

Climate Emergency Working Group

Terms of Reference

Chair

- Environment Coordinator

Members

Council

- One (or more) Manager and/or Coordinator representative from each directorate in Council
- One staff member from the Environment Unit

Community

- One or two representative(s) from the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group Committee
- Up to three interested and active residents
- One young person
- One older person / healthy aging representative
- Up to three First Nations representatives or advisor (one representative from each Traditional Owner Corporation)
- One or two representative(s) from the business and tourism sector
- One representative from Community Health sector
- One rural landholder representative

Background

Council made a Declaration of Climate Emergency on 24 March 2021, publicly stating its commitment to urgently address climate change. The Climate Emergency Plan 2023 - 2030 has been developed in collaboration with the community and stakeholders across the shire to enact this declaration.

The Climate Emergency Plan aims to accelerate action in the Macedon Ranges Shire to address climate change and it will guide work across all parts of Council, as well as provide inspiration and opportunity for everyone in the community to take action.

Alongside local community climate action plans developed through the Cool Changes program and outcomes from six themed workshop conducted in early 2023, the Climate Emergency Plan has also been informed by several key adopted plans of Council, most notably:

- Counting Down to Zero 2022 (to reach Zero Net Emissions for Council operations by 2030)
- Environment Strategy 2021
- Biodiversity Strategy 2018

- Waste and Resource Recovery Management Strategy 2021-2026
- Walking and Cycling Strategy
- Youth Strategy
- Positive Ageing Strategy
- Soft Plastics Policy
- Heritage Strategy

The Climate Emergency Plan also reflects the intentions of the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and incorporates internal work such as the Climate Risk Assessment conducted in late 2022.

The Climate Emergency Plan includes 56 actions, across the six themes of:

- Nurturing Nature
- Climate Ready Communities
- Post Fossil Fuels
- Health and Wellbeing
- Waste and the Circular Economy
- Response and Recovery.

Most of the actions have a specific unit in Council assigned to lead their implementation, however, successful delivery of actions will require collaboration with units across Council, agency stakeholders, community organisations and/or with interested residents. Likewise, the implementation of the nine actions assigned to the community to lead their implementation will require support from Council to be effective.

To ensure a continued focus on the key principle of 'collaboration and partnerships' (as outlined in the Plan) a cross-Council and community representative 'Climate Emergency Working Group' is to be established to guide, progress, evaluate and monitor implementation of the Climate Emergency Plan over its duration.

Purpose and Function

The purpose of this Working Group is to provide advice and recommendations (where appropriate) to Council, in relation to the matters specific to Attachment 1 (Climate Emergency Plan: actions summary).

The scope of this Working Group is to act in an advisory capacity to the Council only and has no delegated authority to make decisions. Advice and recommendations will progress through the formal channels of the Environment Coordinator.

The Working Group will commit to:

- Climate Emergency leadership, specifically around the impacts and opportunities for the Macedon Ranges community
- Facilitating, implementing and achieving Council and community actions within the Climate Emergency Plan 2023 – 2030
- Aligning advice to their representative community cohort and directorate in Council

- Achieving rapid reduction of greenhouse gas emissions across community and council operations
- Increasing community and council resilience to the Climate Emergency
- Upholding Council's Climate Emergency Plan principles of; equity, participation, embed First Nations perspectives, collaboration and regeneration.
- Enhancing partnerships between internal Council departments and external stakeholders and, where necessary, co-develop and co-deliver actions and programs within Council's Climate Emergency Plan
- Ensuring effective and appropriate outcomes for the Macedon Ranges' community on climate issues
- Advocating to relevant external authorities to ensure action is taken to create a safe climate for all.
- Promoting and facilitating participation in the implementation of climate programs to their community and departmental networks.

The Working Group will support and enhance existing work on climate change being carried out by Council units/departments, community groups, agencies and individuals.

The Working Group will support and assist with research about effective community and council climate action and promote a shared knowledge and understanding of the Shire's commitment to emissions reduction, climate adaption and community resilience.

The Working Group will also monitor implementation progress, and provide input to formal reports as necessary, for example, to the Council's annual report.

Recruitment, Appointment and Tenure

A core role of the Working Group is to facilitate collaboration and partnership between Council officers and community members.

All appointments will be offered an initial period of 1 or 2 years, then members will be offered the opportunity to reapply for future appointment.

All vacancies will be publicly advertised by Council prior to appointment.

Prospective community candidates shall submit an Expression of Interest in a form prescribed by Council to enable consideration for their appointment to the Working Group.

Recruitment of community members will be assessed against a Selection Criteria outlined in Appendix A.

The selection panel assessing Expressions of Interest will consists of two Environment Unit staff and one Council staff members outside of the Environment Unit.

Where vacancies occur 'mid-term', replacement Working Group members may be appointed by Council Officers. This may be through advertisement of the vacancy and subject to an Expression of Interest process as above, or other process as agreed to by the Working Group.

Working Group members appointed as a result of a 'mid-term' vacancy will serve the balance of the former Working Group member's term.

