

1. Introduction

The Draft Climate Emergency Plan was released for public consultation from 5 December 2019 to 9 February 2020 (9 weeks). During this time, 306 community members provided feedback on the draft Plan via several engagement channels.

This report presents a summary of the consultation methods used; and a general overview of feedback received on the draft Climate Emergency Plan.

2. Consultation methods and responses received

Both targeted and broad consultation occurred during the consultation period, with the [Your Say Yarra](#) page providing the main platform for written feedback. The survey page had six questions asking respondents for their views on the proposed Objectives of the draft Plan, the actions proposed under the four Strategic Priorities, and an open-ended question seeking any other comments on the draft Plan.

There was also face to face consultation via advisory committees, drop-in sessions, a public consultation workshop and discussions with culturally diverse community members at a neighbourhood house.

3. Summary of responses

The following feedback was received via several channels:

- 145 submissions via the Your Say Yarra page, comprising the following demographics:

Age range of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Under 18	2%
18-25	1%
26-35	17%
36-45	18%
46-55	18%
56-65	21%
Over 65	23%

Connection to Yarra*	Percentage of respondents
Resident	78 %
Business owner or worker	18%

*Some respondents identified as both resident and business owner

- 10 submissions emailed separately from individuals and groups
- 90 attendees at a workshop-style public consultation session at Fitzroy Town Hall on 5 February
- 35 people engaged via drop-by consultation at Collingwood Farmers Market, Gleadell St Market in December and Bargoonga Nganjin in January
- 26 people engaged via targeted consultation with culturally and linguistically diverse communities through a language class at Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre and Yana Ngargna Advisory Committee; and consultation with the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

4. Overview of feedback received

Overall there is general support for the Draft Climate Emergency Plan, however there was a reasonable portion of submissions commenting that the Plan needs to be more strategic and ambitious to reflect the emergency situation we face in the current climate crisis.

There were calls for Council to set clear targets and timeframes to reduce community carbon emissions, with greater funding needed to achieve rapid, large-scale reductions. At the public consultation session, the general view from attendees was consistent with the written feedback seeking improvements to the draft Plan.

As general points that apply across the Climate Emergency Plan, respondents made the following suggestions:

- (a) More measurable targets and timelines for actions and reporting on progress
- (b) Additional data analysis and evidence to demonstrate actions are focussed on areas of greatest impact
- (c) A need for major climate-related communications campaigns, community education and engagement programs
- (d) Stronger partnerships and avoidance of duplication of effort across councils, including new ways of working with existing organisations / successful initiatives that could be scaled-up
- (e) Additional financial resources to achieve the level of impact desired, especially for community programs to drive carbon emission reductions
- (f) A small proportion of respondents expressed a view that climate action is not core business for local government, and some rejected the climate emergency as a legitimate issue

6. Summary of specific feedback on sections of Climate Emergency Plan

6.1 Feedback on the proposed Objectives for the Plan

Overall there was strong support for the proposed objectives, along with a desire for Council to set a measurable target timeline to achieve zero-net carbon emissions. Many called for zero-net emissions for the entire Yarra community to be achieved by 2030.

There were also suggestions to refine wording of the other objectives, including:

- rather than referring to an 'engaged' community, this could include a stronger focus on people taking action / changing behaviours
- a reference to safety, security health and resilience
- a stronger focus on collaboration with others and the importance of advocacy

6.2 Feedback on the proposed Strategic Priorities of the Plan

Strategic priority 1: Mobilise and engage the community to respond to the climate emergency

For actions under this strategic priority, some of the most common suggestions included:

- Expanding community programs —highly visible communication and education campaigns to help people understand how they can make change
- Establishing a 'citizen's assembly' —a representative group of people recommending responses to the climate emergency
- Council to working closely with others, including community groups, organisations, businesses and neighbourhood houses
- Neighbourhood houses as demonstration spaces, to hold workshops and share knowledge around taking climate action
- Support for the 'Nature in the Neighbourhood' initiative to reconnect residents with our natural environment
- Support for community grants for climate action and other council support for grassroots action and volunteering
- Support for engaging the community around divesting away from fossil fuels
- Potential for incentives, rewards and removal of barriers to action, particularly to reduce carbon emissions (e.g. differential property rates based on environmental performance)

