



SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL

Climate Emergency Corporate Response Plan 2021-2031



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Acknowledgement of Country

Surf Coast Shire Council Acknowledges the Wadawurrung People and Eastern Maar People as the Traditional Owners of the lands our Shire spans. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise and respect their beliefs, customs and values, which continue to sustain their intrinsic connection with Country that has endured for more than 60,000 years.

We value the contribution their Caring for Country makes to the lands, ocean, waterways, plants, wildlife and people of Surf Coast Shire, and Acknowledge we have much to learn from the Traditional Owners, especially in changing how we think, work and act in relation to climate change.

We therefore commit to walking alongside the Traditional Owners, allowing them to guide us so that together we can have a more positive impact on our environment and communities in the Surf Coast Shire.

We embrace the spirit of Reconciliation, working towards self-determination, equity of outcomes and an equal voice for Australia's First Nations People.

Eastern Maar

The contemporary Eastern Maar Nation traces an unbroken line of descent back to our Ancestors over many thousands of years.

We have survived as our Country's First People and, despite the well-documented colonial history, continue to maintain economic, traditional, cultural, familial and spiritual ties to our homeland.

Through the leadership and authority of our Elders, we are practicing our laws and customs, strengthening our system of governance and nurturing our connection to Country.

We continue to pass on our traditional knowledge from generation to generation, inducting our young people into Maar society as a cultural practice initiated by our Ancestors. It is a process that keeps customs and stories alive and ensures we are able to maintain Maar culture, language and society.

Drawing strength from our identity and past, we are able to live our culture as a set of attitudes, customs and beliefs, helping us to be resilient and adaptable in changing circumstances.

*Meerreengeeye Ngakepoorryeyyt
Eastern Maar Country Plan 2015
Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation*

Wadawurrung

As Wadawurrung Traditional Owners we live by Bundjil's lore to care for Country and all things living as our Ancestors have always done. Our Dja (Country) is more than a place. Our coastal cliffs, wetlands, grassy and volcanic plains, and people were all formed by Bundjil and our Ancestor spirits who continue to live in the land, water and sky. Karet Bareet (Black Hill near Gordon) is where Bundjil created Wadawurrung people. Lal Lal Falls near Ballarat is where Bundjil created the waterways and where he returned to before heading to his resting place in the stars, continuing to watch over us.

Our Dja is interwoven with relationships no matter whether the shape of that relation is human, granite hills, Waa (Crow) or Larrap (Manna gum). Country is filled with relations speaking language, sharing stories and following lore. These spirits link us back through time in a continuing connection with our past, our cultural practices and our stories. These spirits connect us to our Country and each other, which gives us ongoing respect for our obligation to care for our Country.

Paleert Tjaara Dja – Let's Make Country Good Together

Wadawurrung Healthy Country Plan 2020-2030

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation





Mayor's message

When Surf Coast Shire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, it responded to a community call for urgent and extensive action on climate change.

Climate change is a threat to our health, wellbeing and environment, and poses economic risks to our local businesses and industry.

The increasing frequency and intensity of heat events, and more days with higher bushfire risk, are particular concerns for our area.

Immediate action is needed to reduce the emission of harmful greenhouse gases and adapt to a changing climate.

Council must play its part to help our community and environment to thrive in a safe climate for generations to come. The Climate Emergency Corporate Response Plan 2021-2031 sets out important goals for us to achieve.

Central to the plan is our value for the process of listening to and learning from our local Traditional Owners, the Wadawurrung People and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud People of the Eastern Maar, as we respond together to climate change.

Local government can raise the benchmark and demonstrate what is possible when it comes to climate action.

We've been working hard to foster relationships with our community and government partners who share a willingness to create solutions in transitioning the globe to a sustainable future.

Local government has the opportunity to be innovative and collaborative, and to undertake direct action at the grassroots level.

I feel incredibly privileged and excited to be part of the change at a local level that we all want and need to see.

This plan is our commitment to both the immediate and longer term actions we need to take as an organisation to protect the people and places we love here in the Surf Coast Shire and beyond.

Cr Libby Stapleton

Mayor

"This plan is a practical contribution as well as a gesture of support for a community that's determined to address the climate crisis."

Cr Mike Bodsworth

"We all must act to the best of our ability to address climate change. Local government's contributions and leadership must go hand in hand with our community's to take action to protect future generations."

Cr Rose Hodge

"We need to lead the way to address climate change. It can start with grassroots and community groups influencing all levels of government. Future-proofing the planet includes achieving climate justice and Reconciliation with Australia's First Nations Peoples."

Cr Kate Gazzard

"As the government closest to the community we have a responsibility to engage and act on climate change. This action can bring our community together."

Cr Liz Pattison



CEO's message

Responding to the climate emergency requires a whole of organisation approach and commitment by all staff.

What we do affects our community locally and our planet globally, and this plan outlines the actions our organisation has committed to in playing its part responding to climate change.

Progressive action is already being taken across all areas of Council, including transforming how we run our facilities, deliver services to our community, and plan for the future.

One of the most impactful examples of action in this plan, is that from 1 July 2021, all of Council's facilities and streetlights will be powered by 100 per cent renewable electricity.

The really important and exciting thing, is that we're not doing this alone.

Being one of 46 Victorian councils participating in the Victorian Energy Collaboration, we are part of the largest emissions reduction project ever undertaken by the local government sector in Australia.

More locally, I'm pleased that we led the way in transitioning our shire to a four bin kerbside service in February 2021, including introducing food organics and garden organics collection. Already, we've seen a 33 per cent decrease in waste sent to landfill, which in turn will reduce emissions from the landfill.

I'm proud that we are continuing to identify ways to reduce and offset our greenhouse gas emissions so our organisation will be certified carbon neutral by 2022.

And while these are all important steps, I know there's still so much urgent work ahead of us, to put in place all the actions needed for climate mitigation, adaptation and mobilisation.

This plan is a living document that will be reviewed regularly so we don't lose focus of the challenges and new opportunities arising.

A new action plan will be developed every two years, to enable us to respond to emerging climate projections, innovations and opportunities for our community and environment.

We recognise the importance of existing and new partnerships with our community, other councils and agencies. These will magnify the impact of our shared actions and achievements and help create the change we need to address climate change which is the single biggest and most urgent challenge we will face in our lifetime.

This document paves the way for present and future actions that can be clearly seen and experienced in our community – actions that can lead the way towards real and tangible change.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Howard".

Anne Howard
Acting Chief Executive Officer

"We are the sum of our parts. As local government we must play our part in addressing climate change, and this plan is our commitment to do so."

Cr Gary Allen

"Addressing climate change is the great moral challenge of our generation. I welcome the learning from world's best practice to consider how it could be applied locally."

Cr Adrian Schonfelder

"Through responsible and innovative management of our services, land and waterways and by supporting others to manage local environments effectively, the Shire can contribute to addressing the global threat of climate change."

Cr Heather Wellington

Executive Summary

Surf Coast Shire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, responding to significant petitioning from our community.

Council made its declaration in August 2019, and acknowledged the need for more urgent and extensive action to reduce emissions and respond to local climate change impacts.

This document is Council's response to the climate emergency. It:

- outlines Council's progress so far on responding to the climate emergency
- explains the challenges we face locally that make our climate emergency response so important
- highlights some of the climate actions we have undertaken over the past 10 years
- demonstrates accountability for ways we will collaborate and work together in partnership with our local Registered Aboriginal Parties to protect Country and Culture from the impacts of climate change
- articulates our vision for our **community and environment to thrive in a safe climate**

- defines our key focus areas for climate action, being **mitigation, adaptation** and **mobilisation**
- determines that **reducing greenhouse gas emissions** represents our top priority, and accordingly commits to purchasing 100% renewable electricity and becoming a carbon neutral organisation in 2021-22
- **identifies the actions we will take as an organisation over the next two years** to mitigate, adapt and mobilise in response to the climate emergency.

Additionally, Council recognises that our community is skilled and well placed to lead localised action on climate change. Alongside this plan, Council commits to playing a role in inspiring, informing, enabling and connecting people so our community and environment can thrive for generations to come.



1. Context and strategic position





1.1 This is a climate emergency

In July 2019, Surf Coast Shire Council received two community petitions calling on Council to declare a climate emergency.

Acting on climate science and projections for the future, the international Climate Emergency campaign calls on governments at all levels to declare a climate emergency, and mobilise society-wide resources at sufficient scale and speed to protect civilisation, the economy, people, species and ecosystems.

Our Surf Coast climate is changing – we now live in a hotter, drier climate compared to just 30 years ago, with an increased threat of more frequent and severe extreme weather events, particularly bushfires. A continuation of current climatic conditions and trajectories are indicating a future that is unsafe for us as human beings, and for many of the plant and animal species we live alongside.

In August 2019, Council joined seven other local governments in Victoria that had declared a climate emergency. In just one year, this number had grown to 32, and continues to rise.

Our Climate Emergency Response commits us to taking the urgent action required to make our contribution to sustain a safe climate, where existing and future communities and ecosystems will thrive. Our response centres around actions that Council and our community can take for climate change mitigation, adaptation and mobilisation.

Global climate change

While the [2016 Paris Agreement](#) – an international treaty on climate change – recognised the need to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees (Celsius) above pre-industrial levels, current modelling indicates the world is on track to reach 1.5 degrees by 2030 or earlier, and between three and five degrees by 2100 ([Climate Reality Check 2020](#) report).

Even under the conservative warming of 1.5 degrees, this 2020 report predicts that the world is set to experience catastrophic events, including the demise of Australia's Great Barrier Reef, melting of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet and loss of forest ecosystems.

Scientists predict that 'a four degree (Celcius) future is incompatible with an organised global community, is likely to be beyond adaptation, is devastating to the majority of ecosystems and has a high probability of not being stable' ([The Third Degree](#) report 2019).

This is a climate emergency, needing urgent action now.

“

We're proud of the work we are doing because we know it's helping our community and the environment. We've got lots more to do, and delivering this plan will be a big leap forward.

