

04.May.23 FINAL

Community Feedback Summary

on the draft Climate Change Strategy
Mount Alexander Shire Council



Image (top): 'Always' by Rachel Derum



This report was developed on Aboriginal lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, whose sovereignty was never ceded.

We recognise that First Nations people have deep knowledge and experience of resilience and sustainability that is critical to heal country, people, and communities. Despite the ongoing impacts of colonisation, First Nations people are still generously sharing knowledge and working towards reconciliation and treaty. For this, we pay our respects and deep thanks to First Nations elders past and present, and extend this to all First Nations people. We endeavour to learn from and lift up First Nations expertise in our work.

We all live, work and play on Aboriginal land. 1% of our income is paid to Traditional Owners. We encourage everyone to Pay the Rent.

Let Me Be Frank is a member of 1% for the Planet. We donate 1% of our annual income to environmental organisations. We are proud to be part of a global network that is accelerating smart environmental giving.

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About this report

This report summarises community and stakeholder feedback on the draft Climate Change Strategy.

There was significant interest in the draft Strategy and Action Plan. The Strategy was downloaded 144 times and the action plan 38 times.

12 direct submissions were received:

- Wararack
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee
- Castlemaine Field Naturalist Club
- Environmental Science Associates
- Connecting Country
- Hub Foundation
- Bendigo Health
- Friends of Campbells Creek
- Renewable Newstead
- 3 community member submissions

One submission explored climate risk in great detail. This was beyond scope of the Strategy document, but has been considered in Council's climate risk assessment work.

19 people completed the short survey on Shape Mount Alexander.

Clearly many people who took interest in the Strategy – as demonstrated by the number of downloads – did not choose to provide feedback to Council.

Feedback from Council staff and the project's Community Reference Group were also considered.

The insights in this report have directed updates to the draft Strategy, in consultation with Council staff and Councillors.

This report will continue to have relevance once the Strategy is finalised. The report can be used to support future project planning, and as a reference point when the Strategy is updated.



Regional Zero Emissions Forum at Castlemaine Town Hall, March 2023

The key suggestions and requested changes received through the direction submission are summarised in this chapter.

Positive comments on the Strategy

- It really is a fantastic document
- We strongly support the Council's commitment to address climate change and applaud the initiative to formalise that commitment through a strategy
- Very supportive of, Pillar 2, which addresses the need to protect and enhance the natural environment
- I applaud the Council's strategy for the years ahead, and urge councillors and staff to implement the strategy and actions as a primary focus over the years ahead
- Goal 1 Action 1 defines one of the most critical challenges - for climate change implications to be considered across every department of the Council's structure and to drive every decision
- I consider that Council's Draft Climate Change Strategy is an important document which should encourage Council officers to consider the need to reduce GHG emissions and implement adaptive strategies in response to adapt to global heating
- Broadly, the strategy document is strong, and moving in the right direction

Suggested improvements for the Strategy

Pillar 1 - A healthy, connected and inclusive community

- Protecting the Botanical Gardens and Campbell's Creek from repeated extensive and expensive damage from future flooding should be a priority. Damage to the Gardens and further downstream would be ameliorated by restoring, with native species, the flat grassland west of Barkers Creek with properly designed overflow channels to allow absorption of flood waters as naturally as possible
- P4 Threats, 2nd dot point – I don't understand the reference to "reduced air quality", and I suggest "vector-borne" is inserted before "infective diseases"
- P5 – Opportunities, 2nd para – insert "community" after "climate sensitive"
- With scarcity of resources, risk that people become more disconnected as they compete - need to focus on recognising our interdependence
- Add threats: storms, drought, changing rain fall, water and soil quality, vector, water and food borne diseases
- Add threat: family violence also increases during climate change events

