



# Acting on our Climate Emergency Plan

The story so far ... 2020-2022



# Implementation of the Yarra Climate Emergency Plan

## Mid-term report (June 2020 – June 2022)

In June 2020, Council adopted its first [Climate Emergency Plan](#) (CEP), acknowledging the increasing urgency and scale of the climate emergency. The plan set out Yarra's proposed actions for 2020-2024 towards meeting the following longer-term objectives:

- Achieve zero-net emissions across the entire Yarra community by 2030 and accelerate the removal of excess carbon emissions.
- Enable our community to take effective climate action — pushing for urgent change and changing the way we live and work.
- Ensure our community is safe, healthy and resilient — especially those most vulnerable to severe climate impacts.
- Create a city that continues to adapt to a changing climate and is ecologically healthy for all species.
- Collaborate and advocate with others in the climate emergency movement to increase our impact.

The CEP is now at mid-term, and as committed to in the CEP, this report represents a review of the actions in the plan after two years. This report provides:

- An overview of the progress so far and highlights key achievements across each of the five Strategic Priority areas.
- A summary of the areas of focus for implementation over the next two years, based on the above review of actions in the plan, lessons to date and other market changes, and informed by a recently completed Advisory Report - Roadmap to Zero emissions in Yarra.
- A summary of the proposed way forward for the development of the next Climate Emergency Plan for Council adoption in 2024.

### 1. Tracking the targets set in the CEP

TARGET	PROGRESS (June 2022)
<b>By 2024, engage 10,000 people in Yarra to take action on the climate emergency.</b>	We have had 9,580 engagements since the adoption of the CEP (not include social media data).: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 3,502 people attending events and programs</li><li>- 3,386 engaging in our recorded events and web content</li><li>- 2,692 Yarra Environment News subscribers</li></ul>
<b>By 2024, double the percentage of dwellings in Yarra with solar energy systems from 9% in 2019.</b>	There are now 12% of dwellings in Yarra with solar energy systems.
<b>By 2024, achieve a 50% increase in the capacity of commercial solar</b>	Commercial solar capacity has increased over 100%, from 4,541 kW to 9,113kW in June 2022.

<b>installations across Yarra (from a baseline of 4,541kW in 2020).</b>	
<b>Before 2030, all Council buildings to be 'all-electric' — powered by 100% renewable energy with no use of gas.</b>	Twenty-five Council buildings have now transitioned from gas to all-electric powered by renewables, with only five Council managed small sites remaining on gas. Detailed planning for transition of the eight large Council-operated sites, including town halls and leisure centres, has occurred.
<b>By 2040, increase canopy cover for the whole municipality by 25% from a 17% baseline in 2014.</b>	Yarra's tree canopy cover percentage is due to be measured in 2022/23.
<b>By 2024, 15% of total water consumption by Council to come from alternative sources.</b>	Over 10% of Councils total water consumption now comes from alternative sources.
<b>Through an Integrated Water Management Plan, set additional targets for improved water quality.</b>	Yarra's Integrated Water Management Plan was adopted in September 2020.
<b>Through developing an Integrated Transport Plan set ambitious targets to increase the share of trips by active and public transport and decrease the share by car.</b>	The Transport Strategy was adopted by Council in July 2022.
<b>By 2025, all Council's vehicles to be powered by 100% renewable electricity/zero emissions, where practical options are available.</b>	Approximately 15% of Councils vehicles are zero emissions vehicles. <i>* Note that COVID has significantly impacted local electric vehicle availability.</i>
<b>Contribute towards the state government's targets to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divert 80% waste from landfill by 2030, 72% reduction by 2025</li> <li>• Halve organic material by 2030, 20% reduction by 2025.</li> </ul>	Currently 32.83% of waste is diverted from landfill. <i>* A municipal-wide waste audit is underway to provide further data in relation or organic material going to/being diverted from landfill.</i>

### 3. Summary of progress of all actions since CEP adoption

<b>Report period:</b>	From CEP adoption in June 2020 to June 2022
<b>All actions in Climate Emergency Plan</b> (119 actions, including sub-points)	
Very strong progress continues to be made implementing the Climate Emergency Plan since it was adopted in June 2020:	
112 actions (approx. 94%)	<b>Completed</b> (one-off actions - no further action required) or <b>On track</b> (implementation may be ongoing)
5 actions (approx. 4%)	<b>In progress</b> but requires significant funding for full implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action 2.7.2: Upgrading all main road lights shared with the Department of Transport.</li> <li>- Action 2.7.3 Reviewing residential streetlights to upgrade from T5 to LED when appropriate.</li> <li>- Action 4.2.7: Working towards developing high-profile climate adapted street improvement.</li> <li>- Action 5.2: Roll out a new four-bin glass, food and organic waste kerbside collection service, along with recycling education.</li> <li>- Action 5.3: Facilitate the development of local recycling processing solutions.</li> </ul>
2 actions (approx. 2%)	<b>Not due to start</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action 4.3: Develop a Parking Management Plan</li> <li>- Action 4.4.2: Collaborate with car-sharing businesses to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles</li> </ul>

