



Merri-bek
City Council

Climate Emergency Action Plan

**Towards a zero carbon, zero waste
and climate resilient Merri-bek
2025 – 2030
DRAFT (V2.0)**



DRAFT

Acknowledgements:

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional custodians of the land and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We recognise their continuing connection to the land and community. We pay our respect to the Wurundjeri people, and to their Elders past, present and future, as well as to all First Nations people who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

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Merri-bek Council and community – responding together for a zero carbon, circular and climate resilient future

We are creating a climate ready Merri-bek to ensure a safe, fair and resilient community. Acting on the climate and circular economy is an opportunity to innovate and create change. To improve our health, prevent pollution and save money for our community.

Climate change is a dangerous threat to earth's people, plants and animals. From the local to the global level, we need to transition away from fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) and transform our economies to conserve natural resources and regenerate nature.

Hotter weather, more extreme heatwaves, flash floods and loss of reliable seasonal rains are some of the climate impacts already hurting our people, economy and wildlife.

We are continuing to scale up our work with our community (including residents, community organisations and businesses), neighbouring councils and other levels of government to ensure an equitable, safe and sustainable future, where everyone can thrive, and no one is left behind.

Merri-bek City Council is proud to continue demonstrating leadership in local government climate action.

Over the past 5 years, together with our community, Council has made significant progress towards the community goals and Council targets we set when the first Zero Carbon Merri-bek Climate Emergency Action Plan was adopted in 2019. Visit zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au to find out what has been achieved so far.

Over the next five years we are scaling up our action, including by: dedicating funds to improve **active travel infrastructure around schools** (to complement our Ride & Stride behaviour change program); collaborating to **ensure low-income households are supported to be safe during extreme weather and avoid 'energy poverty'**; **optimising our kerbside waste services** to keep organic waste and other recyclable resources out of landfill; fostering an **increase in tree canopy on private land** to reduce community exposure to urban heat; and evolving our **delivery of city infrastructure to embed circularity principles and climate resilience from the start**.

Council will continue to partner and collaborate, including with the Melbourne 9 (M9) councils, the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA), CERES Environment Park and others, to bring people together to learn, engage and act.

There is much we can do collectively at a local and regional level to reduce our carbon pollution and increase our ability to cope with the many impacts of a warmer and less stable climate.

Importantly, we can all play a role in demanding State and Federal Governments put in place key policies and programs to enable Merri-bek (and Australia) to undertake a 'fast and fair' transition to be zero carbon, circular (zero waste) and climate resilient.

By joining together to respond to the climate emergency and play our part in transforming our society and economy, we can help ensure our city and our planet is a place we can all enjoy.

We are committed to urgent and holistic climate action, with no-one left behind

In 2018 Merri-bek City Council formally acknowledged that we are in a state of climate emergency that requires urgent action by all levels of government and society. Merri-bek has a long and proud history of leadership action on climate change and environmental sustainability.

As effective global action to limit warming to 1.5 degrees has continued to falter, we acknowledge the need to expand our focus beyond 'zero carbon' targets. Our plan reflects our commitment to cut greenhouse emissions, rethink our resource use and build community resilience to climate impacts. Importantly, we will be enacting our principles to 'facilitate a just and inclusive transition' and 'build cohesive, healthy and sustainable urban systems'.

We will be engaging more deeply to support harder to reach and at-risk community, as well as collaborating in our advocacy to State and Federal Government for urgent and effective policy and legislative reform.

We recognise that effective engagement and mobilisation of civil society and businesses in campaigning to demand emergency-mode action on climate change is critical. It is the foundation for the 'political will' required to prioritise action for a safe climate above the vested interests of the fossil fuel lobby. We aim to play our part in moving beyond an incremental approach to transitioning our society.

Council is committed to being a local government leader in addressing the climate emergency. Also, Victorian legislation designates certain climate change accountabilities to all local governments. The Local Government Act 2020 S. 9(2)(c) states 'the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted'. Additionally, the Victorian Climate Change Act 2017 explicitly states that climate change decisions should be based on the Act's guiding principles including being evidence-based, integrated and equitable; and, that councils are required to 'have regard to climate change' when preparing a municipal public health and wellbeing plan (MPHWP).