Where a member is appointed to the Working Group as a representative of a particular organization, a proxy may attend meeting on their behalf if the nominated person cannot attend. The Chair is to be advised of any proxy arrangement two days before a scheduled meeting.

A position becomes vacant if a Working Group member (or their proxy) fails to attend two consecutive meetings without reasonable grounds, on a case by case basis.

Notwithstanding any of the above, by resolution, Council may at any time set a date or a milestone that when reached or completed causes the cessation of the Working Group and the expiry of Working Group members' terms.

Responsibilities and Conduct of Members

In implementing the purpose of the Working Group, members will conduct behaviour in alignment to the following;

- Conduct itself according to, and within, the Terms of Reference and any relevant Council resolution.
- Provide honest, considered, constructive and impartial advice to Council that will improve Council decision making.
- Foster a Working Group culture that seeks to understand and explore diverse views of Working Group members so that advice reflects such diversity of views, and;
- Report to Council periodically on its work (through the Annual Environment Report or other appropriate report).

In providing advice, all members will be given every opportunity, encouragement and support to put their views before the Working Group and that this will be considered in the implementation of actions outlined in the Climate Emergency Plan.

Working Group members will provide advice that reflects the interest and benefits the sector of the community or unit of Council that they represent.

Working Group members will keep the representative communities or Council units informed of the Working Groups work (where relevant).

The Working Group does not have an operational role and neither it, nor its members, may direct Council staff in the performance of their duties.

Members must act honestly, treat others with respect, exercise reasonable care and diligence, and not make improper use of their position or make improper use of information acquired because of their position.

The expectation of members' behaviour is that they will behave with respect and openness by listening to one another and by allowing all members to have a voice. Respectful behaviour is

inclusive of all Working Group meetings, emails, correspondence, telephone calls and on-line meetings.

Members must work co-operatively with other members, respect the authority of the Chair and meeting procedures and must not seek to dominate the meeting or insist or imply that their own views and ideas carry more weight than those of others.

Members must respect the confidential and sensitivity of information as appropriate.

Working Group members must not speak for Council and are not authorised to speak to the media in respect of the Working Group's activities and deliberations.

Behaviour outside of these expectations may result in a Working Group member being formally removed from the group.

Meetings & agendas

Attendance at Working Group meetings is expected in normal circumstances and is critical to fulfilment of appointment as a member.

Meetings will be held quarterly unless determined by the Working Group Chair and Council Officer in order to allow for the timely consideration and provision of advice to Council on particular, time-sensitive matters from time to time. Meetings will be held outside of business hours to enable attendance (likely 5.30pm – 7pm, however best timing will be determined in first meeting).

If the Chairperson is not present at a meeting, the Working Group members will determine to appoint a Chairperson for the purposes of conducting the meeting.

The appointed Council officer will take responsibility for providing executive support to the Working Group including provision of meeting agendas and minutes. Working Group agendas will be forward to Working Group members by email no later than five working days before a scheduled meeting. Minutes will be provided to Working Group members no later than 10 working days of the meeting.

Working Group agenda items will be identified by Council Officers in consultation with the Chairperson. Members are able to request items to be listed subject to them being raised with Council's Environment Unit Officer

Working Group meetings *may* be held virtually

Working Group meetings are closed to the public.

Special guests / subject matter experts may be invited to the meeting at the combined discretion of the Chair and relevant Council officer.

Any Conflicts of Interest must be declared and recorded at the commencement of the meeting. A member who has a conflict of interest must leave the meeting when the item is discussed.

Meetings will aim to be no more than 1.5 hours in duration. Additional time commitments such as reviewing documents and attending extra events or meetings will be arranged as required.

NOTE: It's anticipated that members may require approximately three additional hours between meetings to review proposals, read additional materials and communicate with networks.

Agendas will generally be structured as follows:

- Traditional Owners acknowledgement.
- Attendance (members present and apologies).
- Actions arising from previous meeting and their outcomes.
- Updates from respective groups and/or members.
- Items for Discussion.
- Other Business.

Reporting

The specific advice of the Working Group in relation to a particular matter will be communicated to Council by the relevant Council officer in an appropriate format if and when required.

The Working Group will be the responsibility of the Environment Coordinator

The progress and activities of a Working Group will be reported annually through the Annual Environment Report or other appropriate report.

Review

The group will conduct an internal review of its role, structure and achievements after 2 terms and make recommendations to Council regarding the future role and functions of the Group, including potential revisions to these Terms of Reference.

Appendix A: Climate Emergency Working Group: Selection Criteria

Criterion 1 (25%) Skills and knowledge	Holds relevant technical skills and knowledge to enable climate action projects to be implemented. Holds relevant knowledge of behaviour change methods and principles. Holds skills in co-design and assets-based community development.
Criterion 2 (25%) Lived experience	Has relevant lived experience that would positively influence project and program content to ensure inclusivity.
Criterion 3 (25%) Community connections	Has existing connections to community groups, community leaders and organisations to enable effective collaboration.
Criterion 4 (25%) Experience enabling Climate Emergency Plan principles	Able to provide examples of past experience enabling equity, embedding First Nation perspectives, mobilisation, collaboration and partnerships and regeneration.