Pillar 2 - An environment for people and nature

- Because Council is not directly responsible for many of the waterways, catchment areas and forests in the shire, it is crucial that it works with the agencies and levels of government that do have this responsibility, to ensure that management practices are coordinated and deliver positive outcomes to the natural environment. A commitment to work with other agencies and levels of government should be made explicit in the Strategy.
- We are very supportive of the need to deploy DJAARA's cultural burning practices to heal and manage the environment. Too often we have seen hot burns that damage and sometimes destroy rare plants and ultimately lead to an increase in fuel load. This is an example of management practices not necessarily the immediate responsibility of Council, but where Council could work with other agencies for a better outcome
- Recommend Council uses its influence and exercises its own responsibilities to avoid clearing native forests
- Recommend that management of roadsides, which may include slashing, burning and dangerous tree mitigation, should be undertaken with best practice conservation management in mind, so that these fragile remnant natural environments and plant and wildlife corridors are protected. An emphasis on the control and removal of woody weeds such as gorse, blackberry, broom and pampas grass, along with the control of the grass Phalaris, would do much to reduce fire hazard while improving the conservation value of roadside corridors
- p5 – Pillar 2 Opportunities, 4th dot point – “restore water channels” is not a good choice of words, considering the effects of extensive gold dredging and channelising of the lower reaches of Forest and Barkers Creeks on stream morphology
- Additional opportunities - composting and removing organics from landfill
- Additional opportunity: add opportunity to embed First Nations Peoples' self determination in climate change adaptation and mitigation
- The Strategy refers to planting and restoring trees in the local environment under two dot points. We note that one tree species can have a vastly different impact on the environment as compared to another. We have found that exotic tree species such as Holm Oak, Desert Ash and Dutch Elm colonise our waterways and native habitat with airborne seeds spread from street trees. We recommend that the Strategy promotes the planting of native species, or non-invasive exotic species at the very least
- We also note that planting native species has an immensely positive impact on local habitat and biodiversity, which the Strategy seeks to promote. By intentionally planting solely native, and ideally indigenous or endemic plant species along Campbells Creek, the Friends have witnessed vast improvements in native biodiversity, including the return of the platypus to local waterways after a significant absence post-colonisation
- “Restore water channels” is a problematic goal, given the effects of extensive gold mining and channelising of the Forest and Barkers Creeks on natural stream structure
- Efforts to “expand green surfaces” to reduce flood risk will only be successful if they are matched with parallel efforts to curb the expansion of paved surfaces. The second part of this sentence could be reworded to read “...and deliver Water Sensitive Urban Design to reduce flood risk.”
- We recommend changing references to “habitat” to “native habitat”, for clarity on the sorts of species that Council hopes to support through climate adaptation

Pillar 3 - A resilient and growing local economy

- P6 Opportunities – should mention the importance of climate change adaption by local businesses and industry
- Additional opportunities - focus on supporting and growing local supply chains
- Add threat: add increasing electricity costs often inequitable with low social economic demographic disproportionately impacted through poor quality housing
- Add opportunity: add opportunity to improve financial safety for residents with equitable access to RE, etc
- We would like to see stated that the development of local industry should be sensitive to any potential impact on the health of local waterways and native habitat

Council's role in climate action

- "Prioritising best outcomes for our community, including future generations" should be top of the list and insurance issues at the bottom
- P7, 1st line – add "to" at end
- P7, line commencing "Through this strategy" – "maximise our impact" should be rephrased
- P8 Sideways – should be "eg via Central - - "?"
- Under "all levels of government need to work together to:" mention the need to drive a 'cultural change'
- Under state Govt, include State govt recommendation that climate change strategies be included in MHWB Plan?

Goal 1: Climate action is in everything we do

- Action area 1: is there another layer here that lists suggested policy changes? e.g. procurement, permits (planning and events, waste, transport, etc does each area have measurable targets?
- Action area 1: What would the climate Outcomes be? The most effective and cost-efficient way Council can act on climate change is to embed it into the way it works. Where is the analysis to show that this is the case? Which areas of councils operations lend themselves to the rapid implementation of measures that are efficient and cost effective?
- Action area 2: using communications to effectively engage community?
- Action area 2: What are the climate messages? Can you provide an example?
- Action area 3: While some climate actions lead to financial savings (eg. installing solar on Council buildings). If this is the case, then solar should be installed immediately on all council buildings. Has there been any analysis of the costs savings achieved to date (expressed in NPV terms) from solar installation on council buildings. Funding the necessary scale of climate action requires innovative thinking, a long-term view, and making hard decisions. Please provide a tangible example of what this would look like. On what basis (criteria) would a hard decision be made (e.g. benefits outweigh costs, cost savings alone, social, environmental, economic benefits?). What funding sources will be accessed? Has an overall cost estimate been made on what needs to be done in the short, medium and long term? Which actions will have the biggest impact on emissions? Again, it is not clear if MASC operations are being references or the wider community.
- This goal is vague and fuzzy – what does it actually mean?