Our shared vision for a climate ready Merri-bek

Zero Carbon – Circular (Zero Waste) – Climate Resilient

The vision statements for Merri-bek draw on our Zero Carbon Merri-bek – 2040 Framework, our subsequent Climate Risk Strategy and our new Circular Economy Strategy. They express what a zero carbon, circular and climate resilient Merri-bek might look like.

Energy Transition - Efficient and 100% renewably powered energy:

- The buildings we live and work in are highly energy efficient - well insulated and built or retrofitted for comfort
- Homes and businesses are powered only by electricity, following a supported phase-out of gas
- Many households and businesses generate, store and export renewable electricity locally
- The national grid is powered by 100% renewable energy
- Many residents and businesses are proactive and engaged energy users and help to manage demand by smart use of electricity and local storage
- Energy is often generated and traded at a community level, so everyone can access local, renewable energy even if they cannot produce it on their home.

Sustainable Transport - Active and zero emissions transport:

- Most people choose to walk or cycle to get around locally because its healthy, free, safe and convenient
- Merri-bek is known for its pedestrian and cycle-friendly streetscapes – Streets for People
- Many residents work, play and access services close to home, in neighbourhoods designed to prioritise people
- Renewable-powered buses, trams and trains provide a quick, reliable and affordable way to travel
- Use of electric 'car/ride share' services complement active travel and public transport options, helping to reduce private vehicle ownership
- Low rates of private car ownership have seen car parks converted to green and public open spaces
- Clean and quiet freight trucks (fuelled by hydrogen or electricity generated by renewable sources) complement 'last mile' freight delivery by bikes, electric scooters and vans.

Waste and consumption - Circular economy with zero waste:

- Households and businesses avoid generating waste (and save money!)
- A 'conscious consumer' mindset is the norm and waste is seen as a resource. Consumption (and therefore waste) is reduced as the community reduces what it purchases, then reuses, repairs, repurposes, recycles, and buys recycled
- Many people enjoy local, seasonal and plant-based diets, while minimising food waste
- Local reuse, repair, exchange, share and recycling groups and services are thriving
- Local businesses prosper by creating or providing sustainable goods and services that enable the circular economy
- Many products are made from recycled materials and are easy to repair, remanufacture or recycle in Australia
- All unavoidable organic waste is composted or processed to create other useful products (such as mulch, compost, biogas, biochar).

Socially just and climate resilient – No-one left behind:

- Merri-bek is climate-resilient, leafy and liveable, using water and vegetation in the landscape to combat the urban heat island effect.
- The Merri-bek community is climate-ready and resilient with no one left behind. They are aware of climate-related impacts that may affect them and actions they can take to improve their resilience.
- The Merri-bek community is connected, collaborating, and supporting each other by sharing information and providing mutual support in preparing for, responding to climate-related shocks and emergencies.
- Council works with partners and provides appropriate support to Merri-bek residents and community, especially at-risk groups, to empower them in proactively adapting to climate change and building resilience

Council as role model – zero carbon, circular and climate resilient

- Merri-bek City Council is a recognised local government leader in acting on the climate emergency, consistently 'walking the talk' on zero carbon, zero waste (circularity) and climate resilience.
- Council's climate action is adaptive, collaborative and impactful, seeking transformation for a safe and just climate future for all.

About this Action Plan for 2025-26 – 2029-30

This Action Plan brings together elements of our Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 Framework, our draft Circular Economy Strategy (2025) and our Climate Risk Strategy (2022), to act in an integrated way. It will guide our action over the next five years to:

- continue **reducing climate pollution** from Council and our community ('Zero Carbon')
- scale up our action to **foster a more circular economy**, where waste and pollution is designed out, materials keep circulating and nature is regenerated ('Zero Waste/Circular'); and
- **foster climate resilience** within our community and city ('Climate Resilient').