Rowan Mackenzie
Manager Environment and Community Safety
Surf Coast Shire Council

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1.2 Strategic position

1.2.1 Council's commitments so far

At its Ordinary Council Meeting, 27 August 2019, Council resolved:

That Council:

- a) Declares a Climate Emergency.
- b) Commits to develop a Climate Emergency Response Plan in partnership with the community.
- c) Receives a further report on how a Climate Emergency Response Plan will be developed including any resources needed.
- d) Commits to setting corporate energy, greenhouse gas emissions, water, waste, land use and biodiversity targets informed by the advice of the Renewable Energy Task Force and supported by an evidenced based analysis.
- e) Confirms its commitment to use the One Planet Living Framework and Towards Environmental Leadership Program to guide corporate responses to climate change.
- f) Notes the opportunity to consider climate change in future reviews of the Council Plan (incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan).

This climate emergency declaration (read the full [Council report](#)) follows many years of Council and community taking action related to climate change, however, it acknowledges the need for a more urgent and significant response.

Since our declaration, we have made the following progress:

Council endorsed a four part **Climate Emergency Response Roadmap** on 26 November 2019:

Surf Coast Shire Council's Climate Emergency Response

Corporate Response

Focuses on Council's operations, services and facilities.

**PART
1**

Short Term Action Plan 2020

(February 2020 - February 2021)

**PART
2**

Climate Emergency Response Plan 2021-2031

(this document)

Community Response

Ways we will support community action.

**PART
3**

Council's approach to, and role in, community action
(endorsed 28 July 2020)

**PART
4**

Facilitate and empower community-led climate responses
(underway)

The [Short Term Action Plan](#) included initiatives across our organisation that could be implemented quickly and within existing resources.

The following Climate Emergency Response Plan 2021-2031 requires implementation over a longer timeframe and with additional resources.

Council recognises that our community is skilled and well placed to lead localised action on climate change. Council will play a role in inspiring, informing, enabling and connecting our community. More detail is provided in section 3.3, Mobilisation, and in [Council's approach](#).

Corporate Environmental Sustainability Targets have been established (section 1.2.5 following).

The new Council Plan commencing in 2021 is currently being developed, with our Councillors and community identifying climate change as an important aspect.



1.2.2 Legal framework

The Victorian [Local Government Act 2020](#) sets a clear expectation that councils consider the long-term negative impacts of climate change on future generations through their planning, decision-making and actions.

Victoria's [Climate Change Act 2017](#) also requires councils to respond to climate change (including potential impacts and contributions to Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions) through the development of their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. The Act calls on councils to make a five yearly emissions reduction pledge, and this document will be provided to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change for that purpose.

The [Victorian Government's Climate Change Strategy](#) (May 2021) outlines targets to reduce the state's emissions from 2005 levels by 28-33% by 2025 and 45-50% by 2030. The Surf Coast Shire must play its role in achieving these targets.

Councils have additional legislative obligations related to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change under the [Renewable Energy \(Jobs and Investment\) Act 2017](#), [Planning and Environment Act 1987](#) and [Emergency Management Act 2013](#). Further to this, the [Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006](#) specifies provisions to protect against the harming of Aboriginal living cultural heritage.

For a more detailed summary of the legal framework Council is operating under [click here](#).

In the course of Council performing its role, we must give effect to overarching governance principles including promoting environmental, social and economic sustainability, mitigating and planning for climate change risks, and achieving the best outcomes for our community, including future generations.

Local Government Act 2020 Section 9

1.2.3 Traditional Owners and their Country Plans

Surf Coast Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung People and Eastern Maar People. Both Registered Aboriginal Parties have developed Country Plans which speak about their connections to Country and community, and about protecting the health of these for generations to come.

[Wadawurrung Healthy Country Plan, Paleert Tjaara Dja – Let's Make Country Good Together 2020-2030](#)

[Eastern Maar Country Plan, Meerreengeeye Ngakepoorryeeyt 2015](#)

In their plan, the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation identifies specific threats associated with climate change, and we met together a number of times as we developed this plan.

Goal 4, 'Our organisation aligns with local Registered Aboriginal Parties' Country Plans' (section 3.3) is our commitment to continuing our conversations, growing our knowledge, developing new partnerships, and respecting Traditional Owner perspectives as we implement this plan and work with our broader community to respond to the climate emergency. Council is currently developing our organisation's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, which is also referred to in Goal 4.



Council is also responsible and accountable for our decisions, projects and actions in line with our obligations under the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, management plans and other relevant legislation.

1.2.4 Our climate emergency response areas – mitigation, adaptation, mobilisation

Part 3 of this plan outlines our corporate goals, objectives, targets and measures, along with our two-year action plan (Part 4) that responds to these areas:

Mitigation – minimising greenhouse gas emissions from Council's operations and enhancing natural carbon sinks.

Adaptation – enhancing the resilience of our organisation, community and environment to prepare for the impacts of our changing climate.

Mobilisation – empowering our people to implement climate solutions at work, supporting our community to take action, advocating our position, and joining in with others responding to the climate emergency.

Across climate emergency response plans globally, these three areas are well accepted and commonly used as priorities for action.

“

Within the next decade we need to take significant action to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, and to also take advantage of the opportunities this transition presents.

Action at the local level, which can be facilitated, supported and scaled by local government, is critical to ensure that we can achieve this transition in the short time we have, and in a way that works for local communities. Surf Coast is well placed to lead in this transition by building on the existing local community action and support shown by Council.

Scott Ferraro
Chair of Surf Coast Shire's Renewable Energy Task Force

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1.2.5 Corporate environmental sustainability targets

Our organisation has committed to the following corporate environmental sustainability targets, which link with our climate emergency goals, objectives, targets and measures.

TARGET AREA	HEADLINE TARGET	SUPPORTING STATEMENT	CLIMATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE AREA
 Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Net zero greenhouse gas emissions	Council commits to reporting on corporate greenhouse gas emissions and developing a strategy to reach net zero emissions for Council operations.	Mitigation Mobilisation
 Renewable Energy	100% renewable electricity	Council will obtain 100% of its electricity from renewable energy sources.	Mitigation Mobilisation
 Waste	Zero recoverable waste to landfill	Council commits to audit, report on and reduce waste sent to landfill from Council operations.	Mitigation Mobilisation
 Water	Reduce potable water use	Council commits to reducing the overall volume of potable water used for non-potable purposes through its operations.	Adaptation Mobilisation
 Land use and biodiversity	Responsible land management	Council commits to developing and implementing annual action plans for all land it owns or manages.	Mitigation Adaptation Mobilisation

This plan prioritises actions related to the Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Renewable Energy targets. They have the most direct impact on mitigating climate change, and offer Council a significant opportunity to make a positive difference.

1.3 Climate action 2011-2021

Our climate emergency response builds on 10 years of actions aimed at reducing our impact on the natural world and responding to climate change. Some of the most impactful have been the result of collective action and partnerships between Council, our community and local agencies.

THESE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS:

Implemented Surf Coast Shire **Heatwave Plan** January 2011

Electric vehicle charging stations installed at the Civic Office and Lorne Visitor Information Centre

Established an **Environment and Rural Advisory Panel** of Councillors and community members

Developed **The Fire Game** through our Fire Up! community education program



Ongoing support for our local **Community Gardens**

Launched the **Towards Environmental Leadership Program**

Developed Council's **Draft Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2020**

Surf Coast **Plastic Wise Events and Markets Policy** in partnership with community groups, event organisers and Great Ocean Road Coast Committee

Established a **Renewable Energy Task Force** of Councillors, community members and energy experts

Launched **Powered by Positive Program**



Submissions made by Council on container deposit schemes, unconventional gas exploration, oil exploration in the Great Australia Bight, climate change, waste and recycling management, and Victoria's circular economy

Flare installed at Anglesea Landfill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Introduced **Local Food Program 2018-2021**

Developed the **Integrated Water Management Plan** for the township of Winchelsea

Kerbside Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) pilot in Anglesea

Ongoing support for local **Plastic Wise and environmental groups, and Repair Café Surf Coast**

Implemented **Strategic Fire Management Plan 2017-2020** in partnership with Colac Otway and Corangamite Shires, CFA and DELWP

Community screening of film **2040** and panel discussion with the producer, Damon Gameau

Our Arts Seed Development Funds were themed 'Detritus' (2019) and '**Creative Action for the Climate Emergency'** (2020)



Commenced **fleet transition towards electric and hybrid vehicles**

Streetlight upgrades to LED globes has reduced electricity use by 40%

Established five **Corporate Environmental Sustainability Targets**

Ran a **Climate Youth Skills Development Program** and supported the **Surf Coast Youth 4 Climate group**

Climate change considerations embedded in project management, business case and digital transformation processes/programs

21.4% of Surf Coast households have solar installed – the highest uptake in Barwon South West region

Over 550kW of solar power capacity installed on Council facilities

Carbon dating project at Bells Beach with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

Kerbside waste collection service now includes **FOGO and separate glass recycling bin**



70% of water used to irrigate Council's ovals is sourced from recycled water

Completed **Climate Emergency Short Term Action Plan**

Launched **Community Climate Mobiliser program**

Victorian Energy Collaboration will see **Council buildings and streetlights powered by 100% renewable electricity**

