a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for Victorian councils to procure low cost renewable energy from 2020/21, at the conclusion of their current retail contracts.

Continuing to support the Carbon Neutral Revolving Energy Fund



The Carbon Neutral Revolving Energy Fund continues to help Council drive sustainability initiatives to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, assisting in reaching our carbon neutral target.

Administered by a cross-functional internal working group, the financial savings from energy efficiency programs are reinvested in additional sustainability projects. Since 2015/16, the fund has been reinvested into LED street lighting efficiency replacement and Energy Performance Contract projects such as solar PV, LED lighting, and heating/cooling system upgrades to a total of \$1.5m by end 2019/20. The cumulative effect of these projects is estimated to be a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions over 4,000 tonnes CO₂-e annually.

Pursuing external funding opportunities for sustainability projects



Key partnerships and external funding sources have been established over the last four years enabling a number of significant projects to get off the ground, which might otherwise have been beyond Council's resources. Some of these are highlighted below.

In 2017, Council, in partnership with Swinburne University and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, received funding through the Australian Government's Smart Cities and Suburbs Program.

The funding supported delivery of innovative smart city projects that improve the liveability, productivity and sustainability of cities and towns across Australia. Council's project, Greening the Greyfields, was implemented during 2018/19 and 2019/20, to support renewal of residential areas in the middle suburbs in a sustainable way.

Two pilot sites in Maroondah were considered in this project, with key outputs from the project being a statutory framework aimed at promoting collaborative redevelopment of precincts where landowners work together, and with the local government, to design better housing outcomes for their land, and the publication of handbooks for local government practitioners, developers and landowners providing a step-by-step approach to participate in Greening the Greyfields project.

Council partnered with Melbourne Water, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Yarra Valley Water to naturalise and enhance a section of Tarralla Creek in Croydon and surrounds. The project is a trial site for Melbourne Water's new program of works 'Re-imagining Your Creek'. The multi-staged project involves re-naturalising and enhancing approximately two kilometres of Tarralla Creek in Croydon and surrounds.

Detailed design for creek naturalisation, wetland improvement and stormwater harvesting was undertaken during 2018/19. It is anticipated that Stage 1 (wetland improvement) will start late in the 2020/2021 financial year.

Council was successful in obtaining a \$62,000 Caring for Our Local Environments Grant from the Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning. This funding has allowed for the establishment of "The Changing Nature of Tarralla Creek" project, which seeks to bring together community to learn more about the natural environment in and around Tarralla Creek in Croydon, and enable them to apply citizen science techniques to monitor changes in nature as the creek undergoes its significant physical transformation under the "Re-imagining Tarralla Creek" project.

Through this project Council has:

- employed a part-time Community Engagement Officer
- delivered community engagement and capacity building activities, including a litter action program, various nature monitoring activities, and educational events to promote local community action in citizen science
- established a community stakeholder group with local members committed to planning and carrying out long-term action along Tarralla Creek as it undergoes change
- engaged with local indigenous elders and the community at Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place to enhance social connections across existing community groups and share the importance of cultural connections to nature and waterways.

Active transport projects continue to be delivered through the assistance of grant funding, including the Walk to School with annual funding of \$10,000 from VicHealth supporting primary schools to be involved in the Walk to School program, which makes walking to school easy, safe and convenient, the VicRoads Community Road Safety Grant Program, and the Transport Accident Commission Local Government Grant Program and Safe Travel in Local Streets has been accessed to develop plans and complement investment in the construction of pedestrian and cyclist facilities.

Through the Victorian Government's 'Our Catchments, Our Communities' initiative, a range of Living Links partners banded together to help transform the Dandenong Creek corridor into a world-class urban 'Living Link'. With \$100,000 allocated to revegetation projects along Dandenong Creek in Maroondah to assist with revegetation and weed control. It was delivered in partnership with the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Melbourne Water, Maroondah City Council, Knox Council, Greater Dandenong Council, City of Casey, Parks Victoria and local community groups.

Council was successful in applying to take part in the Victorian Government's 20-Minute Neighbourhoods pilot program. These 20-minute neighbourhoods are identified in the Victorian Government's metropolitan planning strategy (*Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*) as a key concept that can help guide sustainable growth and create healthy, liveable neighbourhoods.

In a 20-minute neighbourhood people will have the choice to live locally, with the ability to meet most of their everyday needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle or public transport trip from their homes.

Stage 1 of the pilot program provided real-life demonstrations and lessons to support the broader implementation of 20-minute neighbourhoods across Melbourne. A focus of the pilot is the delivery of innovative and best-practice community partnership approaches to engage communities and the private sector in strategic planning and place-making.

Council has maintained an on-going partnership with the Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning to scale up this neighbourhood planning approach, and pursue holistic neighbourhood outcomes on the ground through the development of a neighbourhood planning framework for Maroondah and a concept design for the pilot site in Croydon South.

To contact Council

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Translating and Interpreter Service

13 14 50

National Relay Service (NRS)

13 36 77

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