Merri-bek's biggest direct sources of climate pollution are energy consumption (coal & gas fired electricity 36% and fossil gas 26%), **transport** (23%) and landfilled organic **waste** (6%) (as estimated by Snapshot for 2022/23). So the Action Plan summarises key activities to influence and reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions across Energy, Transport and Waste sectors.

To reflect the vision and principles in our draft Circular Economy Strategy, **the Action Plan includes more explicit focus on tackling the 'embodied carbon' within all the goods and resources imported and used in Merri-bek.** We will strive to foster a 'conscious consumer' mindset through education and behaviour change initiatives and encouraging adoption of circular business models in our local economy. Our biggest potential impact to reduce embodied carbon is likely to be through **a new strategic direction of 'Council as Role Model'**. This recognises the importance of Council using its purchasing power to lead by example. Especially through delivery of our building and infrastructure projects (which can consider renewal instead of demolition and rebuild, and use more recycled, natural and low-carbon materials) to influence our supply chains and inspire our community, local developers and other councils to follow our lead.

Council has made progress in establishing corporate and governance systems to manage climate risk in Merri-bek. We have developed a better understanding of how climate change is already impacting our health and wellbeing and the places we love.

More extreme weather and rising energy costs are leaving many community members more exposed and vulnerable. This is especially evident in low-income households who are disproportionately affected by rising energy prices. Despite some changes in federal and state policies there has been little progress in ensuring that all members of our community are protected from climate impacts and can benefit from the energy transition.

Through this next Action Plan, **we aspire to support the resilience, health, and wellbeing of our diverse community.** We will also work to improve the climate resilience of community spaces, homes and buildings, nature and open spaces, so that we can continue to enjoy the many benefits they provide. The climate resilience actions are reflected under the new strategic directions 'Socially just and climate resilient transition' and 'Council as Role Model'.

Climate Emergency Action Plan 2025 – 2030 – Summary ‘Plan on a Page’

Towards a zero carbon, circular (zero waste) and climate resilient Merri-bek

Strategic directions	Socially just and climate resilient transition: No one left behind	Energy Transition: Efficient and 100% renewably powered energy	Sustainable transport: Active or zero emissions transport	Waste and consumption: Circular economy with zero waste
Key action priorities	- Programs and funding to ensure low-income and at-risk residents are not left behind Communicate, engage, and collaborate with our diverse community - Collaborate to get more shade trees in backyards, schools, retirement villages - Progress ‘resilience hubs’ model in at-risk neighbourhood(s) - Foster a heat aware community	Promote and facilitate household energy transition (energy efficiency, renewables, storage) Energy innovation and partnerships (distributed storage, vehicle to grid) - Targeted initiatives to foster energy transition by businesses	School active travel (Ride & Stride, Open Streets, infrastructure improvements) - Targeted programs and incentives to increase adoption of low and zero emissions travel by our diverse community - Facilitating EV charging network - Creating a more walking and cycling friendly city through holistic infrastructure and community activation (Streets for People Plan and Moving around Merri-bek Strategy)	Education and behaviour change (reduce waste/plastic, recycle right, rethink consumption) - Efficient and high-performance kerbside services - Tailored services to reduce food and packaging waste from businesses and multi-unit developments - Foster circular economy opportunities and outcomes for and by businesses, social enterprises and community.
Council as role model - creating a zero carbon, circular and climate resilient city				
Leading by example in our city planning, Council buildings, infrastructure and fleet, operations, services, advocacy and climate governance				

About our goals for 2030

Recognising the existential threat that climate change and ecological breakdown pose to communities here and across the globe, Council has adopted ambitious goals. These goals reflect our strategic objective 'to strive for maximum protection of people's health, plants and animals through leading the urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment' (Council Plan 2021-25).

Because Council cannot 'control' many of the sources of emissions, waste and pollution within our municipality, we are inviting everyone: individuals, community groups, schools, businesses and not-for-profit organisations, to plan and act – within their sphere of control and influence – to reduce carbon emissions and waste generation and increase their climate readiness.

Across the five strategic directions in the Action Plan, there are sub-goals for Community and Council to strive to achieve by 2030.