#### Summary of progress of the 20 'Headline Actions': June 2020 - June 2022

HEADLINE ACTIONS	STATUS	PROGRESS
<b>1.1 - Deliver a new climate program to enable the community to act on the climate emergency</b>	On track (implementation ongoing)	Developed <a href="#">Take Climate Action</a> online hub which includes news, events, campaigns and resources. Delivered more than 40 community events & programs engaging 3500+ people to take climate action. Developing new climate action programs targeting arts, sports groups, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in 2022/23.
<b>1.2 - Upgrade the homes of vulnerable people to be more energy efficient and climate resilient</b>	On track	The Healthy Homes project delivered 47 home energy efficiency assessments with more than half of the retrofits now complete.
<b>1.3 - Commit substantial grant funds to stimulate</b>	On track	Increased the funding pool for <a href="#">Climate Action Grants</a> in 21/22 and 22/23 by over \$100,000 per year. In 2022 this

<b>community-driven climate action</b>		funded more than to 20 projects, with many more funded via Council's Small Project Grants.
<b>1.4 - Deliver a new 'Nature in the Neighbourhood' initiative to reconnect people with our natural environment</b>	On track	Council is in development of a new program to be delivered in 2023.
<b>2.2 - Support small businesses and residents to buy renewable energy through retail partnerships / independently reviewing retail options</b>	On track (implementation ongoing)	Work to gauge electricity market interest and select electricity retail suppliers is in progress. Market research has been carried out in order to understand customer preferences, drivers and barriers. Discussions in relation to potential models, timing, resourcing, potential uptake etc. will continue into 2022/2023.
<b>2.3 - Assist large energy users to switch to renewable energy via Power Purchase Agreements (PPA)</b>	On track (implementation ongoing)	Established the <a href="#">Business Renewables Buying Group</a> to develop procurement process for medium to large electricity consumers to enter into renewable energy Power Purchase Agreements (PPA). The first group is expected to enter into a group purchase in 2022/23.
<b>2.6 - Transition Council's small sites away from using gas within two years and larger, complex facilities before 2030</b>	On track (implementation ongoing)	<p>Twenty-five Council buildings have transitioned from gas to all-electric powered by renewables since the adoption of this Plan. Most of the five remaining small sites using gas are scheduled to be transitioned off in 2022/23.</p> <p>Detailed planning for transition of the eight large Council-operated sites, including town halls and leisure centres, has occurred.</p>
<b>2.8a - Develop a zero carbon developments framework and work with developers to achieve and promote leading practice</b>	On track (implementation ongoing)	A zero-carbon framework has been developed in conjunction with industry and government stakeholders. Yarra has developed a zero-carbon fact sheet and continues to work with developers and actively promote leading best practice via our website and events.
<b>2.8b - Introduce zero carbon standards for new commercial and residential developments, working with local and state government partners to amend the planning scheme</b>	On track (implementation ongoing)	A Yarra-led process has documented changes to the Planning Scheme to be jointly adopted by a group of more than 20 Victorian councils (supported by Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE)). This amendment has now been lodged with the Minister for Planning, and if approved new developments would be required to produce net zero carbon emissions; be powered by renewables and avoid the use of gas; support electric vehicle charging; protect and enhance greening and biodiversity; be more resilient to our changing climate future.

<p><b>2.8d - Seek to waive planning application fees for solar installations and improve guidance to help facilitate installs in heritage areas</b></p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p><a href="#">Planning application fees have been waived</a> for applicants proposing to install solar panels on properties in a heritage overlay (where no other renovations / amendments are being made). New guidelines for solar installation in heritage areas have been developed</p>
<p><b>3.1 - accelerate street tree planting guided by Priority Planting Plans</b></p>	<p>On track (implementation ongoing)</p>	<p>Over 2000 additional trees have been planted including the planting of 50 priority streets across the city, guided by Council's Priority Planting Plans</p>
<p><b>3.5 - Expand stormwater harvesting at Edinburgh Gardens to reduce reliance on drinking water for irrigation and improve water quality</b></p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Stormwater harvesting at Edinburgh Gardens has been expanded via 1,000,000L underground storage tank, pipelines and pumping infrastructure to meet most of the park's irrigation needs &amp; saving 20 million litres of drinking water per year. Council is looking to implement a similar project at <a href="#">Curtain Square</a> from 2023.</p>
<p><b>3.2b - Develop options to implement trials or permanent works to enhance streetscapes through increasing tree plantings and permeable surfaces to mitigate heat, wind exposure and flood risk</b></p>	<p>On track (implementation ongoing)</p>	<p>More than 500 (of over 2000) trees have specifically been planted in over 50 Priority Streets as guided by the Urban Forest Strategy.  The <a href="#">Ramsden Reserve stormwater harvesting</a> trial will enable treatment and storage for irrigation, while reducing nutrients and excess flows to the Merri Creek</p>
<p><b>3.2c - Create additional pocket parks in high density areas through reclaiming road space</b></p>	<p>On track (implementation ongoing)</p>	<p>We have designed a new parks in Otter St (Collingwood), an expanded Cambridge St Reserve (Collingwood), an expand and upgrade to Stephenson Reserve and Gwynne Street (Cremorne Park), and created a new park in Reid St* (Fitzroy North) *<i>Note not previously road space</i>  These upgrades and expansions will result in improved walkability, increased future tree canopy cover and surface permeability.</p>
<p><b>4.2 - Use an 'iterative trial' approach to roll out transport projects quickly to inform permanent upgrades</b></p>	<p>On track (implementation ongoing)</p>	<p>Intersection upgrades occurred on Brunswick Street (Fitzroy), Gipps St (Collingwood), and Wellington St (Collingwood). 'Pop up' bike lanes were implemented along Elizabeth Street (Richmond), and Park St (Fitzroy North).  Additionally, Council supported a new pop-up bike lane on Heidelberg Road, linked through Clifton Hill to Collingwood – led by the State Government.</p>