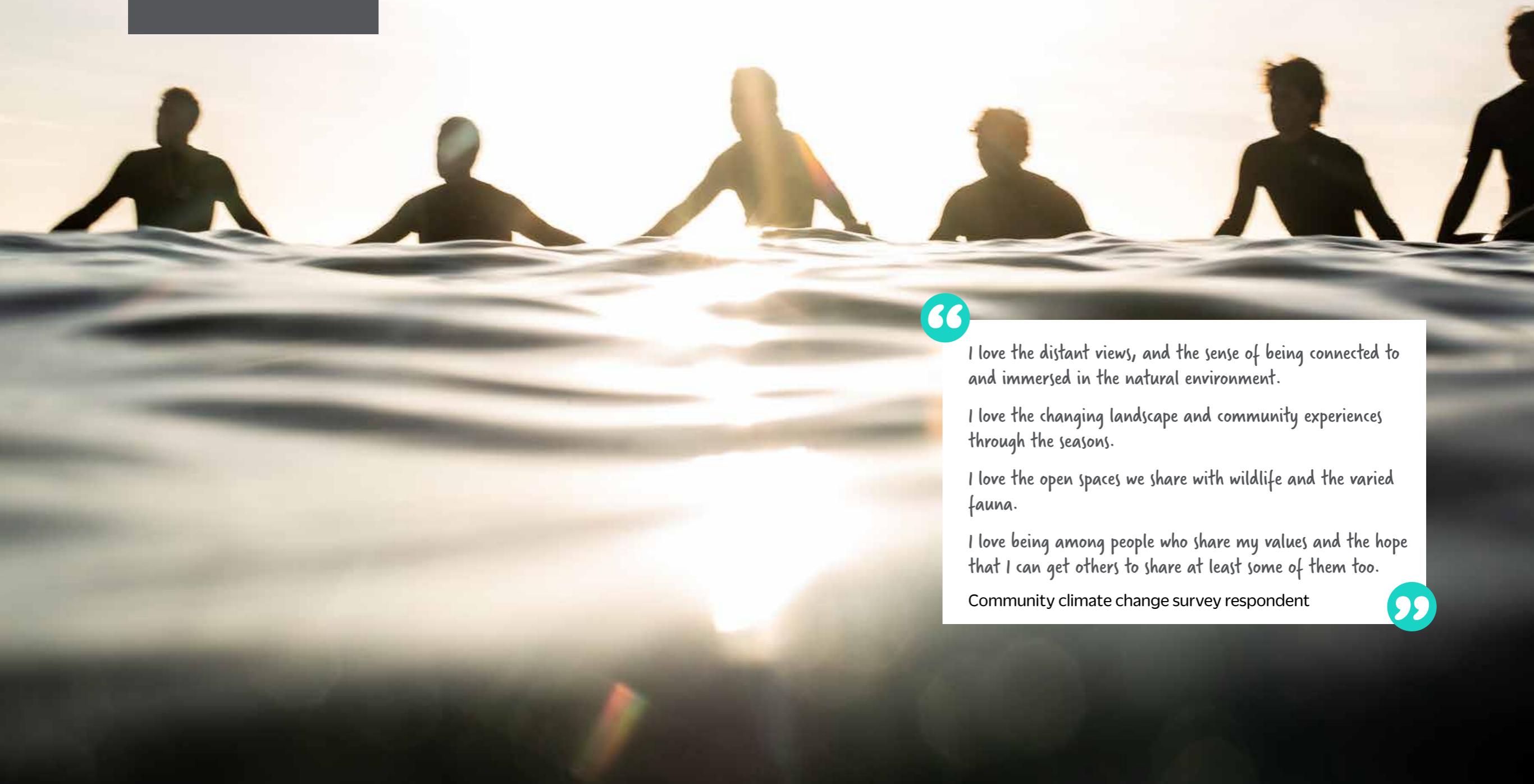
1.4 How we developed this plan

We undertook a range of activities to inform the development of this document. These included:

- 'all staff' workshops to inform and gather initial ideas
- conversations with our local Registered Aboriginal Parties
- research and review of literature such as other council's climate emergency plans and climate science articles/reports
- discussions with Council staff, community members, other councils, climate change networks and agencies
- updating our corporate greenhouse gas emissions profile and developing a carbon offset procurement plan
- surveying staff to gain input into developing the vision and focus areas
- extensive workshops across Council departments to identify possible actions and opportunities
- prioritising and confirming suggested actions based on set criteria (e.g. valuing high impact actions) and with consideration given to resourcing limitations
- gaining Council's endorsement of our proposed role in, and approach to, our community's climate emergency response
- ongoing communication and input from the Climate Emergency Internal Working Group, Leadership Group and Project Control Group (Executive Management Team).



2. Our place



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I love the distant views, and the sense of being connected to and immersed in the natural environment.

I love the changing landscape and community experiences through the seasons.

I love the open spaces we share with wildlife and the varied fauna.

I love being among people who share my values and the hope that I can get others to share at least some of them too.

Community climate change survey respondent

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In Surf Coast Shire we are fortunate to have a diversity of urban, rural, coastal and hinterland townships and hamlets, all within close reach of nature.

Nearby we have the Great Otway National Park, healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands, farmlands, grasslands, the ocean and coastline, and many other natural wonders. As well as being important places to local Traditional Owners, for many residents and visitors, the natural environment is significant to the identity of the Surf Coast Shire.



Perhaps living so close to nature also connects us more directly with the threats of climate change.

In our [2021 community climate survey](#), 75% of respondents stated they are already experiencing its impacts. Natural hazards/extreme weather events; threats to biodiversity and ecosystems; and climate-related diseases and health issues were the top three impacts being noticed. The top-rating additional concerns for the future (reported by over 50% of respondents) were changes to the climate and weather patterns; water shortage and supply uncertainty; and threats to culture and heritage.

While it may seem daunting to tackle the complexity and severity of the predicted changes, we have a terrific opportunity to work together, utilise emerging technology and implement solutions to safeguard our communities and ecosystems now and into the future.

2.1 Impacts of a changing climate

Surf Coast Shire and our broader region are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, and this is expected to become more noticeable over time. The [2019 Barwon Climate Projections report](#) by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the CSIRO predicts the following impacts for the Barwon South West Region:

Temperature increase

Maximum and minimum daily temperatures will continue to increase year round over this century. By the 2030s an increase in daily maximum temperature of 0.8-1.5 degrees Celcius is expected.

Bushfire

The vegetation and geography of the Surf Coast Shire makes it extremely vulnerable to bushfire. This is exacerbated further under climate change with harsher fire weather and longer fire seasons expected.

Heatwaves

Climate change is predicted to worsen heatwave events in the Surf Coast Shire, particularly our inland areas. Increased frequency and intensity of heat events is predicted to impact already vulnerable people and industries.

Coastal and oceanic changes

Coastal inundation, storm surge, sea level rise, erosion and flash flooding in coastal areas will worsen with our changing climate. This will affect how we recreate and live on coastlines, and has the potential to majorly impact cultural heritage sites. Ocean temperatures and acidification levels are also expected to increase significantly, endangering many marine species.

Water scarcity and quality

Water security is a concern for our region with rainfall expected to decline in the future, reducing the amount of water stored in local reservoirs and driving water demand up and supply down. A reduction in water supply and quality also threatens the health of waterways, wetlands and water availability for plants and animals.

Ecosystems and biodiversity

Climate change is expected to intensify the pressure on our ecosystems and biodiversity due to increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, rising sea levels and ocean acidification, changes to waterway flows and levels, and the pervasiveness of introduced species.

Health and wellbeing

Climate change impacts have direct and indirect consequences for human health and wellbeing. This includes heat-related illness and death, vector-borne, water-borne and food-borne diseases, the decline of nutritional quality of food, aggravation of chronic illnesses and adverse mental health effects.

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I think the coastal areas are significantly at risk from sea level rise and erosion. I am concerned about the impact this has on important cultural sites, such as middens all along the coast. The Great Ocean Road itself, and all it stands for to local communities, the economy and tourists is at risk directly and indirectly.

Community climate change survey respondent

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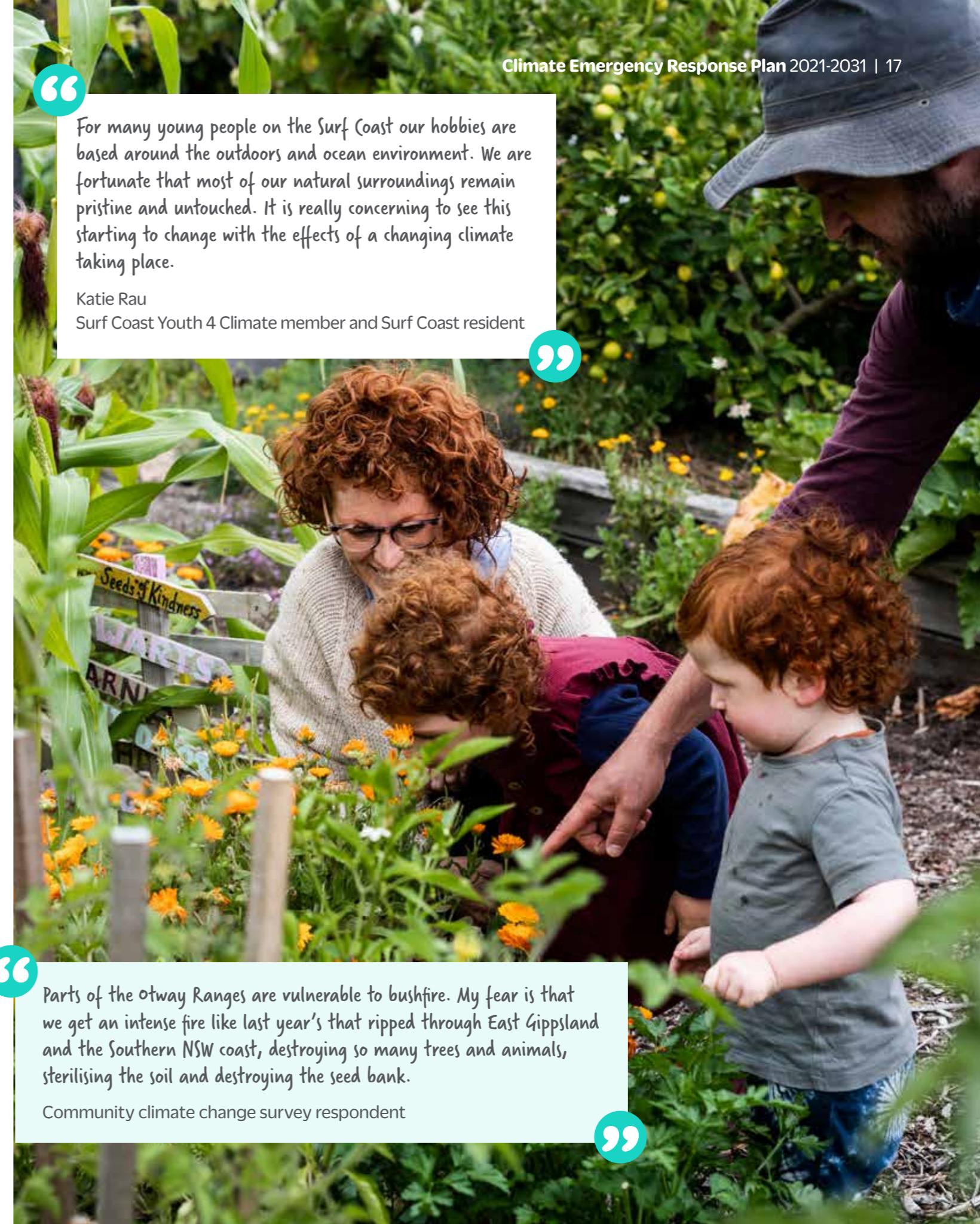
2.2 Local vulnerabilities to climate change

Council's stated purpose is to help our community and environment to thrive.

