

# Climate Change Act 2017: How can individuals and local government contribute?

## Fact Sheet

All Victorians can be part of the Victorian Government's action on climate change and help transition Victoria to a net zero emissions, climate resilient community and economy.

**On 23 February 2017, the Climate Change Bill 2016 was passed by the Victorian Parliament to create a new Climate Change Act.**

The *Climate Change Act 2017* will set out emissions reduction targets and objectives designed to ensure Victoria's communities, economy and environment are prepared for the impacts of climate change, including a long-term emissions reduction target of net zero emissions by 2050.

All individuals, communities, businesses and local governments have a critical role in helping Victoria reach net zero emissions and in shaping Victoria's liveability into the future.

### TAKE2 Pledge Program

In June 2016, the Victorian Government launched the TAKE2 Pledge Program.

TAKE2 gives individuals, businesses, local government, education institutions and community groups an opportunity to commit to taking actions to keep the global temperature rise under 2 degrees Celsius and share their progress.

As of February 2017, over 3000 individuals, businesses, community groups, local governments and education institutions are participating in TAKE2. Pledges range from Girl Guides Victoria committing to reducing waste and water use, to Qantas committing to improve the fuel efficiency of its fleet and establishing the world's largest airline carbon offset program.

Read more inspiring examples of climate change action and make your own pledge to TAKE2 at:  
<https://www.take2.vic.gov.au/>

### Individuals and households

The Victorian Government is also supporting individuals and households to act on climate change.

#### Victorian Energy Upgrades

The Victorian Energy Upgrades program (formally the Energy Saver Incentive) provides households and businesses with access to discounts on energy-efficient products and services.

Upgrading from inefficient appliances can help Victorian homes and businesses cope better with cold weather in winter and warm summer temperatures. It is also an ideal way to take control of energy bills.

More information on Victorian Energy Upgrades is available at:

<https://www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/victorian-energy-upgrades>

#### Energy Legislation Amendment (Feed-in Tariffs and Improving Safety and Markets) Act 2017

The new *Energy legislation Amendment (Feed-in Tariffs and Improving Safety and Markets) Act 2017* will increase the feed-in tariff paid to households and businesses for any solar and wind power they produce and feed back into the electricity network.

Solar customers on the current minimum feed-in tariff rate will move onto the new tariff rate as set by Victoria's independent regulator the Essential Services Commission (ESC), from 1 July 2017.

The *Energy Legislation Amendment (Feed-in Tariffs and Improving Safety and Markets) Act 2017* is available on the Victorian Legislation website:  
<http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>

#### Target 155

The Target 155 water savings campaign was re-activated earlier in 2016, to ensure Victorians remain aware of the importance of using water wisely, particularly as both climate change and population growth put further pressure on Victoria's reserves.

More information on Target 155 is available at:  
<http://www.target155.vic.gov.au/>

# How can individuals and local government contribute?

## Growing Green Guide

The Growing Green Guide, produced with the support of the Victorian Government and the cities of Melbourne, Port Phillip, Yarra and Stonnington, sets out the climate change and broader environmental benefits of green infrastructure, and explains how to create high quality green roofs, walls and facades.

The Growing Green Guide is available at: <http://www.growinggreenguide.org/>

## Sustainability Victoria

For those looking for other simple ways to make a difference, Sustainability Victoria's website (<http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/>) contains practical tips and advice for individuals and households to make their home more energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## Local Government

Many of Victoria's local governments have been leaders in climate change action in their local communities for years, working towards or even achieving carbon neutrality and helping prepare their municipalities for the impacts of climate change.

The Victorian Government is providing support and incentives to local governments to encourage further leadership and innovation.

## Victorian Climate Change Grants 2015

Victorian Government grants provide opportunities for local government to explore innovative projects, collaborations or programs. In 2015, councils across the state received funding for projects such as:

- Moreland Shire Council's *Working together to cool communities* project to investigate and minimise the Urban Heat Island Effect;
- East Gippsland Shire Council's *Renewable energy feasibility with innovative options* project to investigate innovative scenarios and technologies for renewable energy use; and
- Towong Shire Council's *Banking on our solar future – Innovation for resilient communities* project to deliver a demonstration solar bank to educate the community.

## Environmental Upgrade Agreements

Through an amendment to the *Local Government Act 1989* in September 2015, local governments can now offer Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs) to local businesses. These allow businesses to borrow money through an approved lender to pay for environmental upgrades to their building such as solar panels, double-glazing and energy efficient lighting.

Their local council will then collect the repayments through the rates system and pass them on to the lender.

This allows building owners and tenants to pay back the loan at a low rate, while benefiting from the lower costs of a more energy efficient building.

More information on EUAs is available at: <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/energy-efficiency/environmental-upgrade-agreements>

## New Energy Jobs Fund

The Victorian Government's \$20 million New Energy Jobs Fund will support Victorian-based projects that create long-term sustainable jobs, increase the uptake of renewable energy generation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and drive innovation in new energy technologies.

Funding to support new energy technology projects will be available through three annual grant rounds.

Successful applicants under the first round included:

- Maroondah City Council's solar project for low income households;
- Hepburn Shire Council's micro-waste to energy power station to power community buildings; and
- Wodonga City Council's community solar project.

Applications for the second round closed in March 2017, and the third grant round is expected to open late 2017.

More information on the New Energy Jobs Fund is available at: <http://www.business.vic.gov.au/support-for-your-business/future-industries/new-energy-technologies>

## More information

The *Climate Change Act 2017* is available on the Victorian Legislation website:

<http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>