

Community Emissions Reduction Plan – Community Consultation FAQs

What is climate change?

Climate change relates to the build-up of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) in the earth's atmosphere. The build-up of GHG traps heat from the sun and results in a gradual increase in earth's temperatures. Climate scientists agree that human influence has been the leading cause of climate change related global warming, through the production of GHG.

What are greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)?

Climate change relates to the problem of too many Greenhouse Gases (GHG) in our atmosphere, which traps heat below the atmosphere, warming temperatures across earth.

It is now understood that since the industrial revolution, human activity has significantly increased the amount of these gases being released into the atmosphere, leading to increased warming. The main causes of GHG emissions are the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation.

We are already starting to feel the effects of this, as evidenced by increasing weather extremes, and in the number, duration and severity of heatwaves.

What are the common greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)?

Common GHGs are Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O). As the most common GHG found in the atmosphere is Carbon Dioxide, climate change related emissions are commonly referred to as carbon emissions.

Why is Council undertaking this project?

To achieve effective action on climate change, everyone needs to play a part. Recognising this, Banyule City Council is committed to working in partnership with the community and other levels of government, to reduce our contribution to climate change.

Banyule has established two key plans:

- The Banyule Corporate Emissions Reduction Plan will consider emissions sources within Council's direct control with an aim of carbon neutrality by 2028

- The Community Climate Action Plan will support the community through incentives and advocating to work towards carbon neutrality for the whole municipality

These are supported by the \$5M Climate Action Package

What is the \$5M Climate Action Package?

Council's \$5M Climate Action Package includes:

- Additional solar power across 150 Council owned buildings and facilities
- Energy efficiency enhancements across Council owned buildings
- Additional electric vehicles for Council's fleet
- 10 'Green Collar' internships
- Development of business cases for long term abatement initiatives (i.e. solar farms, wind farms, street light replacement)
- Extra allocation of funds to the Environment Grants to support community projects
- Development of Banyule Corporate Emissions Reduction Plan and Community Climate Action Plan using the C40 framework for cities.

What is carbon neutrality?

Carbon neutrality means that there is net zero emissions arising from an organisation or product or service. Emissions can be reduced by lowering energy consumption, improving energy efficiency and utilising renewable forms of energy.

Where some emissions are unavoidable, like those arising from items we purchase whose production processes are not in our direct control, an organisation will undertake projects that will remove the equivalent amount of emissions from the atmosphere, such as planting trees, renewable energy projects and energy efficiency projects. These are referred to as offsets.

What is meant by 'purchasing carbon offsets'?

An organisation will typically purchase carbon offsets, as the final step in their process to reduce their emissions accounts to net zero and achieve carbon neutrality.

Carbon offsets are approved projects or activities, which remove a equivalent amount of emissions from the atmosphere.

Council believes that the purchase of offsets should only occur after steps to reduce energy consumption, improve energy efficiency and procure renewable energy has been undertaken.

What is C40 Cities and the C40 Framework?

C40 Cities is a network of cities around the world, committed to taking strong action on climate change. Through C40, member cities can collaborate effectively, share knowledge and drive meaningful, measurable and sustainable action on climate change.

The C40 Framework is a specific roadmap for cities who are wanting to reduce their emissions to zero.

As a Melbourne Metropolitan Council, with Melbourne being a member city of the C40 network, we are able to use this framework to build our response to Climate Change.

In what ways can Council offer support to reduce emissions?

In December 2018 Council passed a Climate Action resolution ensuring strong, collaborative and urgent action to reduce emissions across Banyule. We do not have operational control over emissions occurring in the wider community, like we do our own. Partnering with the community to achieve the breadth and scale of action required is central to our climate action commitments.

Our role	What will we do?
Collaborator	We will partner with households, community groups and businesses in Banyule, as well as NAGA Councils and other governments for to accomplish actions.
Enabler	We will facilitate others' action through training, grants and other financial assistance.
Information and advice provider	We will be a trusted resource that informs people's choice of services and providers.
Activator	We will use existing links with our diverse community to broaden the conversation with those who are not yet active in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.
Broker	We will connect players in and beyond the municipality, e.g. to broker partnerships for power purchase agreements (PPAs).
Advocate	We will be the intermediary between state and federal governments to mobilise community action.

What are some of the strategies that Council has already implemented?

Council has a long history of acting to reduce our emissions, with the introduction of energy efficient streetlights, solar hot water and solar electricity systems (to name a few).

Most recently, as part of the December 2018 Climate Action resolution, Council has ramped up efforts to improve the energy efficiency of our Council owned buildings with initiatives such as LED light replacement, upgrades to insulation and the introduction of solar hot water systems.

Notably, we are working to roll out solar PV to all Council owned buildings over the short term.

What are the strategies Council is looking to implement to work towards a carbon neutral municipality?

Actions across the following key themes will place the Banyule municipality on a pathway to zero net emissions:

1. Build and broaden engagement
2. Accelerate opportunities for renewable energy
3. Increased energy efficiency
4. Green our buildings
5. Transition to low emissions transport
6. Transition to a circular economy
7. Plan for a climate adaptive and resilient Banyule
8. Monitor, evaluate, report and improve on the plan.

These actions are based on the 'powers' available to Council, considering opportunities within our control, together with opportunities outside our control where our role is to advocate, educate and influence.

We are adopting a staged approach to supporting a zero net emissions municipality, beginning with actions that can be undertaken within the current budget, and planning for the actions that require further budget for additional staffing, research and infrastructure.

Where can I find more information?

Please visit the Shaping Banyule webpage or contact the project team on +61 3 9490 4222 or enquiries@banyule.vic.gov.au. You can also visit us at 1 Flintoff Street, Greensborough 3088

How can I obtain information in other formats or languages?

If you would like this information in different format or language please contact Environment@banyule.vic.gov.au