We recognise that certain ecosystems, geographic areas and members of our community are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than others. We will continue to identify and better understand these local vulnerabilities so we can work with our community to plan for, and respond to, our changing local conditions.

For example:

- Communities within our forested and bushland areas face a higher risk from extreme fire events than those in urban or rural grassy areas.
- Urban, inland communities will be more exposed to hotter, longer heatwaves than coastal communities.
- Communities, natural ecosystems and significant cultural sites close to the coast at low elevation will be more severely impacted by sea level rise and storm surges.
- Natural ecosystems that are already vulnerable may not survive the changes (while others may benefit). Native grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plains are one example explored in a case study, section 2.4.
- Many young people have expressed concern about climate change, and are experiencing high levels of psychological stress and anxiety about current environmental and societal shifts, and uncertainties about the future.
- Populations of older people and those with prevailing illness or disease have a higher risk of being affected by extreme weather events, including heatwaves and smoke from bushfires.
- People from low socio-economic areas have a greater disadvantage when it comes to preparing their properties, households and businesses to decarbonise and prepare for future climate change impacts.



“For many young people on the Surf Coast our hobbies are based around the outdoors and ocean environment. We are fortunate that most of our natural surroundings remain pristine and untouched. It is really concerning to see this starting to change with the effects of a changing climate taking place.

Katie Rau
Surf Coast Youth 4 Climate member and Surf Coast resident

“Parts of the Otway Ranges are vulnerable to bushfire. My fear is that we get an intense fire like last year's that ripped through East Gippsland and the Southern NSW coast, destroying so many trees and animals, sterilising the soil and destroying the seed bank.

Community climate change survey respondent

2.3 Climate change is impacting Culture and Country

Climate change poses a significant risk to Country, Culture and people. Natural disasters, extreme weather events and other climate change impacts threaten culturally significant sites located along our coast, waterways and inland.

These sites, some thousands of years old, have significant cultural and historic meaning to the Eastern Maar People and Wadawurrung People. Ecosystems, plants and animal species also hold important meaning, and a decline in the health and populations of our natural systems can lead to negative impacts on mental and physical health.

In our [2021 community climate survey](#), 48 per cent of respondents indicated they had already observed the degradation and loss of cultural sites and heritage values. Just over 50 per cent identified loss of Culture and heritage as a relevant climate change impact in future, one of the highest priority areas for action identified.

These findings, coupled with Traditional Owners' experiences and aspirations, highlight the importance of learning about and protecting culturally significant sites from current and future climate change impacts.

“For Aboriginal people, Country is more than the land, water and air, the plants and animals. It's more than just what we can see – it's our spirituality, our Ancestors and our connection. It is the way we feel, the way we live and the connection that holds and defines us. When the health of our Country declines, so does the health of our citizens – we are all inextricably linked.

We have had responsibility for caring for our Country for thousands of years. We have never simply taken from our Country without understanding the natural systems and managing them so that they stay healthy and keep providing for us.

Meerreengeeye Ngakepoorryeyt
Eastern Maar Country Plan 2015
Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation

“We are the protectors and carers of this Country and this Country protects and cares for us. We belong to and are spiritually connected to this Country and this Country is part of us. We are inseparable, no matter where we are, we are bound together. When Country is sick, we are sick. We talk to Country in language to help us both heal. Our stories, dances and songs keep us strong in our culture. Our lore and law guide us in keeping our people and Country connected and healthy.

Paleert Tjaara Dja
– Let's Make Country Good Together 2020-2030
Wadawurrung Healthy Country Plan
Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation



2.4 Case studies



Loss of coastal Culture

Many beaches along the unique Surf Coast, including Bells Beach and Point Roadknight, have significant value to Traditional Owners. Some have cultural sites dating back thousands of years which help foster connection to ancestors while telling stories of how people used to live.

As sea levels rise, cliffs, sand dunes and other formations erode, and storm surges and coastal inundation increases, these sites are at risk of disappearing forever.

If we work together with Registered Aboriginal Parties, other agencies and our community now, we can implement innovative techniques to minimise the impacts. Encouraging beach goers to be sensitive with their movements in these delicate areas will also help to safeguard these incredible sites.

Victorian Volcanic Plains

The Victorian Volcanic Plains is an Australian biodiversity hotspot and spans a large part of the Surf Coast Shire. The plains support over 25 nationally threatened flora and fauna species, and a number of endangered and vulnerable vegetation communities. The plains and surrounding grasslands are of great significance to Traditional Owners.

The plains once covered 2.3 million hectares of southwest Victoria. Since European settlement significant damage has occurred including clearing, inappropriate burning and grazing regimes, and urban development. This is an example of an ecosystem that has been decimated by past practices, and may not survive the additional pressures brought on by our changing climate.

In an effort to avoid such a loss, there is exciting potential to work on restoration and reconciliation projects here with Registered Aboriginal Parties, landholders, land management agencies and our community.



2.5 Impact on Council's role and operations

The most recent Victorian Local Government and Climate Change Acts have increased the obligations for local governments to make decisions and take action to protect their communities from the threats of climate change.

Council's purpose – to help our community and environment to thrive – demonstrates a more local and intrinsic care for our people and natural places that also motivates us to act.

Many areas of Council's operations, services and facilities are likely to be impacted by climate change, such as:

- more intense rainfall and heat events will influence our stormwater and infrastructure management
- a drier, warmer climate will impact water security and irrigation of ovals and recreational facilities
- an increased need to prepare for and respond to community health and wellbeing impacts, and to build community resilience.

These impacts will affect how we:

- manage our assets and infrastructure
- deliver services and programs to our community
- manage Council land
- make decisions about Council's investments, liabilities, insurances and financial security
- foster the health and wellbeing of our staff and community members
- support our staff to deliver their work objectives.

Our climate emergency response therefore focuses on reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and building resilience in our organisation, our community and our environment.

Under climate change, there is an increased risk to our community, not just of fire but also heat, storm and flood events. Climate projections show that we are expected to experience a 49 per cent increase in high-risk fire danger days.

Nick Guyett
Resilient Communities Officer
Surf Coast Shire Council



The impacts of climate change on public health are being recognised globally in research, frameworks, strategies and public health advocacy groups. Research indicates that exposure to increased temperature extremes compromises the body's ability to regulate its temperature. Prolonged exposure may induce direct or indirect health complications including chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cerebrovascular disease, and diabetes-related conditions. Extended periods of hot and cold weather are associated with increased hospital admissions and increased mortality including self-harm.

Alicia Hooper
Social Planning and Recovery Advisor
Surf Coast Shire Council



2.6 Council's greenhouse gas emissions profile

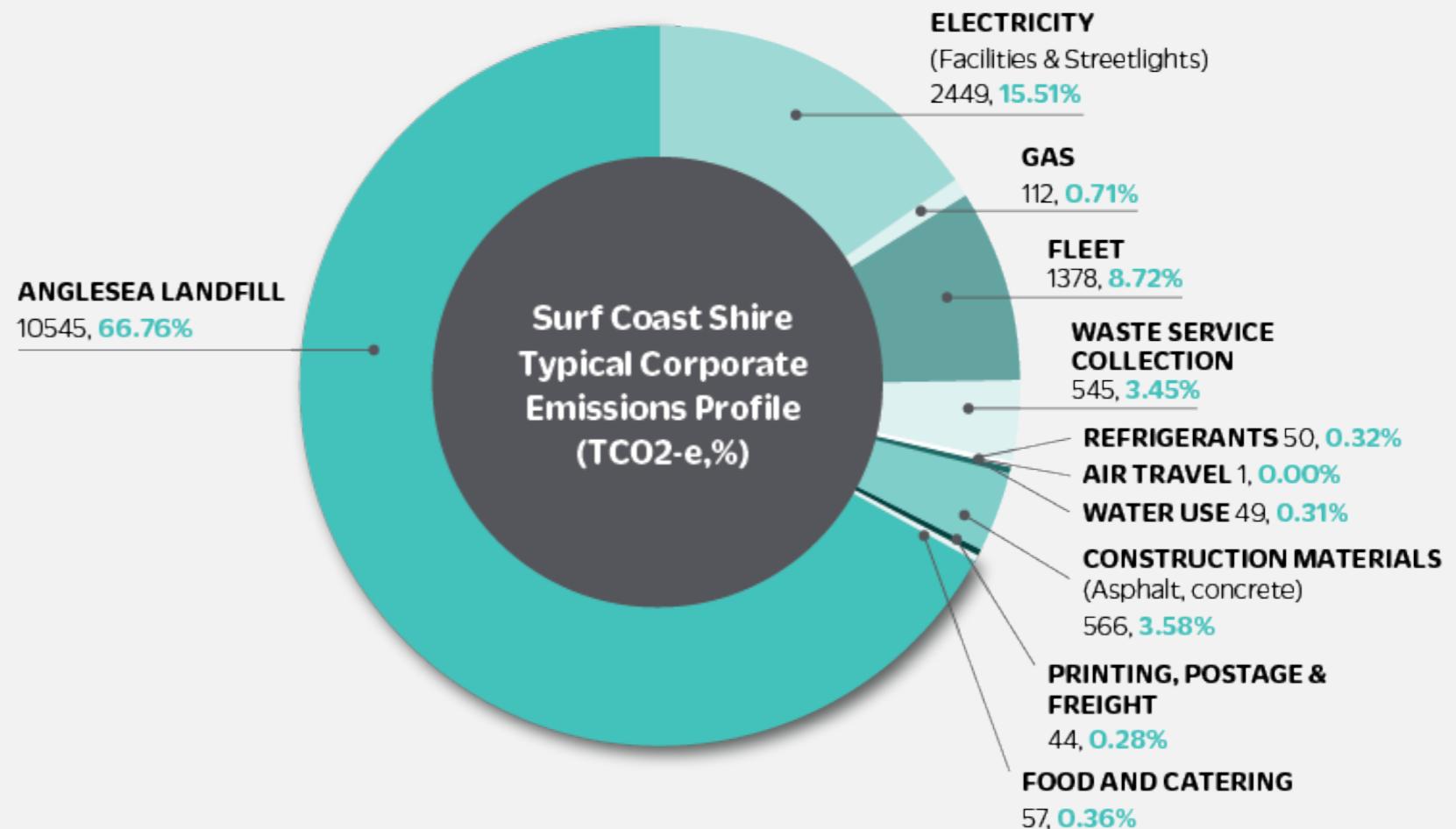
A breakdown of greenhouse gas emissions generated annually from Council's operations, facilities and services is shown below. This corporate greenhouse gas emissions profile has been developed in line with the principles of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard and has been independently reviewed to ensure it is consistent with best practice industry and local government standards. The profile enables us to better understand the volumes and sources of greenhouse gas emissions arising from Council's operations, and allows us to take targeted, evidence-based action.