<b>4.4 - Support the installation of public-use electric vehicle charge points</b>	On track (implementation ongoing)	Two fast public-use electric vehicle chargers have been installed at the Collingwood Library car park. Four more chargers will be installed in Council (off street) car parks in Fitzroy and Richmond in the in early 2023. Council is supporting installation of several more public use EV chargers Yarra by other providers in 2022/23.
<b>4.5 - Replace all Council's diesel and petrol powered vehicles with electric vehicles, where practical options are available</b>	On track (implementation ongoing)	Four electric trucks have replaced diesel trucks. Petrol cars have been replaced with hybrid cars at time of renewal, with no new petrol or diesel cars purchased in last 12 months. Purchasing of new diesel utes has been paused (electric ute options currently very limited). Four new Council fleet EV chargers have been installed.
<b>5.1 - Phase out single use plastics across Council's operations and further engage the community to reduce plastics</b>	On track (implementation ongoing)	An action plan to phase out single use plastics across Council sites and operations has been developed. Education and engagement in relation to the Victorian Single Use Plastic ban being introduced in 2023 (prohibiting the sale of single-use plastic items including plastic straws, cutlery, plates, drink-stirrers, polystyrene food and drink containers, and cotton bud sticks) will continue.
<b>5.2 - Roll out a municipal-wide, four-bin food and organic waste kerbside collection service in 2020</b>	In progress but requires significant funding for full implementation	The separate glass bin service has been successfully rolled out and is now operational. Research is currently being undertaken regarding the roll out of a FOGO service for Yarra.
<b>5.3 - Facilitate the development of local recycling solutions and markets for recyclables, working with industry and council partners</b>	In progress but requires significant funding for full implementation	A business case for the local processing of glass and organics is being developed.

#### 4. Key achievements since the adoption of the Plan

The Climate Emergency Plan identified five strategic priorities to action in response to the climate emergency.

The following sections highlights key achievements across each of the five strategic priority areas:

1. Mobilise and enable our community to respond to the climate emergency.
2. Accelerate renewable energy, zero carbon buildings and efficient operations.
3. Create a climate adapted city.
4. Transition to zero emissions transport.
5. Move towards zero waste and conscious consumption.

## Key Achievements Strategic Priority 1: Mobilise and engage the community to respond to the climate emergency

### 1. Key achievements: mobilisation and engagement

- Launched the **Take Climate Action online hub** as a strategic portal with news, events, campaigns and resources to support the community to take climate action.
- Commenced the **Take Climate Action campaign**, including a 6-week targeted digital launch, engaging residents to:
  - Push for policy and systems-level change to address the climate crisis.
  - Make practical changes to cut personal and household carbon emissions.
  - Prepare for and be more resilient to climate change impacts.

The 6 week Take Climate Action digital campaign engaged our community via:



- Delivered 40+ targeted live and online **community events** engaging 3500+ people to take climate action. All online events have been recorded and have been used online to support hundreds more to build awareness to take action. Innovative and highly successful engagement sessions included:
  - Taking climate action through the food you choose (an online plant-based cook-along with Shannon Martinez). 120 participants.
  - In Praise of Veg: talking plant-based meals with Alice Zaslavsky. 125 participants.
  - A Renewables-Led Recovery: Towards a zero-emissions future - a four-part series on the opportunity we have as a nation to recover from the pandemic and create a safe, healthy, zero-emissions future. 450+ participants.
  - All-electric homes: the why, how and when of getting off gas. 200+ participants.
- Increased subscribers to Yarra Environment News by 1143 to 2,692 people.
- Ongoing evaluation shows education and **engagement activities are leading to action** (70% of surveyed participants reporting they are **now** taking more action to reduce emissions, 47% are pushing for changes in climate and energy policies, and 40% are sharing what they learnt with others).



*Community Skills for Climate Action Program participants coming together to take climate action*

### **1.Key achievements (mobilisation and engagement) continued:**

- Developed and delivered **Community Skills for Climate Action program** (in partnership with Moreland and Darebin Councils). The 10-session, 75-participant program resulted in 22 local climate action projects and a growing network of people working together to create change.
- Provided targeted support and initiatives to **schools, early years, and young people** to take climate action.
- Delivered a greatly expanded **Climate-Action Grants** in 2022, with over \$100,000 awarded to support 20 community led climate action projects. Many additional projects were supported via ongoing small project grants.
- **Supported the most vulnerable in our community to prepare and cope with climate related impacts**
  - Partnered with Jesuit Social Services to deliver **Building Climate Resilience in the Community Sector** workshops engaging 25 community sector organisations around climate change vulnerabilities and building community resilience.
  - Partnered with Red Cross to deliver **Rediplan Emergency Preparedness** training for community organisations, with a focus on climate change related emergencies.
  - Delivered a **Heat Health Engagement** project with communications materials and resources for community organisations to engage vulnerable communities, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

