

## Climate Change and Mount Alexander

Mount Alexander Shire Council acknowledges that human influence on the global climate system is responsible for global warming and the related impacts on people and ecosystems.

The Shire sits 120km north west of Melbourne, and north of the Great Dividing Range. As the climate changes the Shire is expected to experience higher temperatures, less rainfall with more intense rainfall when it does occur, and harsher fires. This will place greater pressure on Council to maintain its assets and services, including emergency management services.

Council supports efforts to radically reduce GHG emissions and address climate change vulnerability, and intends to become carbon neutral in 2025. Council also intends to integrate consideration of climate change into all operations and actively influence and advocate about climate change adaptation and mitigation more broadly.

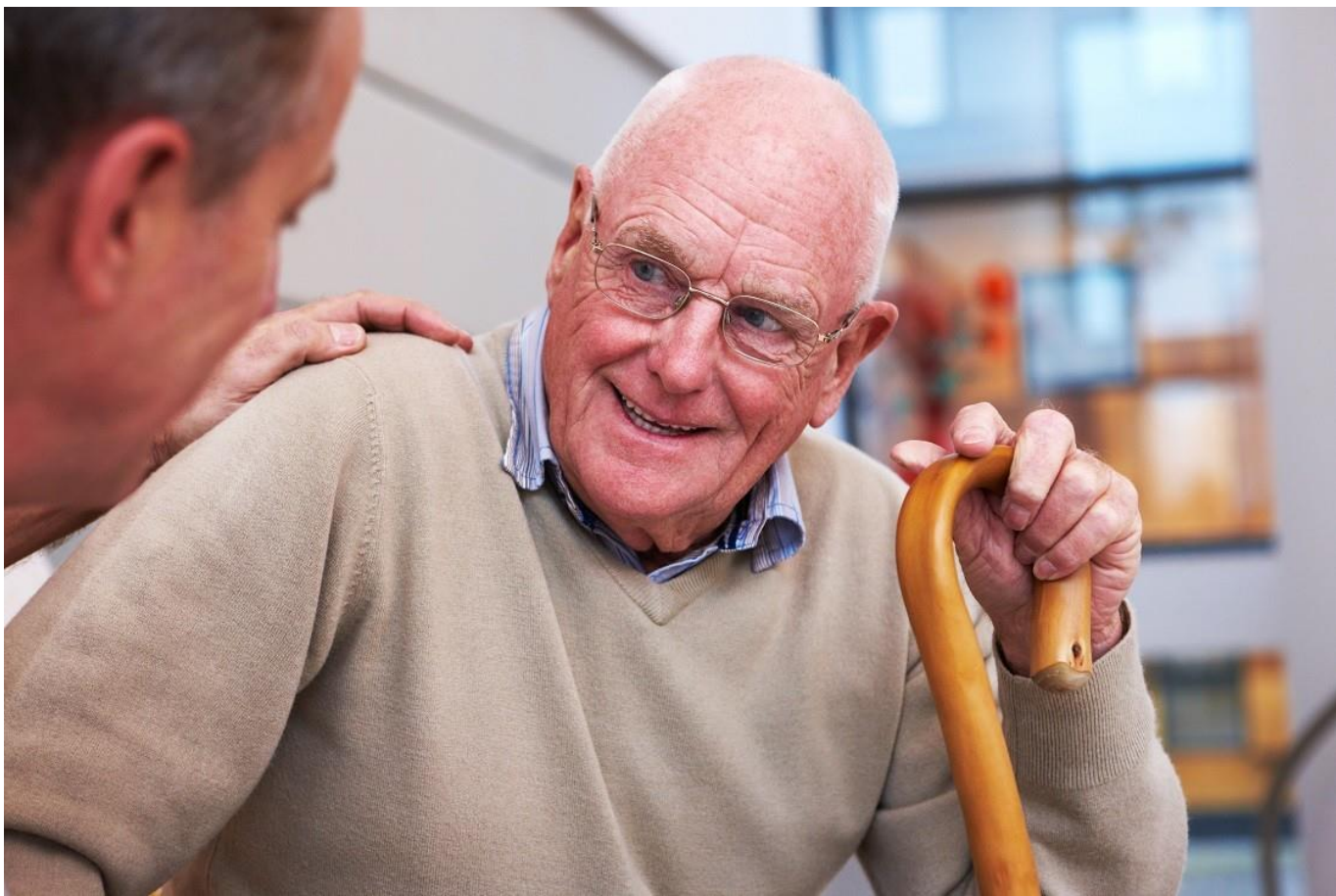


## Connecting Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction and Adaptation Planning

Reducing GHG emissions will not only assist Council to deliver on its carbon neutrality goal, but also realise its vision of *'Council has strong partnerships and relationships and leads with actions that strengthen the fabric and resilience of neighbourhoods and communities in the Shire, and is a hub of innovation in sustainable solutions'*.

Council's adaptation work has included the development and implementation of the Regional Climate Adaptation Plan in partnership with five neighbouring LGAs and the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA).

Council's adaptation work will increase the Shire's resilience to the impacts of climate change, particularly among the most vulnerable members of our community (including the elderly which represents a large proportion of the population in the Shire).



Greenhouse Gas Emissions Evaluation	
Council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions policy, strategy and/or action plan were reviewed along with other core governance documents and the council's website for works associated with mitigating GHG emissions (e.g. 'climate change', 'greenhouse gas emissions', 'carbon emissions' and 'mitigation'). If any of these words were identified a closer analysis of the context was undertaken to assess the context of how they were considered in the document(s).	
NONE	No formal GHG emissions policy, strategy or action plan found. No climate change target found in any of the core governance documents. Also, no climate change target or consideration to reduce greenhouse gas emissions found on the council's website.
BASIC	A commitment or consideration to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is generally mentioned (either in GHG emissions documents or other core governance documents or displayed on the council's website). Climate change target established to 2020 only.