Goal 2: We transition in a just and equitable way to a zero emissions shire

- Action area 1, 4th line – “replacing gas”?
- Action area 1: Participation in the cross-council Victorian Energy Collaboration project is a positive step. What are the findings from participation to date in terms of cost savings, emission reduction? When does this contract end? Is there any potential for council to purchase from the Newstead Solar Farm at some future time? The commitment to zero-net operational emissions by 2025 would appear infeasible. How is council currently tracking towards this target? In terms of climate change, the efficiency of operations is less important than powering those operations with renewable energy.
- Action area 3, 1st dot point – healthy activities include walking and cycling?
- Goal 2 Action area 3 discusses Council's role in supporting positive outcomes on private land but notes this is regulated by State and Federal legislation but that 'Council can still play a role in regulating planning controls....'. Stronger wording would support this action e.g. 'Council will play a role in regulating planning controls..... There are also many Councils that offer incentives for private landholders through grants and rate rebates. Whilst this might not be financially possible for MASC, there is still plenty of scope to provide educational materials and website information to support improved outcomes. Through Connecting Country, we offer some grants and landholder advice but we are completely reliant on grant and charitable donations to deliver our programs. Any support from Council to assist us would be very welcome
- Action area 1: does focusing on council assets deliver the best outcomes overall? ie, is it best use of limited resources?
- Action area 1: and how communities capacity to adapt is restricted by choices made to prioritise council spending?
- Action area 1: include constant monitoring of emissions reduction esp through behaviour change
- Mount Alexander is home to a strong, knowledgeable network of community groups and orgs that care for Country. We would like more detail in how Council will interact and support these groups and organisations. We suggest the inclusion of a stakeholder map
- How is zero emissions interpreted? What is the timeframe for achievement? Is it about the organisation and/or the community as a whole? To what extent have the costs/benefits/risks associated with this goal been considered. What is the baseline (current level of emissions, sources, trajectory)?

Goal 3: Our natural environment and green spaces are healthy, resilient and increasing

- P11 Action area 1, 1stline – “water resources and water quality”?
- The strategies and actions contained, particularly in Goal area 3, are weak and do not show a strong commitment to protecting or building resilience in our natural environment for what is to come
- There is no mention of MASC's Environment Strategy 2015-25 – there is an obvious link between the two strategies. Showing commitment to delivering actions in the Environment Strategy will help the community and the natural environment to be better prepared for climate change
- Action Area 1: We strongly support the delivery of Water Sensitive Urban Design throughout the Shire. The reference to ‘partnering’ seems vague here and some clarity on what form these partnerships take would be useful. For example, whether the partnerships are collaborative or rather delegate certain responsibilities to other parties
- Action area 1: WSUD is ultimately primarily in the hands of developers. How confident is MASC that the current level of compliance and implementation aligns with best practice? To what extent is MASC prepared to require best practice WSUD when issuing planning permits? Council has a key role in protecting and managing our precious water resources. Our shire faces both flood and drought risks. Newstead township levee bank experience suggests that council has some way to go
- Action Area 2 discusses the natural environment but is human centric and does not consider the intrinsic value of protecting the natural environment to save species from extinction
- Action area 2: acknowledging healthy SOIL is critical to life
- Action area 2: Which aspects of this does council deliver on and which aspects do they partner on? Providing some clear and tangible examples would be helpful. What is meant by ecosystem resilience – please use terminology that the target audience for this strategy understands. What are the specific actions related to increasing canopy cover – where will they happen, when and who will pay for them?
- Action area 3: this can include supporting initiatives that are increasing soil in backyards and public places
- Action area 3: Much of the environmental assets on private land are regulated by State and Federal legislation. However, Council can still play a role through regulating planning controls across our Shire. We would argue that Council, through regulation of planning controls, has in many instances the primary role in protection of native habitat and biodiversity assets. These powers should be used to avoid, minimise and offset development impacts (noting that the offsetting is a last resort and is increasingly being shown to be a failed policy tool). The recent failure with the Harcourt Structure Plan (Planning News, February 2023) highlights that council has some way to go in ensuring that biodiversity and native vegetation protection is adequately considered in local strategic planning. There are a number of additional powers (e.g. rate rebate program etc) which can support this action area. The on-going loss of habitat and native vegetation on private land is not being dealt with adequately in council planning decisions
- Action area 2: if this is including First Nations Peoples you may need to put capital on Country
- Action area 2: “... And support our precious ecosystem”. The Shire is home to a multitude of different ecosystems with varying needs. We recommend changing the last word of this paragraph to “ecosystems”
- We would like to see reference to Council’s Environment Strategy under Goal Three, to ensure a coherent approach to environmental matters
- Again this goal is ill-defined and confusing. What constitutes healthy? What is the current health of the environment? Does it refer to the entire shire of just the land MASC is responsible for? How is resilience interpreted? Increasing ... without saying what is increasing (e.g. tree cover, open space, species), this term is utterly meaningless