- **Community 2030 goals — we invite everyone to adopt and help achieve these goals** - these reflect desired outcomes from our collective action, including actions by residents, businesses and all levels of government. We invite all individuals and levels of government to adopt the 2030 community goals and play their part in achieving them.
- **Council 2030 goals – we will strive to achieve these goals** - these are tangible outcomes from actions and programs that are within the control of Council. Achievement of these goals will depend on annual resource allocation to deliver planned actions and initiatives. Many of these goals are associated with Council acting as a 'role model' and achieving them will directly contribute towards realising the broader Community goals.

It is our goal for Merri-bek (municipality) to achieve 75% emissions reduction by 2030 (against 2011/12 baseline), net zero by 2035 and drawdown ('negative emissions') by 2040. While significant progress has been made, based on our latest emissions profile (see Snapshot, 2022/23) we are tracking 'behind target' with emissions down 30% since 2011/12. We need everyone to accelerate the transition towards 'all electric buildings' (powered by renewables), active and zero emissions transport and zero waste.

We also have the aspiration for Merri-bek to achieve zero waste to landfill. By 2030, through greater investment in Victoria's waste and recycling sector and 'recycling right' by our community, it's a community goal to increase the diversion rate of kerbside bin waste away from landfill to 80%, without relying on waste to energy.

Council also has a highly ambitious target **to reduce Council's (corporate/operational) greenhouse gas emissions by 80 – 100% by 2030** (precluding offsets, against 2011/12 baseline). Council's electricity use is 100% renewably powered (zero emissions) so action to reduce Council's remaining direct emissions is focused on switching our vehicle fleet to zero emissions technologies and transitioning off gas in our buildings.

We also aim to ensure that Merri-bek residents have access to relevant and appropriate information and support from Council to take meaningful action to adapt and build resilience to climate change. Achieving climate adaptation outcomes requires a strong partnership between residents and the Council, where Council provides information and support, while success depends on community participation and action.

To achieve our vision of a zero carbon, circular and climate resilient Merri-bek we need to expand our advocacy and collaboration with others. We must continue building the social movement required to transform our lifestyles, our economy and our politics to recognise and address the climate emergency. State and Federal Governments control many potential policy and funding levers that must be enacted for Merri-bek (and Australia) to achieve our objective of 'maximum protection of people's health, plants and animals'.

Supporting a socially just and climate resilient transition

Community 2030 goals - we invite everyone to adopt and help achieve these goals:

- Our community is informed and resilient – Our diverse residents are more informed about local environment and climate issues and are supported to take climate action and build their resilience to climate impacts.
- An inclusive energy transition - All residents benefit from the energy transition with comfortable and resilient homes and can pay their energy bills.

Council 2030 goals– we will strive to deliver on these goals:

- An inclusive energy transition – tailored support has helped at least 1,000 at-risk households to lower their energy bills and improve the thermal comfort of their homes.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
1.1	Explore opportunities for partnership on climate and circular economy as part of Merri-bek's Statement of Commitment with the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Merri-bek.	Our vision as a Council for reconciliation is respectful and inclusive recognition of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Merri-bek. To build stronger relationships we will: • Investigate with other councils a coordinated approach and support for WWCHAC to work with Councils on climate. • Resource engagement with WWCHAC and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Merri-bek on climate and circular economy. • Support Ballerit Mooroop's potential as a showcase of climate resilience.	Lead: Sustainability & Climate Branch WWCHAC Other councils on Wurundjeri Country	Engagement within existing operating budgets.
1.2	Advocate for systemic changes to enable a socially just and climate resilient Merri-bek	Strategic and collaborative campaigns and partnerships to influence all levels of government. Key advocacy asks include: • Invest in place-based programs and infrastructure upgrades to increase local community resilience to climate impacts.	Lead: Sustainability and Climate Branch M9, NAGA, Victorian	Within existing operating budgets.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
		Support and fund energy upgrades programs and subsidies for at-risk households and partner with local government to deliver targeted local outreach. Refer to Appendix 1 for high priority 'advocacy asks' of State and Federal Governments.	Greenhouse Alliances, CASBE, MAV, Climate Emergency Australia, VCOSS, ACOSS, Renew Australia for All, 1 Million Homes Alliance.	
1.3	Communicate and engage with our diverse community on the climate emergency and circular economy	Continue with general communications on the climate emergency and circular economy for residents, businesses and community organisations, including: - Providing engaging information, showcasing community action and ensuring information reaches at-risk members of the community. - Activities such as the Zero Carbon Merri-bek website, monthly e-newsletter, webinars, videos and events and Council communications channels. - Profiling and promoting diverse leaders in the community to inspire and influence.	Lead: Sustainable Communities Unit	Within existing operating budget.
1.4	Evolve and expand responsive and evidence-based programs and initiatives to ensure disadvantaged and/or at-risk residents are not left behind.	Higher energy prices and poor performing homes are creating energy stress and exacerbating risks from extreme weather, particularly for at-risk or disadvantaged households. Many at-risk households do not have the capacity or the funds to support upgrades to their homes. In response, Council will: Continue to deliver and evolve a program of subsidised energy and solar upgrades for low-income households.	Lead: Sustainable Communities Unit Other Local Governments/ Greenhouse Alliances State and/or federal government and	Within operating project budget (pending confirmation of draft Council Budget 2025-26).