INTERMEDIATE	Climate change target established to 2030 (or one other single date) but minimal information on existing GHG emissions. No target for carbon neutrality.
HIGH	Climate change target established out to 2050 but no target for carbon neutrality. Information on council's current/historical GHG emissions is provided.
ADVANCED	Climate change target and aim for carbon neutrality by or before 2050.



## Mount Alexander's Journey to Carbon Neutrality by 2025

Council has long recognised the importance of responding to climate change. In 1999, Council's climate change response began with membership of the International Cities for Climate Protection program milestone framework. This led Council to adopt its first Greenhouse Action Plan and to setting an emissions baseline of the year 2000.

Since that first plan Council has continued to respond to climate change through a range of plans and related measures. Most recently this has involved the development of the Regional Climate Adaptation Plan, and measures undertaken as part of the implementation of Council's Environment Strategy 2015-2025 and Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020. This includes the installation of more than 100kW of solar panels on Council buildings.

The key actions for Council to decarbonise are to reduce methane pollution from the Castlemaine Waste Facility, to install significant renewable energy capacity and to optimise and then gradually electrify the vehicle fleet as this technology becomes more accessible.

Council has also committed to substantial energy efficiency measures, implementing adaptation measures for the most vulnerable people and places, and to providing support and advocacy for community-based and regional climate change response projects.

Council is limited in terms of financial and human capital so will continue to seek external support through the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA). Working across the organisation and with other Councils and agencies, Council will continue to mainstream GHG emissions reductions.



## What's next for Mount Alexander?

An ambitious carbon neutrality goal demands rapid action to reduce GHG emissions. This includes:

- Investigating the feasibility of setting up a Power Purchase Agreement with a community owned or commercial renewable energy development.
- Investigating the feasibility of owning and operating a medium scale solar farm in the Shire.
- Continuing to install solar PV on Council buildings.
- Being a supporting partner of the Mount Alexander Sustainability Group's waste-to-energy project.
- Transitioning the Castlemaine Waste Facility to a transfer station and improving resource recovery.
- Offering Environmental Upgrade Agreements to commercial property owners.