Corporate greenhouse gas emissions profiles can vary significantly between Local Government Areas. Unlike many other councils, we manage a landfill, which includes a significant component of legacy emissions from decaying organic matter deposited since the landfill opened in the 1970s. A flare has been installed onsite to transform emissions from methane to the relatively less potent greenhouse gas of carbon dioxide, significantly reducing the emissions attributed to this facility.

Surf Coast Shire Council's typical greenhouse gas emissions profile

Average before procurement of renewable electricity

Average annual emissions: 15,794 TCO2e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions)

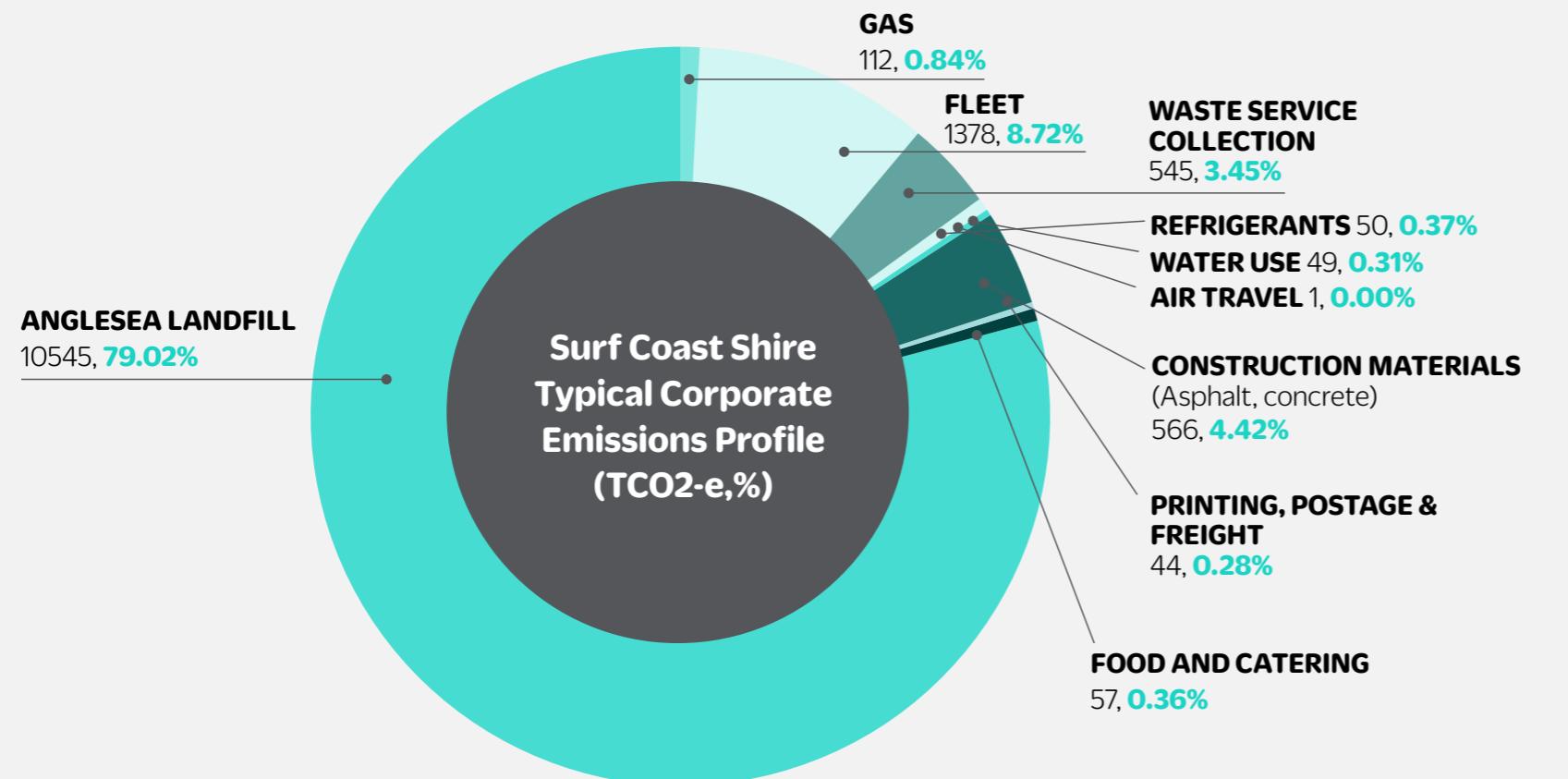


The Surf Coast Shire Council's corporate emissions profile varies year on year, depending mainly on the magnitude of emissions from the Anglesea Landfill. By procuring 100% renewable electricity for our facilities and streetlights from July 2021,

we expect to reduce our emissions by around 2,450 tonnes per annum, or approximately 15.5%. The figures below depict Council's projected emissions profile following the procurement of 100% renewable energy.

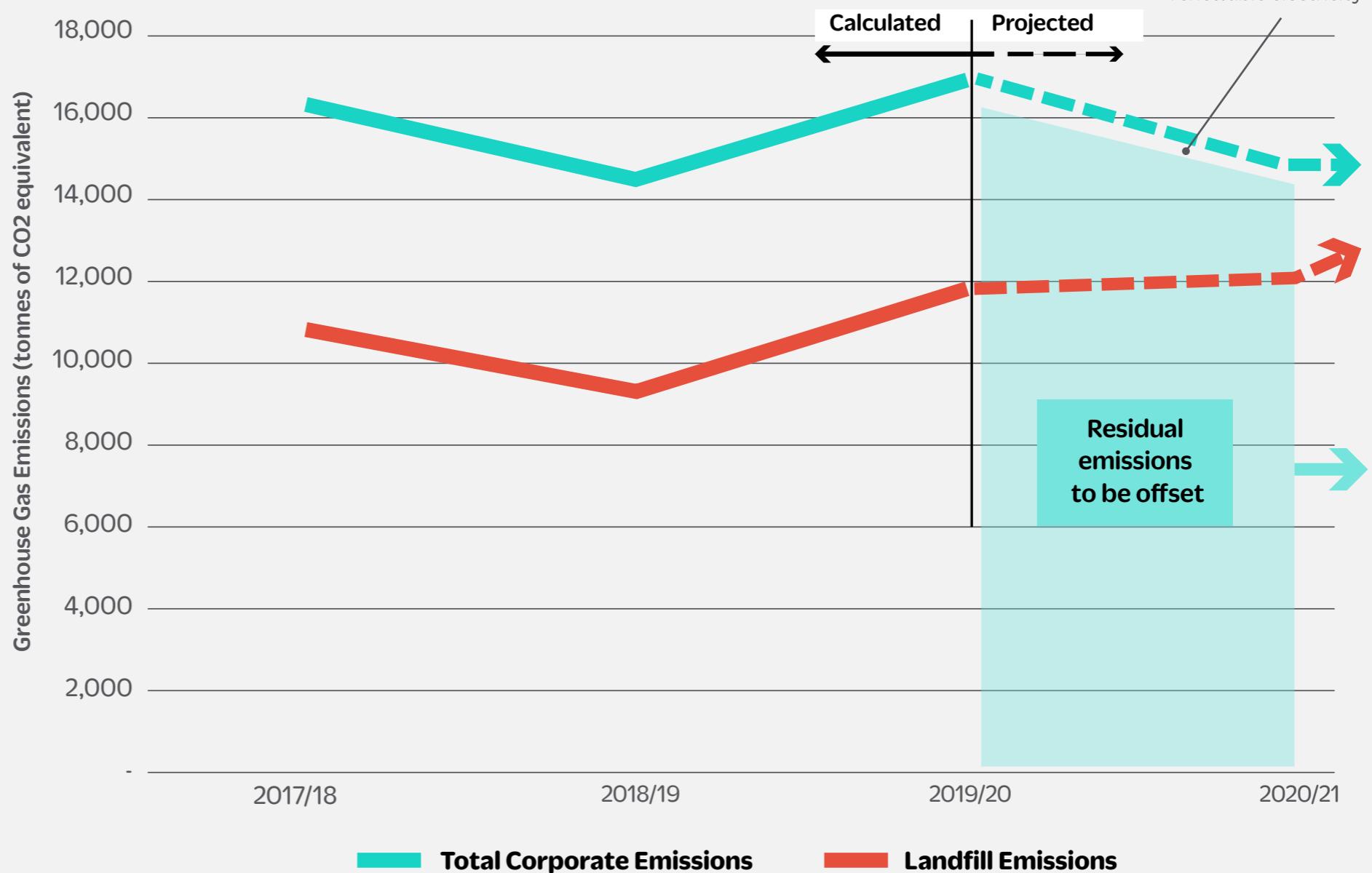
Surf Coast Shire Council's projected greenhouse gas emissions profile once renewable energy is purchased

Approximate annual emissions expected: 13,345 TCO2e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions)





Surf Coast Shire Council's emissions profile over time



Corporate emissions in future

The proposed new Aquatic and Health Centre for Torquay has the potential to significantly increase Council's emissions profile due to the high gas, electricity and water use typically required for such facilities. We will consider the implications this will have on our net zero ambitions and emissions reduction goal, and work to embed climate considerations and environmentally sustainable design into plans for the new facility.