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
		- Work with potential collaborators on key aspects such as program review, refinement, joint procurement and cross promotion. - Explore ways to secure long-term funding for supporting at-risk households in the energy transition.	associated agencies	
1.5	Undertake place-based community outreach and engagement to meet community interest and needs	Building on the success of the pilot project undertaken in Fawkner, continue with place-based activities and expand to other areas in Merri-bek's north. Activities include: - Co-design engagement with diverse local groups and residents to meet community interest and needs. - Visit active community groups to share Council sustainability programs and services. - Recruit and support volunteer working group of local leaders to provide guidance. - Conduct events and programs identified through the co-design process.	Lead: Sustainable Communities Unit	Within existing operating budget to June 2026. Subject to business case / grant funding from July 2026.
1.6	Build the capacity of residents and community groups to take action	Build community capacity and resilience of residents and community groups to act in the community and to inspire and support others. To be achieved with engaging programs such as further roll-out of The Adaptation Game, skills workshops, scholarships and community grants. Explore ways to support partnerships with community groups on local climate and circular economy.	Lead: Sustainable Communities Unit Community groups	Within existing operating budget.
1.7	Investigate and (where viable) implement, methods for creating sustainable funding to build and strengthen the Merri-bek	Council will look at reducing barriers to participation in the journey to 100% renewable energy and supporting community members to improve their climate resilience, with a focus on disadvantaged and at-risk residents. Council will investigate sustainable forms of funding streams (both internally and externally) such as:	Lead: Sustainable Communities Unit	Investigations within existing operating budget.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
	community's energy and climate resilience, and address energy inequity.	• Long term Council funding; • Community funds; • Revenue making activities; • State and federal funding mechanisms; and • Green bonds and/or private investment/ philanthropy.		
1.8	Reduce impacts of urban heat and increasing heatwaves by collaborating to get more shade trees in places like schools, retirement villages, and backyards.	Planting trees is the most effective way to combat urban heat. We will focus on places used by groups that are at risk from extreme heat such as older people and young children. To do this, Urban Forest and Sustainability teams will work together to: • Co-design the program and identify required resources. • Raise awareness of the right trees for right spaces and that risks from trees can be reduced by correct tree selection. • Promote custodianship and maintenance of trees for the future. • Trial a partnership with a school or retirement village to plant trees and vegetation for cooling, then expand if successful. • Explore local partnerships to support shade tree planting in household gardens.	Lead: Sustainability and Climate on program design and community engagement	Design within existing operating budgets. Implementation subject to business case / grant funding.
1.9	Explore and progress 'Resilient Neighbourhood Hub' model in an at-risk neighbourhood	To support community resilience through strengths-based and place-based approaches, we will design and deliver a Resilient Neighbourhood Hub model in Fawkner. To do this, we will: • Work with our Community Development and Social Policy team and others to establish a partnership model with social service providers and community groups in the area. • Identify priority buildings for upgrading or retrofitting to be more climate resilient and implement works in partnership with our Capital Works Planning and Delivery teams.	Lead: Sustainability and Climate Branch	Subject to grant funding

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
		Support and fund climate resilience programs led by community partners.		