## Key Achievements Strategic Priority 2: Accelerate renewable energy, zero carbon buildings and efficient Operations

### 2.Key achievements: accelerating **community** renewables and emissions reduction:

- Strong progress has been made towards requiring **zero carbon developments** in Yarra. A Yarra-led process has documented changes to the Planning Scheme to be jointly adopted by a group of more than 20 Victorian councils (supported by Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE)). This amendment has now been lodged with the Minister for Planning, and if approved new developments would be required to:
  - Produce net zero carbon emissions.
  - Be powered by renewables and avoid the use of gas.
  - Support electric vehicle charging.
  - Protect and enhance greening and biodiversity.
  - Be more resilient to our changing climate future.
- Supported the installation of the **first urban community battery** in Australia. Delivered by the Yarra Energy Foundation this sector leading battery in Fitzroy North was launched in June 2022 and has become an exemplar for others to follow.
- Established and led the **Business Renewables Buying Group** with partner councils to develop a scalable and replicable procurement process for medium to large electricity consumers to enter into renewable energy Power Purchase Agreements (PPA). Council will support this business group towards an aimed renewable energy purchase in 2022-23.
- Developed and delivered **100% Renewable Yarra** campaign, including strong focus on **All-Electric Homes** through:
  - Online engagement, including 'Let's Electrify Yarra' webinar series; videos case studies, and online tools to help residents choose a green electricity plan.
  - Targeted engagement for concession card holding home-owners and renters.
  - Offering personalised energy advice and access to quality, affordable solar energy systems and efficient electric equipment (e.g., heating/cooling and hot water systems), in partnership with the Metro Community Power Hub.
  - Running events in partnership with Sustainable House Day and Sustainable Living Festival to increase reach and impact.
- Developed and delivered the **Healthy Homes project** through Aged and Disability Services, supported by Yarra Energy Foundation. Forty-seven households received home energy assessments, and draughtproofing and blinds. Lessons from this project will lead to ongoing efficient retrofits offered for aged and disability service clients.
- **Waived planning application fees** for applicants seeking to install solar panels on properties with a heritage overlay. Developed and promoted web-based guidance on installing solar in heritage areas to make the process as clear and straightforward as possible.



*Yarra Energy Foundation's Community Battery, North Fitzroy*

## **2.Key achievements to reduce community emissions (continued):**

- **Powering community used council buildings by renewable energy and removing gas.** Installed solar, batteries, energy upgrades, and transition off gas and efficiently electrify eight Council-owned community buildings (supported in part by Sustainability Victoria grants).
- **Providing community organisations access to affordable renewable energy.** Council has established a program to allow community tenants in Council facilities to access Councils' long-term 100% renewable electricity contract. Nine organisations have made the switch, reducing emissions by around 130 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.
- Developed and delivered a program to **support small businesses** in Yarra to reduce emissions and save money through product retrofits, changing electricity providers, and installing solar PV. Engaged directly with over 100 SME's, developed unique online resources, and delivered online webinars.
- Developed a **Sustainable Business Yarra** regular e-newsletter, with subscribers increasing to over 500.
- Commissioned the **Roadmap to Zero Emissions Advisory Report** developed by Ironbark Sustainability which will further guide us in driving significant carbon emission reductions towards zero-net emissions across the entire Yarra community by 2030.
- **Significant advocacy to state and federal government for stronger climate action including for:**
  - A fast transition away from gas to 100% renewable energy.
  - Stronger emissions reduction targets.
  - Higher energy efficiency requirements in the National Construction Code and a rapid pathway to a zero-carbon built environment.
  - Mandatory energy performance standards and disclosure at point of sale/lease.
  - Strong policy and incentives to drive a rapid transition to electric vehicles.

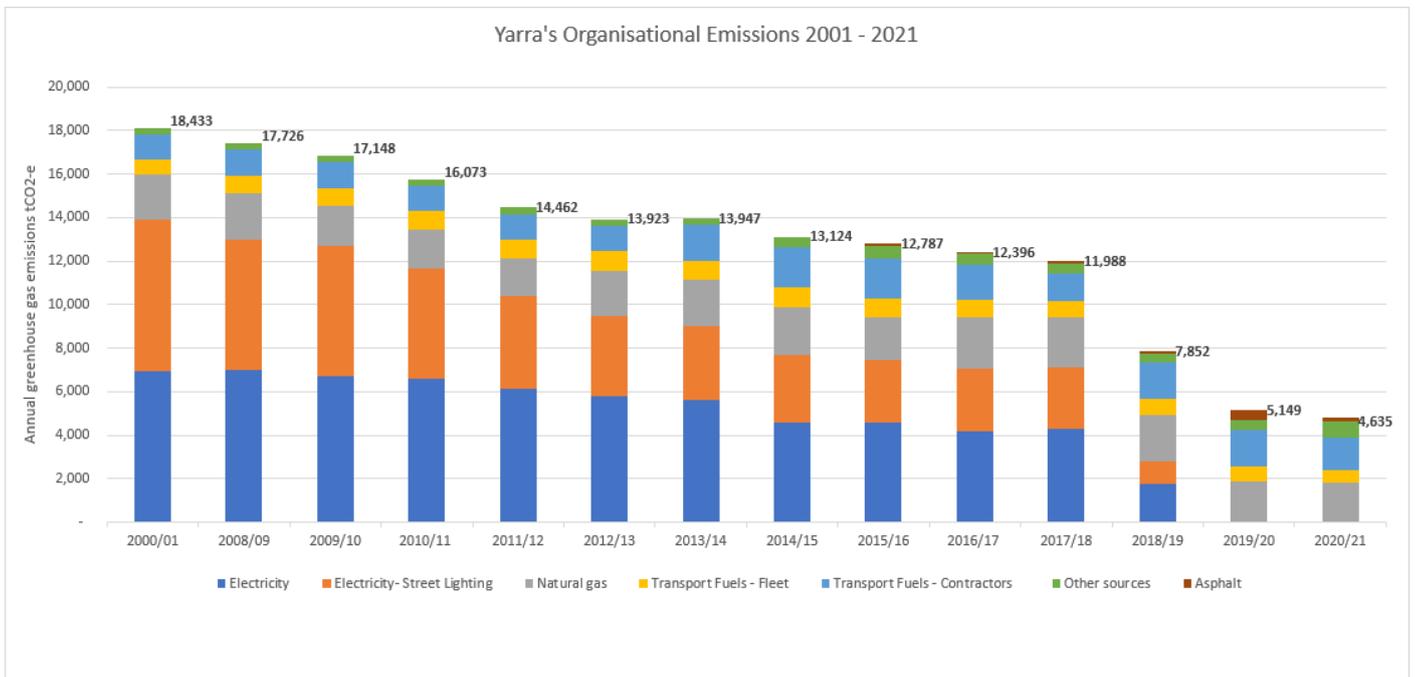
## 2. Key achievements to reduce emissions from Yarra Council's operations