Goal 4: Our infrastructure is robust in the face of current and future climate change impacts

- A critically important action for Council is to join with other Victorian Local Governments to urge the State Government - which on paper has commendable Climate Change goals - to change planning laws to make it possible for local governments to ensure that new housing (and industrial and commercial) developments are resilient and sustainable, for example:
 - Minimise clearing of large trees from land and incorporate them into the development
 - Design road layouts and housing blocks so well established passive solar features can be built into houses, contributing to net-zero goals
 - Avoid the shadowing of household solar PV (that all new houses should have) by adjacent structures
 - Forbid black roofs - it has been proved that groups of houses with light roofs are significantly cooler
 - Minimise the extent of hard road and driveway surfaces and include swales etc for better water management
- Action area 2: good to acknowledge limitations, but could be rephrased to focus on what you CAN do?
- Action area 2: The strongest planning outcomes are set by the Victorian Planning System. These are managed by the State and Federal governments ... We will use planning controls to reduce exposure to the climate risks our shire faces for community and private buildings, and open spaces. This is confusing. MASC still has a primary decision-making role through the implementation of the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and Mount Alexander Planning Scheme which Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP). ... We will use planning controls to reduce exposure to the climate risks our shire faces for community and private buildings, and open spaces. How will you do this? A brief description of the powers that council has, and some examples would be valuable. Are you prepared to have climate appropriate design features 'trump' heritage requirements?

- Has an assessment been done of the impact of future climate impacts on infrastructure? For example, melting road asphalt.
- Action area 3: leading from a place of deficit place maybe not helpful- what CAN you do - this reads as defensive
- Action area 3: include advocacy regarding improving energy efficiency of social housing, equitable access to affordable RE including for tenants
- In the interests of a cohesive approach to flood mitigation, we would like to see reference to Water Sensitive Urban Design in this section concerning infrastructure. Historically, issues with the management of waterways and flood risk have occurred due to a lack of collaboration between infrastructure and environmental planning and this intersection is crucial if we are to respond to climate risks in a cohesive manner.
- What are the current climate change impacts? What are the predicted future impacts? What infrastructure is particularly at risk? Fair enough that the detail is not in the strategy but does it exist somewhere else in the shire's background work and analysis?

Goal 5: Our community is connected and has the capacity to adapt to climate change

- Council may like to link this Strategy with work or actions around the Gender and Equity Action Plan?
- Action area 1: The narrative under this action area is vague and non-specific. Including some priority initiatives (such as those noted in progress to date) would be useful

Goal 6: Our shire is zero waste and has a resilient, circular economy

- P14 - “zero waste” is an impossibility – “towards zero waste” might be a more sensible term
- Recommends that Council should minimise waste to landfill through the better recycling facilities
- Action area 2: build on food waste systems
- Where are we starting from? How connected is the community at present? What is the current capacity? Which communities will most need help to adapt?
- Is this really a SMART goal? If it is then there will be no need for waste collection services, landfill or recycling facilities. Again, are we just talking about the Shire’s activities and/or the community as a whole?

Principles for delivery

- P15 Principle 2: 2nd line needs to be rephrased
- Principle 3: what about principle of inclusion? Or principle supporting The goal of transitioning in a just and equitable way

Evaluation and reporting

- Consider strengthening evaluation approach by adding text such as: Council is committed to monitoring and evaluating the progress of this strategy by measuring our efforts against the impact we want to have and the outcomes we want to see
- Regarding narrative evaluation: I don't understand the language: are you evaluating or telling the story of evaluation? Is this new is it about qualitative data?
- Regarding goal 6: This may need a little more detail? i.e. include what other area of Council? This is a big one for some and this cursory mention may be disappointing
- [State government offers indicators](#) p 31 and p65-68

Document language and design

- I found it difficult to comprehend. I thought it lacked clarity and wasn't erudite in its language
- If there are images used in the Strategy design, be mindful of avoiding the accidental portrayal of gender stereotypes is important e.g. having only men depicted as emergency services workers and women depicted as the carers of children and homes etc
- I was disappointed in the clumsy negative language where a statement would say: this comes under federal and state control and therefore can't affect; where other councils actually offered to lobby federal and state bodies. A much more proactive approach
- I think MASC needs to go back to the drawing board. The document was Castlemaine focused and did not deliver a comprehensive strategy
- I looked at several other strategies from about five other councils. Each document was clear on its goals and tasks; and laid out clear timelines covering all aspects of climate issues. The MASC document seemed to align to council pillars that appeared to come from the council plan
- The potential disruptions of a changing climate seem to be downplayed, and so adaptive measures are similarly downplayed
- The Strategy could more explicitly acknowledge the gendered impact of climate change and disasters. E.g. that the majority of caring is done by women and that women are most impacted by climate disasters and events in terms of shouldering the role of caring for children and elderly family members, as well as extended family and neighbours