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Energy Transition: Towards efficient and 100% renewably powered energy

Community 2030 goals - we invite everyone to adopt and help achieve these goals:

- **Community solar capacity** - Combined solar capacity across Merri-bek's residents and businesses has increased to 250MW up from 2024 levels of 77.8MW
- **Community solar penetration** – At least 25% of Merri-bek households (up from 13.5%) and 20% of businesses (up from 11%) have rooftop solar PV.
- **Energy storage** – the amount of energy storage (in batteries) within Merri-bek has risen from 3.1MWh capacity in 2024 to at least 6.2MWh by 2030, helping to maximise the usage of local rooftop solar.
- **Decreased gas use** – With new rules preventing gas connections into new homes, combined with the growing understanding of the benefits of electrification, the Merri-bek community's fossil gas consumption has reduced by 25% from its 2022-23 levels.

Council 2030 goals – we will strive to deliver on these goals:

- **An energy-efficient and electrified Merri-bek** – Council has assisted at least 3,000 homes and/or businesses in transitioning to energy efficient and all-electric operations in their homes/ premises.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
2.1	Advocate for systemic changes to accelerate the energy transition	Strategic and collaborative campaigns and partnerships to influence all levels of government. Key advocacy asks include: • Phasing out of gas appliances from new and existing homes for residents to benefit from the health, safety and bills savings benefits of all electric homes. • Mandatory disclosure of energy performance of residential properties at point of sale and lease. Refer to Appendix 1 for high priority 'advocacy asks' of State and Federal Governments.	Lead: Sustainability and Climate Branch. M9, NAGA, Victorian Greenhouse Alliances, CASBE, MAV, ALGA, Climate Emergency Australia, VCOSS, ACOS, Renew Australia for All, 1 Million Homes Alliance.	Within existing operating budgets.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
2.2	Promote and support household 'energy transition' (efficient, all electric, renewable, thermally comfortable and healthy) with targeted programs.	• Provide residents with information, tools and clear pathways to make their homes energy efficient, electric and powered by renewables. Connect residents with rebates and programs delivered by state and federal governments. Tailored program for different community cohorts such as renters and landlords. • Continue to conduct the evidence-based electrification communications campaigns to support households to transition off gas for heating, cooking and hot water. • Encourage households to shift their energy use (such as appliances) to during the day when energy tariffs are lower and for solar households to maximise energy savings by using their own clean energy.	Lead: Sustainable Communities Unit SECV, Solar Savers/ other local governments, service providers, Research Institutions.	Within existing operating budgets.
2.3	Investigate and implement innovative approaches that can deliver energy solutions at the community-scale.	With increasing local solar energy generation and battery storage, as well as changes to how electricity is used, there may be significant opportunities to maximise benefits for the broader community, as well as solar and battery owners. Council will investigate and, where viable, enable opportunities that might work for our community, such as: • Promoting and/or piloting viable consumer energy resource interventions (e.g. virtual power plants and electric vehicles as storage solutions) so individuals and groups can actively participate in energy systems and markets. • Residential or commercial demand response programs to incentivise shifts in energy usage patterns. • Distributed energy storage via grant funded community and/or neighbourhood batteries (e.g. Brunswick Community Battery) and projects delivered by partners like electricity distributors.	Lead: Sustainable Communities Unit Electricity distributors, local service providers, energy businesses and community groups, other local governments and Victorian Greenhouse Alliances	Investigations within existing operating / capital budgets. Implementation may be subject to business case / grant funding.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