- Transitioning all Yarra **Council buildings away from gas to be all electric, powered by renewables**
  - Twenty-five Council buildings have transitioned from gas to all-electric powered by renewables since the adoption of the Climate Emergency Plan. Most of the remaining five small sites using gas are scheduled to be transitioned off in 2022/23.
  - Detailed planning has been completed to transition off gas at many of the eight large Council-operated sites, including town halls and leisure centres. These are very complex and expensive works that in many cases require unique bespoke solutions. Projects transition off gas will be linked to bigger planned renewal projects where possible and are still aimed to be completed by 2030.
- All **new Council buildings constructed without gas connection**, maximising solar and energy efficiency.
  - Examples include Jack Dwyer Pavilion, and the proposed new Brunswick Street Oval facilities. Works are also adapting to a changing climate such as plantings and material choice to reduce the impact of the heat island effect.
  - Council's Sustainable Buildings Design Policy updated to strengthen support and guidance for sustainable design of Council's own buildings.
- Investment in **smart technologies to reduce emissions:**
  - Smart poles have been trialed, enabling access to a range of environmental data (wind, rain, temperature, humidity, air pressure, pollen, particle dust and CO2) and movement data (pedestrian, vehicle and bicycle counting), as well as energy efficient LED lighting.
  - Smart solar benches using 100% standalone solar energy are being used to provide solar device charging and environmental sensing.
  - Retrofitted 215 main road streetlights from old yellow high pressure sodium bulbs to the latest LED lighting technology. This reduced energy use from these lights by half whilst also improving visibility for cyclists and pedestrians. Further energy reductions are expected via phase 2 when lights are dimmed at off-peak.



## 2.Key achievements to reduce emissions from Yarra Council's operations (Continued)

- Demonstrated a **strong track record in cutting carbon emissions**
  - Council has been a certified carbon neutral organization for 10 years.
  - In 2022 Council became one of only a few Australian Councils to achieve full compliance in all six possible phases of the international [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy](#).
  - Council completed a new [Organisational Roadmap to Zero Emissions](#) to guide the organisation towards zero gross emissions by 2030.
  - Since 2008/09, the total emissions from Yarra Council as an organisation have reduced by more than 70% from 16,194 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2008/09 to approximately 4,635 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2020/21 (see below). The remainder of Council's carbon emissions come primarily from natural gas (45 per cent) and transport (42 per cent).



*Change in council emissions over time*

## Key Achievements Strategic Priority 3: Creating a climate adapted city

### 3. Key achievements: Creating a climate adapted city

- Additional **street tree planting to increase canopy cover**, diversity and climate resilience
  - Over 2000 additional trees have been planted including the planting of 50 priority streets across the city, guided by Council's Priority Planting Plans and the Urban Forest Strategy. The annual tree planting programs continues to meet the street and park tree annual target, and new species are trialed that are suited to inner city Melbourne conditions.
  - Plan and design streetscapes, open spaces and precincts taking into account increasing climate vulnerability, such as urban heat and flood risk, and considering the needs of vulnerable communities.
- Enhancing **habitat, canopy cover and connectivity between ecological communities**
  - Around 25,000 local indigenous species planted to improve species diversity and to expand areas managed for biodiversity.
- Creating **more green and open spaces** through new and upgraded parks, including:
  - A new park completed in Reid St (Fitzroy North); design of new parks in Otter St (Collingwood), and expanding Cambridge St Reserve (Collingwood), expand and upgrade to Stephenson Reserve and Gwynne Street (Cremorne Park).
  - Local area place making projects, have included kerb extensions, increased landscaping and reduced asphalt surfaces, helping to mitigate urban heat.
- Delivered a **permeable pavement and media filter trial** at Ramsden Oval in Clifton Hill. The trial filters pollutants out of stormwater, increases soil moisture and improves the overall quality of water entering our waterways.
- Increased **water harvesting for park irrigation** via expanding the Edinburgh Gardens stormwater harvesting scheme in 2021 to treat and store additional water to meet most of the park's irrigation needs, saving 20 million litres of drinking water per year. An additional project has recently been initiated to **water Curtain Square** via local stormwater harvesting. These projects together, along with other small projects, should see Council exceeding its target for alternative water use.
- Creating **climate adapted streets that facilitate walking and cycling**
  - Over 2000 additional trees have been planted, including more than 500 in 51 'priority streets' guided by Council's [Urban Forest Strategy](#)