3. Vision, goals and actions



OUR VISION

Our community and environment are thriving in a safe climate

Climate Emergency Response Areas

Mitigation

Adaptation

Mobilisation

OUR GOALS

Each goal has associated objectives, measures and targets.

Our immediate actions are outlined in a two-year Action Plan (2021-2023 financial years)

Goal 1

Our organisation is carbon neutral

Goal 3

Our organisation is adapting well to a changing climate

Goal 4

Our organisation aligns with local Registered Aboriginal Parties' Country Plans

Goal 2

Our organisation generates, stores and uses renewable electricity

Goal 5

Our organisation facilitates and empowers community-led responses to the climate emergency

Goal 6

Our organisation is a climate emergency leader

3.1 Mitigation

Minimising greenhouse gas emissions from Council's operations and enhancing natural carbon sinks.

Human-induced greenhouse gas emissions are the major cause of climate change. To sustain a safe climate into the future, atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations need to be reduced significantly. We can help do this by first reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, then by offsetting those we can't, and drawing down carbon from the atmosphere, for example by planting trees and protecting carbon sinks.

GOAL 1 – OUR ORGANISATION IS CARBON NEUTRAL

Objective 1: Reduce Council's greenhouse gas emissions.

Measure: Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas emissions emitted to the atmosphere annually from Council's operations, services and facilities.

Target: An annual reduction from the previous year.

Objective 2: Offset all of Council's residual greenhouse gas emissions.

Measure: Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas emissions offset annually (calculated in accordance with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol standard and local government best practice, with certification obtained through the Federal Government's Climate Active Program).

Target: 100% of annual residual emissions offset each year, commencing 2021-2022.

GOAL 2 – OUR ORGANISATION GENERATES, STORES AND USES RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY

Objective 3: Increase the renewable energy generation and storage capacity each year at Council sites and facilities.

Measure: Installed renewable energy generation and storage capacity at Council facilities as measured at end of financial year.

Target: Maximise capacity with 5 to 7 year payback.

Objective 4: Consume only renewable electricity and avoid consuming electricity and fuels from fossil fuel sources.

Measure: Amount of fossil fuel consumed by Council's operations, services and facilities

Target a: 100% renewable electricity consumed from 1 July 2021.

Target b: Annual reduction in consumption of gas, diesel, petrol and other fossil fuels used in Council operations and facilities.



3.2 Adaptation

Enhancing the resilience of our organisation, community and environment to prepare for the impacts of our changing climate.

The Surf Coast Shire is already experiencing climate change impacts – to our ecosystems, health, water, food security, built environments and economy. Learning to adapt well to these impacts, as an organisation and a community, is critical to thriving in a changing climate.

With our bushfire threat being amongst the highest in the world, continuing our existing emergency management and bushfire preparedness programs are a priority for adaptation.

GOAL 3 – OUR ORGANISATION IS ADAPTING WELL TO A CHANGING CLIMATE

Objective 5: Update Council's draft 2016 Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Measure: Updated Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Target: Plan approved by December 2021.

Objective 6: Update the Surf Coast Shire Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.

Measure: Plan is approved by the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee.

Target: Plan approved by December 2021.

Objective 7: Update the Surf Coast Shire Heatwave Plan.

Measure: Plan is approved by the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee.

Target: Plan approved by July 2022.

3.3 Mobilisation

Empowering our people to implement climate solutions at work, supporting our community to take action, advocating our position, and joining in with others responding to the climate emergency.

Sustaining a safe climate now and in the future requires every one of us to respond with urgency on an ongoing basis. Our mobilisation actions are separated into corporate and community components.

Corporate

As an organisation we must ensure that our people are informed and well-placed to address climate change and incorporate our climate emergency response into their work. We have many opportunities to alter existing governance and decision-making processes to enable all staff and contractors to consider and address climate change as we go about our daily practices and plan new projects/programs. Council also has a role to play in advocacy, and creating and strengthening local partnerships, particularly with our local Registered Aboriginal Parties.

Community

We are lucky to have many passionate and skilled individuals, groups, education settings and businesses leading the way on climate action, with significant experience to contribute to a community climate emergency response. Council's role will be to inspire, inform, enable and connect people to develop a localised, community owned and led response.

So far we have completed a [community climate change survey](#) and [community greenhouse gas emissions profile](#), hosted an online events series called Surf Coast Reimagined, and kept in regular contact with climate-focused community members.

Our 2021 survey told us that providing local climate data, information, mapping and projections are the most useful things Council can do to help our community prepare for a changing climate. Connecting people, providing access to Traditional Owner knowledge, grant funding, and supporting

our youth and vulnerable people are other things we may assist with.

Launched in April 2021, Council's Community Climate Mobiliser program will instigate broader community conversations to identify priority actions for the Surf Coast community's climate emergency response.

The [Towards Environmental Leadership Program](#) is Council's commitment to working together with our community to protect our natural world and encourage sustainable practices.

The web-based platform shares locally relevant information about climate change, our environment, local food, waste avoidance, water and energy. A highlight is the wonderful collection of tips and stories shared by skilled and passionate people in our Surf Coast community.

GOAL 4 – OUR ORGANISATION ALIGNS WITH REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTIES' COUNTRY PLANS

Objective 8: *Work in partnership with local Registered Aboriginal Parties in the management of Council land.*

Measure: Council to meet with local Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) individually to identify opportunities for co-management of Council managed land, including use of traditional practices such as cultural burning.

Target: Minimum one meeting per year with each RAP to identify and progress co-management opportunities.

Objective 9: *Protect culturally significant sites on Council managed land under threat from climate change impacts.*

Measure: Council and local Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are working together to care for and protect culturally significant sites under threat from climate change, such as assessing, monitoring and reassessing sites.

Target: Minimum one meeting per year with each RAP to assess the threats and protection of culturally significant sites.

Objective 10. *Involve representatives of local Registered Aboriginal Parties in Council-initiated climate change and environmental advisory groups, and in relevant decision making processes.*

Measure: Both Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are offered a place on advisory groups or alternative ways to contribute, and are engaged in early stages of planning.

Target: RAPs regularly participate and provide guidance.

Objective 11: *Council's Reconciliation Action Plan and processes recognise and elevate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge and abilities in the context of the climate emergency.*

Measure: Council's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan incorporates knowledge and abilities to respond to the climate emergency.

Target: January 2022.



GOAL 5 – OUR ORGANISATION FACILITATES AND EMPOWERS COMMUNITY-LED RESPONSES TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY.

Objective 11: Deliver the Council endorsed role in, and approach to, community action for the climate emergency response.

Measure a): The number of community mobilisation actions (section 4.3) completed from this (and future) plan/s.

Target a): 80% of actions implemented/completed by June 2023.

Measure b): Report to Council identifying successes, challenges and recommended actions or changes.

Target b): Minimum reporting twice per annum (nominally 6 months apart).



GOAL 6 – OUR ORGANISATION IS A CLIMATE EMERGENCY LEADER

Objective 12: *The actions in this Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021-2023 and future plans are delivered.*

Measure: Number of actions completed from Action Plan (section 4).

Target: 80% of actions implemented/completed by June 2023.

Objective 13: *Advocate for climate emergency policy improvements at regional, state and national levels.*

Measure: The number of Council submissions on issues relating to climate change.

Target: No target.

Objective 14: *Reaffirm and/or establish new formal partnerships with other organisations for mutual progress on climate action.*

Measure: The number of partnerships.

Target: No target.

3.4 Reporting progress and assessing impact

Our Climate Emergency Goals and Action Plan* – Council's Manager Environment and Community Safety is responsible for reporting progress quarterly to the Executive Management Team, Councillors and the community, using a traffic light status update system.

Our Corporate Environmental Sustainability Targets –

Council's Manager Environment and Community Safety will report on progress towards these targets annually to the stakeholders above, including an update on our greenhouse gas emission profile.

Our [Towards Environmental Leadership website](#) will house the related reports and stories for our community to access.

*An updated Action Plan will be developed every two years, prior to annual budget processes. This approach will enable us to respond to the rapid evolution of climate change science, information, technology, legislation and available solutions, and to the impacts being experienced locally.



