

# Yarra Ranges Council

## Leading in the way in corporate planning and climate change



### Climate Change and Yarra Ranges

In 2014 the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) commissioned the CSIRO to model the likely impacts of climate change on the eastern region of Melbourne, including the Yarra Ranges. This revealed that Melbourne's east is likely to experience hotter, drier conditions, more frequent heatwaves, droughts and bushfires, and more intense rainfall (see Figure 1)

Potential impacts on Yarra Ranges and its community include:

- increased risk of bushfire
- increased frequency and severity of flooding
- changes to distribution of flora and fauna species due to environmental conditions
- changes in the suitability of the region for types of agricultural and horticultural production (eg. apples, stone fruit)
- impact of increased frost events on crops.

### Why is Corporate Planning for Climate Change Important?

The Local Government Act requires all local governments to prepare a Council Plan to guide their work. The Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2017-2021 details the objectives and associated strategies by which these are implemented. Council also has a legislative requirement to consider climate change and related impacts in its Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The incorporation of climate change action into Council Plan objectives ensures that action is a high priority, and is therefore appropriately considered and resourced.

The Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2017-2021 considers climate change under its four key objectives, in particular 'Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Spaces' and 'Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment'. The Plan also details Council's commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions towards zero, with a reduction from 14,621 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e in 2016 to less than 10,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e by 2020 (see Figure 2).

| Corporate/Strategic/Council Plan (#1) evaluation  |  |
|---|--|
| Council's Corporate/ Strategic/ Council Plan was reviewed for words associated with managing climate change (eg. Climate change, adaptation, resilience). If any of these words were identified a closer analysis of the context was undertaken to assess the extent of how they were considered in the document. |  |
| No Data   | No corporate/Strategic/Council Plan found or publicly available  |
| None  | No consideration of climate change in the Corporate/Strategic/Council Plan   |
| Basic   | General statements about climate change (eg. In introduction)  |
| Intermediate  | Prescribed responses/guidance for one climate change issue (eg. Sea level rise) AND/OR one council function (eg. Land use planning) only.                    |
| High  | Detailed inclusion of climate change, but is limited to two climate change issues (eg. Sea level rise) AND/OR two council functions (eg. Land use planning). |
| Advanced  | Climate change is well considered and includes responses to direct and indirect impacts.   |



Figure 1: Climate change projections for Melbourne's EAGA region (CSIRO 2013)

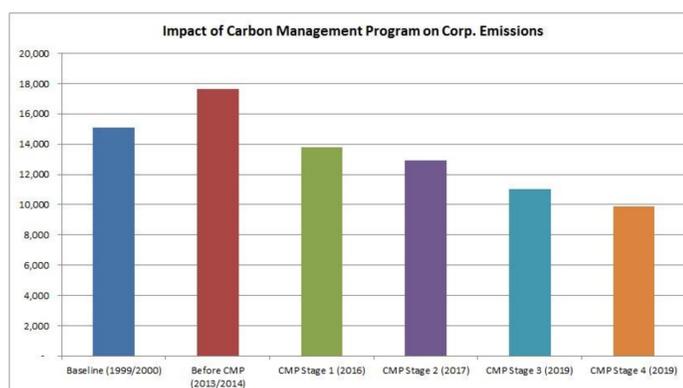
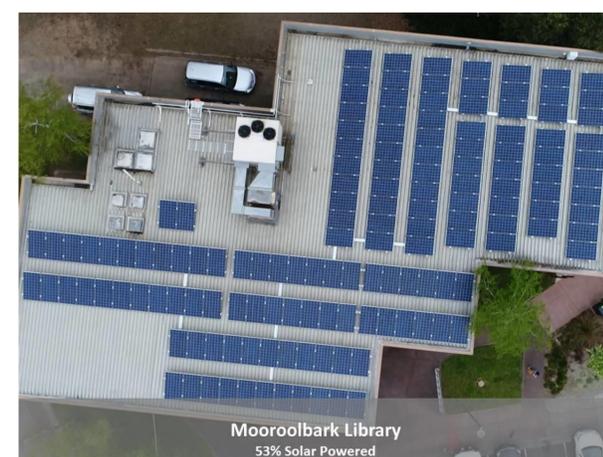


Figure 2: Corporate emission level targets as a result of Carbon Management Program



### How Yarra Ranges Integrated Climate Change into Corporate Planning?

In 2011, Yarra Ranges developed their 'Adapting to a Changing Climate and Energy Future' plan. This plan was developed in consultation with staff from across the organisation, with input provided through a range of workshops. Modelling and scientific information commissioned by EAGA was used to drive conversations amongst staff on how climate change may impact on their future work.

Implementation is reported on quarterly across Council through Interplan.

The plan was endorsed by Council in 2012. In 2015, key actions were incorporated into the six goals of the Yarra Ranges Environment Strategy 2015-2025, bolstering commitment to action. It has also been incorporated into the Council Plan 2017-2021 in response to organisational and community concerns about the issue.

Challenges and opportunities:

- Ensuring continuity and longevity of reporting – e.g. when Interplan was upgraded some elements of reporting were inadvertently discontinued and needed to be reinstated
- Staff changes are a challenge, as they can lead to a loss of knowledge of past commitments and actions. It is important to ensure long term commitment and engagement of staff and teams, and that commitments are recorded within cross council teams to ensure action continues across staff changes
- Inclusive, cross-Council planning is vital to ensure all teams understand and take responsibility for action
- Resourcing action can require personnel with specific skills to deliver key projects
- Councillor endorsement of the plan was important to build commitment
- Ensure the plan has clear, measureable targets, a well-considered action plan with responsibilities and timeframes documented, and a monitoring and evaluation framework to chart progress over the life of the plan.

### Where next for Yarra Ranges?

Next steps:

- Five year/mid-point review of Councils 'Adapting to a Changing Climate and Energy Future' plan, including re-engaging with stakeholders, evaluation and redevelopment of how actions are reported. Development of an action plan for final five years of plan delivery.
- Continued project scoping and implementation
- Supporting community projects in adaptation and building resilience
- Explore science-based emissions reduction targets for the organisation and community beyond 2020.