- What is a strategy? ... a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim
- In reading this draft strategy we were looking for a succinct description of the long-term or overall aim the plan of action that would contribute to the aim. We were also looking for some specific examples of actions that can be implemented to both mitigate and adapt to climate change as well as commentary on likely costs and budgetary diversions that could occur. It MASC truly thinks this matter is an emergency then a far more robust and well-developed strategy is needed
- Goals without timeframes are not goals ... they are untested aspirations

Delivery mechanisms

- Given the intersection between pillars, a coordinated approach to policy and actions across all areas of Council's work is essential. This will require changes in current policy and practice
- Clarify the governance of the Strategy. Council and community. Is the reference group a continuing governance structure
- Bringing 2 community people into the Leadership Group as critical friends to ensure alignment of effort (wondering about someone from CVGA and Wararack)

Suggested improvements for the first-year Action plan

- Strengthen the language across the plan from people explore and consider (etc) climate change to incorporate and ensure. Ie demonstrate a solid commitment not if they feel like it

Goal 1: Climate action is in everything we do

- 1.1.5: Does Council have a climate change risk assessment and mitigation strategy document?
- 1.2.1: It would be good to develop a climate change comms strategy for the diverse audience and perspectives of our community - eg focusing on costs of electricity, emergency management rather than using language around climate change all the time. I am assuming this will integrate with Sarah Gilmour's communication and community engagement strategies?
- Developing capabilities across Council to understand generative and regenerative practices and decision making

Goal 2: We transition in a just and equitable way to a zero emissions shire

- What is being done to improve a just and equitable transition? ie climate change amplifies disadvantage and what is being done to ensure those experiencing systemic disadvantage have the same opportunities?
- Wondering what else can be included regarding just transition for its residents eg support VCOSS advocacy re equity to affordable RE. Tenants access to affordable RE. Energy efficient social housing etc etc
- Recommend that Council should provide incentives and assistance for households and businesses to use more renewable energy sources and improvements to home insulation

Goal 3: Our natural environment and green spaces are healthy, resilient and increasing

- Under the actions in both the Strategy and the Year 1 Action Plan there is no mention of direct project commitments, either financial or on ground works to protective biodiversity. It specifies partnerships and funding applications but no clear commitment to delivery or targets. It would be good to see some clear projects outlined, particularly in the short term
- Does increasing canopy cover in the Shire involve using indigenous trees? We would value a commitment to using a certain percentage of indigenous plants for projects as many other Councils do
- We see there could be value for Council in establishing a biodiversity conservation reference group or environmental advisory group, made up of representatives from local community groups and organisations, which could support Council on development and implementation of Councils environment strategies (including the climate change strategy)
- Green spaces should also be accessible eg for community members who identify with a disability
- Action area 1: Also linking in with integrated planning-equitable neighbourhood access to these spaces

Goal 4: Our infrastructure is robust in the face of current and future climate change impacts

- Action area 2: integrated planning enhancing equitable access within neighbourhoods to services, green spaces, connection, active living, etc

Goal 5: Our community is connected and has the capacity to adapt to climate change

- Local Government can do to support the types of conversations that could lead to change
- Action area 1: what about MASDAG and their emergency management mentor program Mount Alexander Connectors (MAC) that Council facilitates?
- Action area 2: The orgs working in this space encourage language around experiencing systemic disadvantage. Could read members of the community experiencing systemic disadvantage and most at risk of experiencing climate change impacts (eg farmers etc)

Goal 6: Our shire is zero waste and has a resilient, circular economy

- Be clear that Goal 6 is covered by the MASC economic strategy to avoid confusion

Survey feedback

The responses received through the Shape Mount Alexander Survey is summarised in this chapter.

Q1. Where do you live?

Campbells Creek	2
Castlemaine	6
Elphinstone	1
Harcourt	2
Maldon	1
McKenzie Hill	1
Metcalfe	1
Newstead	2
Taradale	1
Other	2

Q2. How old are you?