<https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/news/2021/02/24/water-upgrades-at-edinburgh-gardens-to-save-millions-of-litres>

## Key Achievements Strategic priority 4: Transition to zero emissions transport

### 4. Key achievements: Transition to zero emissions transport

- Developed the **Yarra Transport Strategy** which was adopted by Council in July 2022. Significant engagement with the community, including approximately 800 submissions informed the final version of the strategy.
- Delivering **cycling infrastructure**, including
  - Intersection upgrades on Brunswick Street (Fitzroy), Gipps St (Collingwood), and Wellington St (Collingwood).
  - 'Pop up' bike lanes along Elizabeth Street (Richmond), and Park St (Fitzroy North)
  - Additionally, Council supported a new pop-up bike lane on Heidelberg Road, linked through Clifton Hill to Collingwood – led by the State Government.
- Facilitating more **electric vehicle (EV) charging** infrastructure
  - Two fast public-use electric vehicle chargers have been installed at the Collingwood library car park.
  - Five more sites (10 more chargers) are to be installed across Yarra (including at Council off-street car parks in Fitzroy and Richmond) in early 2023. These have been supported by grant funding from the Victorian Government.
- Facilitate **'EV ready' new developments and additional bike parking**
  - The proposed Zero Carbon Development Planning Scheme Amendment would require new commercial and multi-residential developments to provide infrastructure for electric vehicle charging and increased bicycle parking.
- Continuing to transition our **vehicle fleet pool towards zero emissions**
  - Council's low emissions fleet has grown to 70 electric and hybrid vehicles and bicycles.



*Electric vehicle charging infrastructure at Collingwood Town Hall*

## Key Achievements Strategic priority 5: Move towards zero waste and conscious consumption

### Key achievements: Move towards zero waste and conscious consumption

- Delivered glass recycling collection service across the municipality, undertaking extensive community engagement and education in relation to the separation of glass from comingled recycling stream.
- Engaged the community to improve recycling behaviour and reduce contamination.
- Investigating options for a municipal wide Food and Garden Organics (FOGO) collection service.
- Joined the multi-council [My Smart Garden](#) program to provide free education workshops and resources to create gardens to grow food, provide shade and habitat, use water wisely and recycle organic waste.
- Developed and delivered a feasibility study on diverting Hard Rubbish from landfill through reuse and repair.
- Developed a draft Circular Economy Strategy including consultation with community and stakeholders.



## 5. The next two years and beyond: a review of key actions and pathways

In the Climate Emergency Plan, we committed to taking an adaptive approach to implementation, responding to new opportunities and changes over the life of the plan.

We have made significant progress towards achieving the objectives, strategic priorities and targets outlined in the plan, with the vast majority of actions in the plan on track.

The successes of the past two years highlight strong progress and a further acceleration of Yarra's climate emergency response. Council, along with households, community groups, organisations and businesses have taken steps to reduce emissions, push for stronger climate and environmental policies and action, and improve community resilience to climate impacts.

Our work, successes, and lessons learnt to date give us a strong foundation from which to scale up our efforts to achieve the vision outlined in the plan.

In addition, we have sought external advice to guide us in driving significant carbon emission reductions towards zero-net emissions across the entire Yarra community by 2030. The Roadmap to Zero Emissions Advisory Report developed by Ironbark Sustainability in 2022 presented analysis on the priority opportunities to reduce emissions in Yarra, including:

- Emissions trends that are projected to impact Yarra for the coming decade.
- The vision for a zero-net emissions future and broad pathways to achieve zero-net emissions.
- Specific actions that can be taken by businesses, households, individuals, Council and other levels of governments towards achieve zero-net emissions.

The following section summarises areas of focus for implementation over the coming two years across the five strategic priority areas. These areas of focus are based upon achievements and learnings over the past two years, the needs and vulnerabilities of our community, market changes, and the guidance provided in the Roadmap to Zero Advisory Report.

The areas of focus over the coming two years also present opportunities to realise a range of co-benefits including addressing social inequalities, improving resilience to climate change impacts, improving community connectedness, greater physical activity through active and public transport, and an overall increase liveability of the city.

### **Key Focus Areas 2022-24: Strategic Priority 1 - Mobilise and engage the community to respond to the climate emergency**

- We will build on and delivering further **targeted climate action programs** to key segments of the community, including the arts sector, sports clubs, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We will work with sectors which have a significant influence within our community and empower them to lead change within their communities. We will also seek to work with groups within our community who traditionally have been underrepresented in the mainstream climate movement; this includes CALD communities who are also disproportionately impacted by climate change.