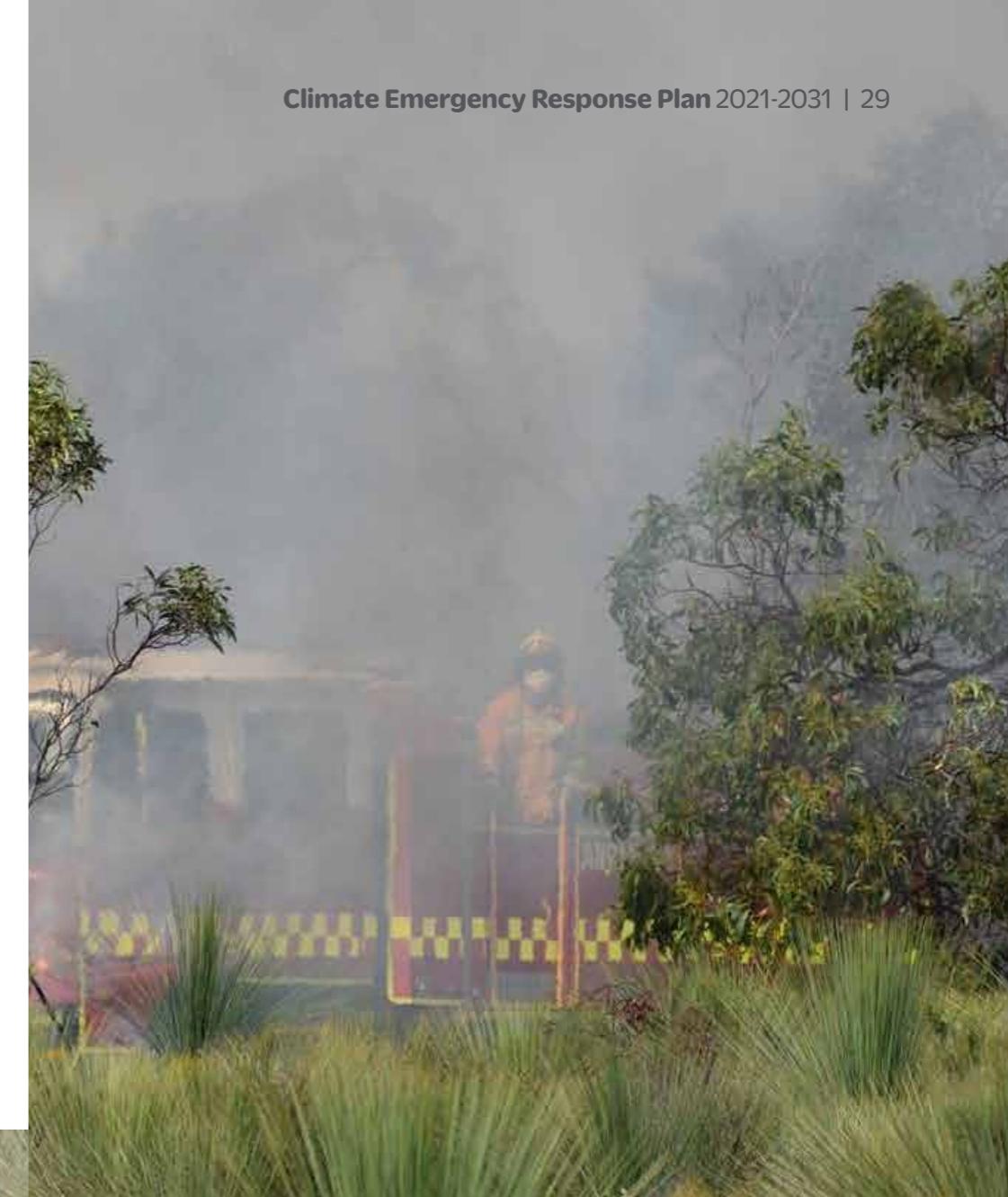
4. Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021-2023

This two-year action plan outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment to embedding climate change actions in our business processes, services, operations, facilities and interactions with our community. It includes actions developed by teams across Council that reflect the need and relevance to our entire organisation and the varied roles we play in serving our community.

Climate actions are prioritised within the key climate emergency response areas – mitigation, adaptation and mobilisation – as high, medium or low based on their potential to:

- achieve our climate change Mitigation, Adaptation and/or Mobilisation Goals
- align with our Corporate Environmental Sustainability Targets
- align with climate emergency principles (e.g. urgency, scale, transition from business-as-usual, contributing to a safe climate)
- fit within available budgets and resources
- demonstrate corporate leadership.

Some work on the tabled actions is already underway, and a new two-year action plan will be developed to commence in the 2023/24 financial year.



“

Impacts of climate change have been very noticeable in the way we deliver open space maintenance. Increased severe weather events including heavy downpours of rain have seen flooding throughout the year, especially in seasons where we don't expect these rains. Severe and increased wind events have impacted vegetation throughout the shire, with increased tree and limb failure impacting maintenance budgets.

With the sea level rises from higher average temperatures, open space assets in low lying areas such as Anglesea and Aireys Inlet will be impacted. There will be significant cost to relocate assets from these areas that will be subjected to increased flooding events.

Travis Nelson
Manager Facilities and Open Space Operations
Surf Coast Shire Council

”

4.1 Mitigation actions

Minimising greenhouse gas emissions from Council's operations and enhancing natural carbon sinks.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting team/s	Priority	Resources/Funding
M1	Become a certified carbon neutral organisation using the Australian Government's Climate Active Certification in 2021-2022.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Procurement, Finance	High	Subject to budget bid and Towards Environmental Leadership program
M2	Procure carbon offsets for Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions annually, commencing financial year 2021-2022.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Procurement, Finance, Waste Management	High	Subject to budget bid and Landfill Gate Fee Levy adjustment and Towards Environmental Leadership program
M3	Purchase 100 per cent renewable electricity beginning July 2021.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Procurement	High	Existing budget and Towards Environmental Leadership program
M4	Develop a waste strategy that embeds the principles of the waste hierarchy, including an action plan for achieving the 'Towards Zero Recoverable Waste to Landfill' corporate target.	Coordinator Waste Management	Environmental Sustainability	High	Waste Reserve
M5	Implement an Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) and Climate Adapted Building Policy for new Council buildings and significant refurbishments/renewals.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Facilities and Open Space Operations	High	Towards Environmental Leadership program, subject to budget bid in future years
M6	Establish at least one community carbon offset demonstration site, starting with Council owned land at Lake Modewarre.	Coordinator Environment	Environmental Sustainability	High	Subject to budget bid
M7	Establish a new native vegetation offset site at the Moonah Wetlands in Torquay.	Coordinator Environment	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Subject to budget bid
M8	Explore opportunities to develop local land, coastal and wetland carbon sequestration projects with local Registered Aboriginal Parties, private landowners, community groups, and other councils and agencies.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Environment	Med	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years
M9	Prepare a report that explores costs and timing to transition our fleet towards hybrid and electric vehicles and for the installation of vehicle charging stations at Council sites.	Team Leader Fleet Management	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget
M10	Continue Council's transition towards hybrid and electric vehicles.	Team Leader Fleet Management	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years
M11	Install new electric vehicle charging stations at Council-owned sites to encourage the transition to electric vehicles, including e-bikes.	Team Leader Fleet Management	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting team/s	Priority	Resources/Funding
M12	Continue the Solar on Council Buildings program to install additional solar electricity capacity, upgrade monitoring capabilities and explore battery storage options.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Facilities Management, Economic Development	Med	Towards Environmental Leadership program, subject to budget bid
M13	Continue the Powered by Positive renewable energy program, with a focus on encouraging solar uptake in the commercial sector.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Economic Development	Med	Towards Environmental Leadership program
M14	Update previous, or undertake new, energy efficiency assessments of priority Council buildings to assess the potential for improvements to reduce electricity use and refrigerant-related emissions, and transition away from gas use.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Facilities Management	Med	Towards Environmental Leadership program
M15	Promote active transport and embed climate considerations into road and pathway infrastructure planning via the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathway Strategy • Safer Cycling Strategy and Action Plan • Road Safety Strategy 2021-2026 	Coordinator Design and Traffic	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget, external funding and Towards Environmental Leadership program
M16	Investigate options to install solar systems on leased community facilities, including the potential for a community project at the McMillan Street Community Precinct in Anglesea.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Facilities Management	Low	Towards Environmental Leadership program
M17	Undertake a pre-feasibility study of potential solar array projects on Council-managed land and other innovative renewable energy initiatives.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Relevant teams	Low	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years
M18	Explore opportunities and mechanisms for protection of native vegetation on private land in the shire.	Coordinator Environment	Environmental Sustainability	Low	Existing budget
M19	Explore Environmental Upgrade Finance agreements for commercial and residential property owners.	Manager Finance	Environmental Sustainability	Low	Existing budget and Towards Environmental Leadership program
M20	Incorporate recycled consumer waste products into Council projects to reduce embodied emissions associated with council projects. Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two road projects • Two open space projects 	Asset Management Analyst, Manager Social Infrastructure Planning	Program Management Office, Environmental Sustainability, Social Infrastructure and Open Space Planning	Low	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years

4.2 Adaptation actions

Enhancing the resilience of our organisation, community and environment to prepare for the impacts of our changing climate.

Note: this action table includes reference to climate change impacts outlined in section 2.1 above.

No.	Climate change impact	Action	Lead	Supporting team/s	Priority	Resources/Funding
A1	Multiple	Update Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan.	Coordinator Community Emergency Management	Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget
A2	Bushfires, extreme heat, flooding	Building on our existing bushfire programs, develop a national best practice bushfire program with partner agencies, and include this in the update to the Surf Coast Shire Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.	Manager Environment and Community Safety	Relevant teams	High	Existing budget
A3	Bushfires, extreme heat	Update the Municipal Heatwave Plan.	Coordinator Community Emergency Management	Relevant teams	High	Existing budget
A4	Multiple	Update the Corporate Risk Register in accordance with recent climate risk data.	Coordinator Risk Management and Legal Services	Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget
A5	Multiple	Monitor and adapt public health programs as required to respond to a changing climate, and impacts of vector-borne, water-borne and food-borne disease.	Coordinator Environmental Health	Emergency Management	High	Existing budget
A6	Sea-level rise, extreme events	Work with Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Registered Aboriginal Parties to increase understanding of culturally significant sites on Council managed land and the need to protect them from climate change impacts. May include a study to identify sites and threats, and an assessment and reassessment of registered culturally significant sites.	Manager Environment and Community Safety	Relevant teams	High	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years
A7	Bushfires	Advocate for, and build capacity of local Registered Aboriginal Parties to use cultural burning practices, and act to enable a collaborative trial on Council managed land.	Manager Environment and Community Safety	Environment, Emergency Management, Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget

No.	Climate change impact	Action	Lead	Supporting team/s	Priority	Resources/Funding
A8	Bushfire, extreme heat	Establish at least one Climate Adapted Building demonstration site at a community facility or Emergency Relief Centre.	Coordinator Community Emergency Management	Facilities Management, Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget, external funding and Towards Environmental Leadership program
A9	Extreme heat	Expand Council's existing street tree program to include new plantings in hinterland townships at risk of increased urban heat impacts, in particular Torquay North, Winchelsea, Moriac and Deans Marsh. Explore options to assist community members in undertaking their own nature strip plantings.	Coordinator Open Space Operations	Environment, Social Infrastructure and Open Space Planning, Environmental Sustainability	High	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years
A10	Multiple	Incorporate climate change considerations and data into the 2021 review of the Planning Scheme.	Manager Planning and Development	Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget and Towards Environmental Leadership program
A11	Multiple	Source climate change data to increase understanding of localised impacts of climate change and future high-risk areas, with a consideration on limiting exposure to vulnerable community members.	Manager Environment and Community Safety	Environmental Sustainability, Community Emergency Management	Med	Existing budget, external funding
A12	Multiple	Update Council's Asset Management Plans to incorporate climate change considerations.	Asset Management Analyst	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget
A13	Bushfire	Prepare a discussion paper on how we can influence decisions/approaches that enable us to 'build back better' in the event of a major bushfire destroying houses.	Coordinator Community Emergency Management	Manager Planning and Development	Med	Existing budget
A14	Multiple	Identify and capture climate change impacts and risks affecting local businesses and industry within Surf Coast Shire during engagement of the Prosperous Places Project.	Manager Economic Development and Tourism	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget
A15	Multiple	Incorporate One Planet Living principles, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals or similar into precinct structure plans undergoing reviews within the next two years (and encourage use by developers).	Manager Planning and Development	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget and Towards Environmental Leadership program

No.	Climate change impact	Action	Lead	Supporting team/s	Priority	Resources/Funding
A16	Multiple	Review the Open Space Landscape Standards for developers and Council's Open Space Strategy with consideration for climate change, increasing street trees and enhancing vegetation in reserves.	Coordinator Social Infrastructure and Open Space Planning	Environment Sustainability	Med	Existing budget
A17	Multiple	Monitor and adapt the pest, plant and animal management program as required to respond to a changing climate, and new and emerging pest, plants and animals or diseases.	Coordinator Environment	Open Space Operations	Med	Existing budget
A18	Multiple	Manage Council reserves to improve resilience to climate change, including retention of native vegetation, plant species selection and location, protection of threatened species habitat and ongoing pest, plant and animal management (including feral animals).	Coordinator Environment	Open Space Operations, Social Infrastructure Planning, Ranger Services	Med	Existing budget
A19	Drying, water security	To assist in achieving the 'Sustainable Water Use' corporate target, complete a feasibility study looking into alternative water sourcing options, including recycled water and stormwater harvesting options for Council's high water use reserves and for Council operations.	Coordinator Design and Traffic	Environmental Sustainability	Low	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years
A20	Waterway degradation	Conduct a stormwater quality improvement feasibility assessment for key waterways that will be impacted by climate change (e.g. through increased flash flooding, reduced environmental flows over time).	Coordinator Design and Traffic	Environmental Health, Environment	Low	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years
A21	Waterway degradation	Develop an updated concept design for the next stage of the Jan Juc Creek Daylighting, focused on the proposed wetland near Duffield's Road and the Three Bridges Park.	Coordinator Design and Traffic	Environment	Low	Currently unfunded - subject to external funding or budget bid in future years

4.3 Mobilisation actions

Empowering our people to implement climate solutions at work, supporting our community to take action, advocating our position and joining in with others responding to the climate emergency.

Corporate

Council will make the following changes to organisational processes and decision making to embed climate considerations and enable accelerated action.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting team/s	Priority	Resources/Funding
C1	Report quarterly on progress, achievements and risks associated with this Action Plan to the Executive Management Team, Councillors and the community – and on Part 2 (Council led), and Part 4 (community led) components of our Climate Emergency Response Roadmap.	Manager Environment and Community Safety	Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget
C2	Integrate climate emergency consideration into all Council decision making, in particular all Council reports and the Council Plan.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Governance and Risk	High	Existing budget
C3	Incorporate climate change into Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (incorporated in Council Plan 2021-2024).	Manager Community Strengthening	Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget
C4	Integrate the Wadawurrung Healthy Country Plan and Eastern Maar Country Plan into Council's work and operations. Continue to strengthen relationships with local Registered Aboriginal Parties, develop a Reconciliation Action Plan and secure ongoing resourcing where possible.	Manager Community Strengthening	All	High	Existing budget and subject to budget bid
C5	Develop and implement a program to help staff across the organisation consider climate change when making decisions and undertaking their work.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	All	High	Towards Environmental Leadership program
C6	Review Council's purchasing processes and budget structures to enable use of innovative environmentally sustainable materials and initiatives.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Finance, Program Management Office	High	Existing budget
C7	Review and strengthen Council's Procurement Policy and standard Tender and Request for Quotation (RFQ) templates to include environment and climate change provisions during the 2021 Procurement Policy Review.	Coordinator Procurement	Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget
C8	Continue to monitor the investment market for fossil fuel divestment opportunities and opportunities to invest in environmental sustainability initiatives as the COVID-19 pandemic recovery progresses.	Manager Finance	Environmental Sustainability	High	To be explored post COVID

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting team/s	Priority	Resources/Funding
C9	Join the Council Alliance for the Sustainable Built Environment to access networks and resources. Participate in the Sustainable Subdivision Framework and explore options to use the Built Environmental Sustainability Scorecard tool and participate in other collaborative local government sector projects that seek to reduce emissions associated with new developments.	Manager Planning and Development	Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget, Towards Environmental Leadership program and budget bid
C10	Continue to work in partnership with organisations like the Barwon South West Climate Alliance and Climate Emergency Australia.	Manager Environment and Community Safety	Environmental Sustainability	High	Existing budget, subject to budget bid in future years
C11	Host a minimum of two interns or volunteers in the Environmental Sustainability (or related) team each year to gain experience and build their knowledge and skills to take climate action.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Relevant teams	High	Existing budget
C12	Develop a strategy for achieving our 'Responsible Land Management' corporate environmental sustainability target, including the development of annual action plans.	All managers or coordinators identified as land managers in Council's Land Management System	Environmental Sustainability, Environment	High	Existing budget and Towards Environmental Leadership program
C13	Achieve environmental sustainability outcomes and climate action through Council's Early Years program.	Manager Community Strengthening	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget
C14	Build the capacity and capability of Council's Green Team to respond to climate change and take action in the workplace (e.g. through running activities and helping embed sustainability actions across our organisation).	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Relevant teams	Med	Towards Environmental Leadership program

Community

Our community has a long history of leadership in environmental protection and climate action.

These are Council's commitments to supporting and facilitating sustained community-led climate action.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting team/s	Priority	Resources/Funding
MO1	Support our community to develop Community Climate Emergency Responses and take broader community action, including facilitating localised climate change discussions, collecting data and encouraging informed action.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Relevant teams	High	Towards Environmental Leadership program
MO2	Share climate change data, stories, solutions and information through a variety of platforms to inspire action amongst Council officers, Councilors and our community. Utilise our Towards Environmental Leadership website and explore programs such as StoryMaps, SpendMapp, Social Pinpoint and GIS mapping.	Manager Communications and Community Engagement, Coordinator Digital Transformation	Environmental Sustainability, IT, Economic Development, Emergency Management	Med	Towards Environmental Leadership program
MO3	Explore future options for Council's Renewable Energy Task Force and look into options for a Climate Action Task Force.	Manager Environment and Community Safety	Environmental Sustainability	High	Towards Environmental Leadership program
MO4	Continue and strengthen the Surf Coast Youth for Climate network and skill-building program. Pursue other opportunities to empower youth to increase their understanding of climate change and take climate action.	Team Leader Youth Development, Coordinator Environmental Sustainability		High	Existing budget and external funding
MO5	Continue supporting a sustainable local food system and building skills and involvement in seasonal eating, food growing and preparation, including opportunities for intergenerational learning and sharing.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Relevant teams	High	Towards Environmental Leadership program
MO6	Continue supporting our community gardens to thrive and benefit their communities.	Coordinator Environmental Sustainability	Social Infrastructure and Open Space Planning	High	Towards Environmental Leadership program
MO7	Work with community groups and lessees of council facilities to deliver initiatives with positive energy/water/recycled materials/waste avoidance/environmental outcomes.	Coordinator Environment Sustainability, Coordinator Social Infrastructure and Open Space Planning	Relevant teams	High	Existing budget and Towards Environmental Leadership program
MO8	Encourage community environmental and climate-focused art through the Art Seed Development Fund and other opportunities.	Arts Development Officer	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting team/s	Priority	Resources/Funding
M09	Promote Council's Small Grants Environment Stream, and develop the capacity of community groups and individuals to write successful grant applications.	Manager Community Strengthening	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget
M10	Promote Council's Casuarina Program to the community with an emphasis on encouraging environmentally driven groups and individuals, and achieving environmental sustainability outcomes.	Manager Community Strengthening	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget
M011	Explore opportunities with Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Registered Aboriginal Parties for co-management of land, including cultural fire burning and vegetation management, protection of registered Cultural Heritage Sites and incorporation of Country Plan principles, on Council managed land.	Coordinator Environment	Environmental Sustainability	Med	Existing budget
M012	Provide a platform for local businesses to share their environmental initiatives and efforts to reduce emissions and waste with each other and the community.	Manager Economic Development and Tourism	Environmental Sustainability	Low	Existing budget

4.4 Advocacy

To further advance Council's aspirations for both our organisation and community to be leaders in climate action and resilience, we can play an advocacy role, including leading by example and adding our voice to important issues.

In 2021-2023 (life of this action plan) this will include support for:

- advancement of the climate emergency movement
- transitioning to a net zero emissions economy and achieving strong state and federal emission reduction targets before 2050
- meaningful partnerships and engagement with Traditional Owners that help advance the Wadawurrung Healthy Country Plan, [Paleert Tjaara Dia – Let's Make Country Good Together 2020-2030](#) and Eastern Maar Country Plan 2015, [Meerreengeeye Ngakepoorryeeyt](#)
- expansion of Victoria's electric vehicle charging network
- environmentally sustainable tourism in the Surf Coast Shire and on the Great Ocean Road
- increasing facilities and services in our region to aid transition to a circular economy in Victoria
- reducing single use plastics
- Environmentally Sustainable Design principles in planning and development
- a just transition and equitable access for vulnerable community members, e.g. in regards to renewable energy, reducing emissions and building resilience to climate change
- divestment from, and discouragement of, new fossil fuel related projects and institutions