Under 18 years	0
18 - 29	0
30 - 44	6
45 - 59	4
Over 60 years	9

Q3. Have you been, or are you involved in a climate action group in Mount Alexander?

Mount Alexander Sustainability Group	1
Wararack Initiatives	2
West End Resilience Group	1
Landcare	2
Connecting Country	2
Renewable Newstead	1
No I have not or am not	9
Other	1

Q4. What do you like about the draft Climate Change Strategy?

- The principles
- I think it does a decent job at covering the major issues and setting some clear directions.
- It attempts to break a complex issue like climate change into smaller chunks to help with understanding and planning action.
- "It offers reference points and guides for staff to check against when recommending decisions to Council meetings and Councillors. It provides the community with the same for cross-checking when community is taking action. Love the idea of a Climate Change Leadership Group in Council"
- It's clear and logical.
- It puts some aspirations on paper
- Includes protections of agricultural land to grow local food
- "Simple, clear and easy to understand language
Clear, distinct and comprehensive goals and action areas
Combination of actions focused on council assets and actions oriented to community support and change"
- "It's a waste of money. By the way, where's the emergency? the planet's never been greener nor humankind better off.
Nothing you do will make a difference to the world's climate, so stop pretending you can.
Climate change strategies are based on a lie, there a a waste of money, and that's why the funding needs to be redirected."
- I like the commitments to holistic action on climate change and to working with community on these tasks.
- The goals are clear - especially like to be heading towards zero waste.
- It is great to see that MASC will be reviewing its water usage across assets and try to incorporate tank water and water recycling.
- Improvements to walkable and rideable paths and trails - more emphasis required through the Strategy. More emphasis on connected trails and continuous improvement to the active transport infrastructure.
- I like that it is so com prehensile and inclusive and is trying to get the direction of actions.
- "The goals, actions and principles are well written and comprehensible.
- Some goals determined for Council are good, such as
 - zero net emissions
 - planning for lower emission housing and environmentally sustainable landscapes
 - role of connecting community
 - improved health of the native environment and community members"

Some respondents chose to state what they don't like about the Strategy:

- I don't like anything about it - it is full of PC speak and good intentions but says nothing clear cut about how it plans to reach any of the goals outlined
- 20 pages of bureaucratic mumbo jumbo - the actions are so vague How many times does the word ""recycle"" appear - not once - recycling only twice What about mentioning other successful local government lead initiatives like glass recycling as in Macedon Ranges - What about solar - mentioned twice!!! Or Electric vehicles - again just twice -"

- "Here goes, and I know this will probably be canceled & not be out there for discussion, as in this so called inclusive age (please tell me what that actually means) we cannot have discourse or opposing ideas anymore! And science apparently is now settled, how wonderful. So what to do with all the scientists who now have nothing to research?

Anyway, back to the Answer Nothing. Show me the science behind climate change, not the alarmism!

2 words hijacked for an agenda Climate & Change (climate by its very essence changes) & why the name change? Because the previous labels weren't cutting it. Read your HISTORY! Every 12 years they state we have 12 years left. Obviously short memories or cannot do math. Been doing this since the early 70's, well that's now 53 years ago & still no islands have disappeared in the Pacific & the planet is actually cooling, so much for experts.

We went from the Greenhouse effect (name changed as planet is not getting hotter). Global warming (Likewise Planet still not getting hotter). So here we are at Climate change, so we can point at anything and claim its having an effect.

Stop the propaganda and actually show me the science. Not what crap comes out of a lying politician or bureaucrats mouth.

John Kerry complains about my carbon footprint, yet lives in 6 mansions, has 12 cars, 2 yachts & a jet plane. I dare say he produces more in a year than I have in my lifetime, and we listen to this hypocrite? PS I'll let you in on a little secret, he has no solar panels on any of his mansions, nor does Obama, Clinton or Gates. What do you think that all means?

All part of the woke agenda, a distraction & another division, oh yeah, and a lot of people making an awful lot of money out of the Green Scam including all those named above."

Q5. Keeping in mind Council's role, what could be improved in the draft Climate Change Strategy?