- We will deliver specific programs to **support households to switch to renewable energy, reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency**, including but not limited to:
  - **All-electric homes:** a suite of programs which will support the general community to install solar, switch to GreenPower, transition to all-electric homes and improve energy efficiency.
  - **Green apartments:** programs which target barriers specific to emissions reductions in apartments, noting that 85% of dwellings in Yarra are medium to high density.
  - **Green renters:** programs which target the barriers specific to emissions reductions for tenants and landlords, noting that around 50% of Yarra’s community live in rental properties.

*\*Working with households in these ways is recommended in the Roadmap to Zero Advisory Report. Given that 20% of Yarra’s greenhouse gas emissions come from households, and this is a sector which Council can most influence.*
- We will support households to buy **ethical and affordable renewable energy**. This may be via solar/battery/appliance purchasing programs, partnerships with retailers and/or independently reviewing renewable electricity retail options, and/or emerging community energy models such as solar gardens.
- We will deliver programs which **support vulnerable and low-income households to improve energy efficiency and thermal comfort and reduce energy consumption and costs**. This includes programs which fill information gaps and programs which respond to existing barriers to action.
- We will further build active engagement with our **Take Climate Action online hub** – a web-based portal with news, events, campaigns and resources to support the community to take climate action. We want to grow and promote this new hub so that it is a leading source of climate action information for Yarra households, community groups and businesses.
- We will continue to stay up to date with emerging approaches to drawdown and partner with others to advocate for effective and scalable drawdown methods. This is a new area of work for councils and one we have capacity to lead on in partnership with others including First Nations organisations.
- We will continue to partner with other Councils, other levels of government, Greenhouse Alliances and organisations such as Climate Emergency Australia, Cities Power Partnership, Yarra Energy Foundation to implement solutions to accelerate and advocate for stronger climate action.

**Key Focus Areas 2022-24: Strategic Priority 2: Accelerate renewable energy, zero carbon buildings and efficient operations**

- We will continue to focus on how we support businesses to make the transition, being responsible for around 60% of Yarra total greenhouse gas emissions.

*\*The Roadmap to Zero Advisory Report advises Council to continue to educate and facilitate medium to large businesses to take up renewable energy, such as through PPAs and large-scale solar installations.*

- We will continue to support **Business Renewables Buying Group** and seek to build off project lessons to support more large energy using businesses to jointly procure renewable energy as this has potential to significantly reduce emissions, with a large portion of community emissions coming from electricity use in commercial and industrial sectors.
- We will continue to work with the Yarra Energy Foundation to **increase the capacity of commercial solar installations**, seeking to support Yarra businesses take action and through the process to learn for how better to target other businesses.
- We will continue to **support small to medium businesses to make changes to their operations to improve sustainability**, including development of an online assessment tool aimed to provide 'green business' certification and a tailored sustainability action plan.

*\*The 'Roadmap to Zero Advisory Report' advises Council to target stronger support small to medium businesses to improve sustainability. Further, this builds upon the support provided, relationships developed, gains made via the support already provided to this cohort by Council and the Yarra Energy Foundation.*

- We will further support the community to participate in **innovative pilot projects** such as the roll out of additional community batteries and exploration of other potential innovations (for example, integrated energy systems, energy trading, demand management and virtual power plants). These may variously involve households, electricity distribution businesses, technology providers and governments.

*\*The 'Roadmap to Zero Advisory Report' advised Council to explore a range of innovative energy solutions for the community, such as the examples above. Similarly, Yarra Energy Foundation has developed a 'Roadmap for Community Batteries in the City of Yarra'*

- We will continue to strongly **advocate to state and federal governments** to support zero carbon households: including to:
  - Rapidly decarbonise the electricity grid.
  - Deliver programs and funding support to assist all households to transition to zero carbon (renewable, all-electric, gas-free), including renters, apartments, and households on low incomes.
  - Bring forward the date for banning all new household gas connections through the Victorian Government's Gas Transition Roadmap.
  - Regulate minimum standards for rental properties in Victoria, focused on energy efficiency and thermal comfort.
  - Provide funding support for public electric vehicle chargers.
  - Deliver energy and emissions reduction policies and incentives that support businesses to innovate to reduce emissions.

- Support the proposed joint planning scheme to '[elevate ESD targets](#)' including introducing zero carbon requirements for new multi-residential and commercial developments.
- Support planning scheme and building regulation changes that would enable zero carbon buildings state and nation-wide, including through the National Construction Code.
- Extend funding support for innovative community renewable energy projects (community batteries and virtual power plants).
- Support for to improve the climate resilience of community assets.

### **Key Focus Areas 2022-24: Strategic Priority 3: Creating a climate adapted city**

- We will improve the climate resilience of Council's assets, such as buildings, roads and drains, including producing an up-to-date climate risk assessment for Council. We will undertake asset vulnerability assessments and developing specifications/design requirements to improve the climate resilience of buildings, identifying adaptation options for buildings and determining the costs and benefits or proposed options. Consultation across Council helped inform the scope of works for an update to Council's climate risk assessment and asset vulnerability assessments.
- We will update flood overlays throughout Yarra to enhance how this projected climate change impact is considered.
- We will continue to accelerate Council's tree planting program, improving local tree canopy cover and providing protection from increased heat and extreme heat events.