2.4	Continue collaboration to support residents / owners of existing apartments to transition to be energy efficient, electric, powered by renewables and resilient	48% of Merri-bek households live in medium and high-density housing. Building on Council's Unlocking Sustainable Strata project, we'll continue partnering with others to help overcome the extra barriers to energy transition within existing apartments. Activities likely to include: • Host or support events that provide information and peer-to-peer sharing of how apartment residents, owners and managers can make their buildings more sustainable. • Collaborate and seek funding to enable apartment energy upgrade research. Case study strata building communities receive end-to-end support through the full upgrade cycle over multiple years. Experiences generate insights, case studies, support materials, and events which enable other buildings to follow in their footsteps and improve legislation. • Advocate for enabling legislation including changes to the Victorian Owners Corporation Act to make it easier for energy upgrades to occur.	Lead: Sustainable Communities, in collaboration with other Local Governments with substantial Strata populations, research institutions, state and federal governments, and relevant strata associations	Ad-hoc opportunities within existing operating budgets. Substantive new initiatives would require grant funding.
2.5	Provide information and support to Merri-bek businesses to be energy efficient and renewably powered	Merri-bek's commercial and industrial businesses may require specific responses to assist them in being part of the energy transition, such as: • Information and access to energy upgrades advice, programs or incentives for energy efficiency and renewables in existing commercial buildings and businesses. • Opportunities to upskill and evolve their services to align with the energy transition (e.g. plumbers, electricians etc).	Lead: Economic Development with support from Sustainability & Climate State / Federal Government Industry associations	Ad-hoc opportunities within existing operating budgets. New support programs/ initiatives subject to business case / grant funding.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
2.6	Work with strategic partners that can assist in delivering outcomes of emissions reductions and community benefits as part of the energy transition	Recognising that Council cannot deliver on its ambitious goals by itself, Merri-bek will continue to work with existing stakeholders and create new relationships to meaningfully impact Merri-bek's transition to 100% renewable energy. Such opportunities include: - Promote and improve existing program/s - both Council initiated and those conducted by external partners, to extend reach and effectiveness of programs. - Collaborate on new initiatives and innovations/ opportunities. - Represent the Merri-bek community on key stakeholder and reference groups. - Investigate and explore ways that external funding (state, federal or private sector) can be unlocked.	Lead: Sustainability & Climate Branch Electricity distributors, Local, State and federal governments, government agencies, Not for Profits, solution providers and suppliers, local businesses	Within existing operating budget.