- The need to reduce impacts from agriculture by shifting to plant-based diets
- Council staff and service areas to be advocates for climate emergency action, such as libraries, childcare, customer service and parks staff

Strategic priority 2: Accelerate renewable energy, zero carbon buildings and efficient operations

For actions under this strategic priority, some of the most common suggestions included:

- That this strategic priority —to drive carbon emissions reductions across the community — should be a major focus for Council
- Higher Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) standards for new developments
- Initiatives to assist renters to reduce carbon emissions
- Consider whether the level of action required to drive emissions reductions can be delivered within proposed resources in the draft plan
- Support for Council helping upgrade vulnerable people’s homes to be more energy efficient and climate resilient, and a desire for more households to be assisted
- Potential for interest-free loans (e.g. like Darebin Solar Savers) for housing upgrades, subsidised solar and batteries and/or trialling new technologies like micro-grids
- The proposed public lighting upgrade was identified as providing limited climate-related benefits as street lighting is already powered with 100% renewable energy
- Support for Council transitioning its facilities away from gas, with a small number of submissions suggesting funds may be better used to help reduce community emissions
- Support for assisting businesses to reduce emissions, including through the purchase of renewable energy
- A desire for the removal of barriers to energy upgrades to buildings, such as solar installations in heritage areas

Strategic priority 3: Create a climate adapted city

For actions under this strategic priority, some of the most common suggestions included:

- Support for additional trees, along with increased vegetation overall to enhance biodiversity and a desire for additional open spaces in Yarra
- Additional food growing and related opportunities - more community gardens, localised food production, communal composting, worm farms and gardens
- Working with other stakeholders to lead and support greening across the municipality, not limited to Council land
- More information and support for community planting and volunteering
- Considerable support for a ‘flagship’ climate adapted street, demonstrating increased greening, water sensitive urban design, biodiversity and sustainable transport infrastructure
- Strong support for integrated water management, particularly greater stormwater harvesting and storage
- Several respondents saw this Strategic Priority as also needing to focus on emergency management and preparing the community for worsening climate-related impacts, using the recent bushfire smoke impacts as an example.

Strategic priority 4: Transition to zero emissions transport

For actions under this strategic priority, some of the most common suggestions included:

- Support for the use of pilots and trials to quickly enable sustainable transport infrastructure and calls for additional investment at a faster rate
- Support for facilitating a shift to electric vehicles and car sharing, acknowledging there is a need to reduce cars overall to reduce congestion and enable other benefits, like reclaiming road space for improved pedestrian areas and green space

- While there was a desire to transition to more sustainable transport options, several respondents saw a need for cars and did not want to see a reduction in on-street parking
- Considerable support for pilots / 'flagship streets' that demonstrate best practice for sustainable transport, shared space and enhanced greening
- Strong support for better separation of modes of transport, improved cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, with a focus on safety and connectivity
- Increased communications and education to encourage behaviour change to take up sustainable transport modes
- Considerable feedback seeking Council to convert all its fleet to electric vehicles as soon as possible (earlier than 2030)
- Support for development of an Integrated Transport Plan

Strategic priority 5: Moving towards zero waste and conscious consumption

For actions under this strategic priority, some of the most common suggestions included:

- The kerbside food waste service was highly supported with a push for fast roll out across the city. (Note: feedback was received prior to Council's decision to roll out the four-bin service).
- More and higher profile waste communications and education programs and promotion of action being taken by the community to reduce waste
- Further emphasis on lifecycle and circular economy approaches, with a need to focus on avoiding waste and consumption in the first instance
- Expansion of existing initiatives such as recycling drop-off points / communal hubs, further work with businesses, more kerbside bin audits, feedback and compliance action
- Improvements to waste management in multi-unit developments, including food waste options for apartments
- Seed funding or other incentives for repair and reuse by businesses and groups
- Improved explanation of the carbon emissions associated with waste