- Consider adding more to address energy security, including energy infrastructure options such as microgrids. These would support communities and households with power during high-impact and extreme weather events such as storms, floods and fires - and perhaps even future pandemics. Energy security is also an equity issue so this ties in very nicely with several themes in the strategy.
- I think being more ambitious with native vegetation plantings and protections is a must. Obviously funding is scarce, but native vegetation restoration has to ramp up to buffer native plants and animals and provide cooling effects for all.
- A clearer explanation of where Council fits in with the responsibilities of the Federal and State Governments
- More concrete targets. A bolder agenda/ less conservative strategy
- "A clear statement about where Council is now on the emissions it produces, how much it wants to reduce emissions by and when, how it will do this, how it will measure this change, and the money and staffing it will provide to make this happen. Include this at the start of the strategy and update in the Council's proposed annual Climate Action Plans Identify exactly what Council will do to exploit the opportunities under the three pillars."
- I would like some specific commitments. And a specific set aside of budget @ 3% of the total Council budget each year to be earmarked for the climate response
- There is very little acknowledgment of the ravages to the ecology of our area that has taken place and continues to take place in terms of new developments, of the need to approach land with a view to the necessary regeneration.
- Clear accountability for embedding climate in all that council does is very important. It's great to see this concept mentioned, but it will be critical to ensure that it is enforced so that all parts of council are aligned and singing from the same songsheet in relation to this strategy, the Active Transport Strategy and other aligned strategies
- Scrap it. Redirect funding toward real emergencies like improving our roads. Some, like the Kyneton- Metcalfe-Elphinstone roads, are a disgrace. You might even want to consider improving the lives of the those being pushed deeper into poverty because of climate strategies; you know, those no longer able to pay for basics like electricity and gas. Perhaps even use some to assist those living rough in the Castlemaine botanical gardens.
- Provide more details on a sustainable food system and embed in policy, including the food supply impacts. This work will support the local economy and decrease risks of food security. The zero/ minimise waste will be supported by more local gardens through worm farms and sustainable garden practices.
- Support more local growing of food to increase availability of fresh and nutritious foods, decrease transport miles. More community gardens, produce swaps, skills in growing and harvesting food and encouraging local businesses which produce food.
- Put it in the bin where it belongs, waste of resources and carbon emissions!
- More detailed action statements - there is NO need to do indepth lengthy reports - just get on and copy what has worked elsewhere

- I think the strategy focuses too much on RESILIENCE, ensuring everybody is resilient to the effects of climate change, and not enough focus on educating the community how to reduce their own contributions to climate change. I think Council could play a much greater role in informing community members how they can personally reduce their carbon footprint, and encourage them to change their bad habits, e.g. driving kids to school, reducing electricity consumption at home, reducing food waste, reducing purchases and packaging. Maybe Council could create a new category of community grants specifically for funding programs that educate and facilitate changes to reduce personal impacts on climate change. Studies have already shown that people feel less stressed about climate change when they start to make personal changes, but most people don't know how.
- I feel a visual updating mechanism somewhere in Castlemaine so the whole community can see how we are doing in actions towards climate Change. Like actual measured actions completed and where we are at for our targets. Maybe it gets updated bi monthly. There could be a creative artist element to it. Produced so it is visible and easy for us to see when in town. Then it encourages even more action. Perhaps our local newspaper could be encouraged to have a regular update...or the council takes a full page in it for this purpose and for stimulating more action because we can all see the progress being made.
- Look at increasing opportunities for use / installation of renewable energy. For example installing a solar array on top of the old landfill site once it has been capped.
- With a focus on Goal 3 Our natural environment and green spaces are healthy, resilient and increasing, the 3 action areas under this goal do not specify any direct on ground action projects or financial support for ensuring the protection of biodiversity across the region. Under the implementation of the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens Climate Change Study and Tree Succession Plan, there is no mention of a focus on planting native or indigenous species which are key to the restoration of local flora and fauna. Under Action area 3 in this section there is no commitment to working with private landholders on conservation projects or by providing landholders who put a lot of money into conservation on their property with a percentage discount on their rates. MASC own Environment Strategy 2015 - 2025 is not mentioned in this section. The region really needs to see firm financial commitment to protecting and enhancing biodiversity across our region. We are facing a species extinction crisis due to climate change across the globe and protecting and restoring the natural environment is key to providing habitat for local flora and fauna. The Mount Alexander region has many active and knowledgeable groups working to protect the local environment, as a shire we already have the skill set and volunteers to help protect local biodiversity. What the local environment groups need from MASC is financial backing to support the groups work. MASC proposed in the first year Action plan that they will continue to work with groups such as Connecting Country and Landcare groups. The council needs to identify specific project that they can financially support that are run by these groups to help build the capacity of these groups.
- You could at least say whether/ how and when you might do something to prevent more flooding of houses in Castlemaine (otherwise claims that you are going to achieve robust infrastructure ring extremely hollow)

Q6. What is one climate change action you think Council MUST do in the next 12 months?