### **Key Focus Areas 2022-24: Strategic priority 4. Transition to zero emissions transport**

- We will develop an Action Plan identifying how the goals and targets in the newly adopted Transport Strategy will be achieved.
- We will continue to deliver trials of temporary sustainable transport infrastructure such as cycling lanes and bike hoops, car free zones and curfews, and reallocation of street space for sustainable transport modes.
- We will continue to support and facilitate the transition to electric vehicles, seeking an expansion of the network of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and working to update planning requirements and guidelines for developers to include electric car and bicycle charging in new developments or 'future proofing' the building for installations.
- We will continue to support and facilitate the uptake of electric micro-mobility options, including electric bicycles and scooters. Electric micro-mobility has huge potential to meet many of the transport needs of the community in Yarra, however the key to unlocking this potential will be the existence of a high-quality bike network to support uptake across as wide a cross-section of the community as possible.
- We will further transition council fleet to electric vehicles to reduce operational emissions and support the second-hand market. We are working with potential suppliers to ensure there are

vehicles to meet our needs. We will also participate in a multi-council project to review organizational fleet needs and plan transition to zero-emissions fleet.

- We will continue to advocate to other levels of government to support zero carbon transport including to:
  - The Victorian Government to support mode shift to active transport by funding and constructing safe, accessible and connected infrastructure for people walking, wheeling and cycling, particularly on arterial roads.
  - The Victorian Government to further invest in public transport improvements to provide frequent, convenient, well-connected and accessible services.
  - The Victorian Government to strongly accelerate its adoption of electric buses, noting that NSW have committed to electrify their entire bus fleet by 2030.
  - The Victorian and federal governments to adopt favourable policies (e.g., strong targets, taxes, tariffs, stricter emissions standards) to accelerate the transition to low emissions vehicles of all types.
  - Industry to support for the design and manufacture of zero emissions vehicles locally, such as e-bikes and buses.

#### **Key Focus Areas 2022-24: Strategic priority 5. Move towards zero waste and conscious consumption**

- We will seek to take tangible steps to act on the Circular Economy Bill passed in the Victorian Parliament in December 2021, including:
  - Development of a Council Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan
  - Progressing towards a four-stream waste and recycling service
  - Development of relevant education and information campaigns
- We will identify and develop Council's role in enacting the Container Deposit Scheme which will commence in 2023.
- We will engage and educate residents, businesses, internal stakeholders and others in relation to the Victorian Single Use Plastic ban being introduced in 2023 and which will prohibit the sale of single-use plastic items including plastic straws, cutlery, plates, drink-stirrers, polystyrene food and drink containers, and cotton bud sticks. Engagement and education will focus on supporting stakeholders to run down current stocks of these items and find suitable alternatives.
- We will continue to deliver and manage the Community Growing Spaces program.
- We will investigate new ways to support community members and groups to grow food on public and private land.
- We will evaluate the current Urban Agriculture Strategy including evaluation of urban agriculture opportunities and participation in Yarra.

## 6. Developing Councils next Climate Emergency Plan

We will soon begin work on the planning and development for the next Climate Emergency Plan, due for Council adoption in mid-2024.

Yarra was just the second Council in Australia to develop a Climate Emergency Plan, and in the following two years many other Councils have followed suit. As well as following standard Council processes for development and consultation and building off the lesson learned through implementation of this CEP, Officers have also reviewed other council's recent Climate Emergency Plan's and will use all these inputs and more in designing the process for the development of the next Plan.

At this early stage, below are some key guiding principles that Officers will use in commencing the development of the Yarra's next Climate Emergency Plan.

### 1. First Nations engagement and integration of knowledge

We will engage, collaborate with, and learn from First Nations people and uphold their unique and continuing relationship to the land known as Yarra. We will be guided by First Nations people in the design and development of the new plan.

We recognise that climate change is threatening the cultures and health of First Nations people. We are committed to working with the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation to restore a safe climate, connect with our community and with country, and support climate justice.

### 2. Involving young people in the development of the plan

We will ensure that the voices of young people are heard in the design and development of the new plan. As the climate emergency intensifies over time, it is children and young people who will face the worst impacts.

### 3. Whole of-community engagement and buy-in

We will engage with key community stakeholders in the early stages in development of the next plan and seek to engender stronger community buy-in, shared ownership, and deeper community support for the process and subsequent plan.

We know that the scale and complexity of the climate emergency challenge means that we all have a role to play, and that we must work together – the actions of individuals, organisations or sectors alone cannot solve the emergency.

### 4. Build the evidence-based to guide future direction and action

We will build the evidence base for key Yarra specific emissions reduction needs and opportunities and use this to inform the new Plan to ensure it is focused in the key areas and designed to have the greatest chance for success. This includes:

- Building upon and learning from our achievements in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the current plan.
- The directions presented in the Roadmap to Zero Advisory Report
- Improving understanding of the community emissions profile or other localised data sets, and opportunities to reduce in key areas.

- Community surveys and alike.
- Examples of success from other council areas.

## **5. Further building internal engagement and linkages**

Similarly, we will seek early engagement with colleagues across our organisation in the development of the new Plan. Through this work we will seek to boost ownership of the actions within the plan across Council, and understand how this plan might complement, support, connect with other plans, strategies.

### **Next Steps**

We will begin the planning and development of Yarra's the next Climate Emergency Plan concurrently with the continued implementation of this Climate Emergency Plan 2020-24. We will seek to ensure a smooth transition from this current Plan to the next in mid-2024, as well as a continued acceleration of actions in response to the Climate Emergency.