- This decision should be based on strong evidence. Where could the biggest outcome be achieved, within council's resources over the coming year? eg where things like waste, emissions, health outcomes could most be improved - and make that your priority. A strong outcome here will help bring the community along in the journey, inspire them to get involved, and demonstrate that council is serious about taking action to achieve meaningful, measurable results
- Get off gas entirely and transition fleet and equipment off petrol
- Consider a Local Law requiring developers to plan and implement climate change actions into any new development, e.g., green belts of existing growth
- Reward staff for cycling/walking/non-fossil fuel ways of getting to work. Contract electric bin-collecting trucks only
- Go paperless. It is absolutely shocking how much paper is used within the organisation
- I would like a commitment to connect all the major towns in Mt Alex to Castlemaine via bike paths, be they on road or off road. For example, I live in Harcourt and cannot ride a bike to Castlemaine station... the road needs to be made safe for cyclists. Vline is now cheap enough to use, but getting there on an ebike is risky. Make it safe... from Maldon, Newstead, Guildford, Harcourt
- Plan for disaster. Make things stronger, think long term, plan for the worst. Think about insurance costs. Think about the need for shade, soil health, air quality and the need for us all to adapt to a different standard of living
- Council must be mindful not to commit to practices that will lock it in to financially unsustainable and unfeasible actions that will impact on future projects. Must govern for the silent majority not the vocal minority
- Get rid off their own hot air!
- Taking near-term action to support members of the community most exposed to climate risks such as extreme weather. For example, the newly bolstered Flood Recovery Program should focus not only on responding to impacted residents' needs, but also preparing particularly residents and their homes and properties for future extreme events. This includes examining council-owned / managed infrastructure and its impacts on households in extreme weather
- Review housing, building and planning policies and regulations to maximise the enhancement of sustainable retrofits to below 7 star-housing in our shire — and, as needs be, advocate to state and federal and neighbouring governments to change regulations to facilitate the same.
- Flood prevention work plus planting more trees
- Ensure that all electricity used in all Council owned buildings and vehicles comes from renewable electricity production and convert all operations and vehicles to battery powered
- Knowledge sharing between community groups and organisations and council is key. A biodiversity protection reference group should be established by 2024. This group will be made up of representatives who volunteer or work for the local community groups and organisations that work to protect local biodiversity. The skills and expertise of this reference group can be drawn on in the development of and review process of MASC's environmental plans such as the Environment Strategy 2015 - 2025, the Roadside Conservation Management Plan 2012 -2017 and the Climate Change Strategy
- Monthly glass recycling collection - glass (and aluminium) is 100% reuseable - Macedon does it - and it works!!! Just copy and paste!

Process of integrating the community feedback

Community feedback was essential to shaping the final Strategy and first-year Action Plan.

Each piece of feedback was entered into a spreadsheet, considered for inclusion by the project consultants, and then marked as integrated or not. Where a piece of feedback was not integrated, a note was logged to explain why the feedback was not integrated.

Positively, much of the feedback provided is already being addressed by Council via the [Roadmap to Carbon Neutrality](#) (also see [progress update on the Roadmap](#)).

The Strategy

There were 99 separate pieces of feedback on the Strategy. 58 of them were integrated into the Strategy.

The primary reasons feedback was not integrated into the Strategy were:

- It was too specific and not suitable for inclusion in a high-level strategy document
- It could be better addressed in another Council document (e.g. The Active Transport Strategy or the Environment Strategy, Sustainable Subdivision project, climate risk assessment project)
- It was not appropriate for Council to address, given Council's legislated role, and what is already being delivered by other levels of government
- The value proposition wasn't strong enough or it was out of scope for Council given the resources required
- There were opposing suggestions from the community. In this case, best practice approaches were considered

The first-year Action Plan

There were 40 separate pieces of feedback on the Action Plan. Twelve of them were integrated into the Action Plan.

The primary reasons feedback was not integrated into the Action Plan were:

- The action is already being delivered other levels of government
- The action is already being delivered by Council through an existing action plan, or will be addressed through an action plan that is currently in development
- The action is a great idea but can't be done in the first-year action plan. Instead, it will be considered for future years
- The effort to impact ratio did not favour the action

Where to from here

Once the community feedback was integrated into the Strategy and first-year Action Plan, the documents were provided to Council for final amendments and sign-off. Following, the Strategy will be tabled and presented at a Meeting of Council for adoption. The first-year Action Plan will be provided to Councillors for information.

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