Sustainable Transport: Towards active or zero emissions transport

Community 2030 goals - we invite everyone to adopt and help achieve these goals:

- **More active & sustainable local trips** - More people of all ages and abilities are moving around Merri-bek actively and sustainably, with less residents relying on private cars for local journeys.
- **Healthy and safe school commutes** – Merri-bek schools engaged in the Ride & Stride program are averaging 80% of school trips by bike, scooter, walking or public transport.
- **Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network** – publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure in Merri-bek has expanded, to achieve a ratio of 17:1 EVs to public charging bays (including Council-owned, privately owned and pole-mounted chargers).
- **Better Public Transport** – responding to priority advocacy asks, the state government has approved delivery of the duplication and extension of the Upfield train line and roll-out of accessible tram stops along Sydney Road.

Council 2030 goals – we will strive to deliver on these goals:

- **Streets for People network** – Council has delivered holistic upgrades within 10 corridors across the Streets for People network.
- **Ride & Stride infrastructure** – Council has delivered active travel infrastructure improvements for at least half of schools actively engaged in the Ride & Stride behaviour change program, to foster safe and healthy school precincts.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
3.1	Advocate for systemic changes to support active and zero emissions travel.	Strategic and collaborative campaigns and partnerships to influence all levels of government. Key advocacy asks include: • Duplication and extension of the Upfield train line to Wallan • Accelerated roll-out of accessible tram stops, with a priority on Sydney Road. Refer to Appendix 1 for high priority 'advocacy asks' of State and Federal Governments.	Lead: Transport Branch Northern Councils Alliance Community advocates	Withing existing operating budgets.
3.2	Implement Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy and Action Plan	The Moving around Merri-bek Strategy outlines Council's approach to deliver a transport system in Merri-bek that is Safe, Accessible, Sustainable, Healthy, Liveable and Inclusive.	Lead: Transport Branch	Within existing operating and capital budgets.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
		Strategic activities required to support achievement of this plan's 2030 goals for sustainable transport include: • Commence delivery of Streets for People corridors • Deliver infrastructure to support active travel to schools • Invest in strategic improvements to the Pedestrian Network • Expand and improve our Cycling Network • Deliver more bike parking & bike behaviour change programs • Support shared and micro-mobility • Roll out safer speed limits • Support expansion of car share services.		
3.3	Deliver the Ride & Stride behaviour change program together with priority infrastructure upgrades around schools, to foster safe and active travel to and from school	Build on the Ride & Stride behaviour change program by integrating dedicated funding for capital infrastructure in Merri-bek school zones. Continue to deliver and scale our innovative, holistic and collaborative interventions with engaged Ride & Stride primary schools. Behaviour change offers to schools include: • Assistance with trialling or establishing Open Streets • Education / skills training in bike riding, road safety and bike maintenance • Subsidies or other supports encouraging parents to switch to active transport for school commutes Priority infrastructure improvements within selected school precincts could include: • Safer school crossings • Designated school zone asphalt treatments • Lower speed limits • Modal filters • Tactical urbanism treatments – e.g. asphalt art, planter boxes, street furniture	Lead: Sustainability & Climate Branch with Transport Branch Local Primary and High Schools Local community bike shops, organisations and advocacy groups Relevant State departments/agencies	Within existing operating (Sustainable Communities) and capital (Transport) budgets.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
		Investigate opportunities to integrate the Ride & Stride program with high schools, kindergartens and childcare centres as the program continues to scale.		
3.4	Design and deliver innovative programs and initiatives to support active travel by people with additional barriers (e.g. low-income, CALD, women/gender diverse).	To foster transport equity, continue to design and deliver active travel initiatives for residents facing additional or intersectional transport barriers, including by: • Wheel Sisters - providing tailored bike skills capacity building for women (especially culturally and linguistically diverse women) in Merri-bek's north. • Expanding free community e-bike libraries with local community centres. • Exploring / trialling subsidies for purchase or loan of e-bikes to overcome upfront cost as barrier to active travel, particularly for those on lower incomes. • Building on the success of bike maintenance classes for women and non-binary folks, with further initiatives to encourage more women in our community to feel safe and confident to ride. • Exploring opportunities to support older people, people with disabilities, or other mobility impaired residents to participate safely in active travel.	Lead: Sustainability and Climate Branch Local community centres, such as Neighbourhood Houses, Libraries, Leisure centres, etc Local advocacy groups, such as Merri-bek BUG, Walk on Merri-bek, CERES Bike Shed.	Within existing operating budgets.
3.5	Support the expansion of publicly accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network across Merri-bek and beyond	Lack of convenient access to EV charging infrastructure should not be a barrier to purchase of an EV. Council will continue to expand the network of renewably powered public charging stations through a combination of Council-installed charging stations and licencing parking bays to charging operators. Council will also: • Help facilitate the roll out of on-street EV charging options (e.g. pole-mounted chargers) in denser neighbourhoods, to serve EV owners without off-street parking. • Promote EV charging infrastructure within or adjacent to new private developments through the planning process and advocacy. • Collaborate with 'car share' businesses to accelerate their transition to electric vehicles.	Lead: Sustainability and Climate Branch Department of Transport, VicRoads, Electricity distributors Car share operators Other councils	Within existing capital and operating budgets.

Waste and Consumption: Towards a circular economy with zero waste

Community 2030 goals - we invite everyone to adopt and help achieve these goals:

- **Waste avoidance** – Cut total waste generation (across all 4 kerbside bins) by 15% per capita (against 2021 audit baseline)
- **Organic waste recovery** – Halve the amount of organic material (FOGO) going to landfill (against 2021 audit baseline)
- **Resource recovery** – Increase diversion of kerbside bin waste from landfill to 80%, without reliance on thermal Waste to Energy (WtE). In 2023/24 Merri-bek's landfill diversion rate was 53%, the achievement of 80% diversion will require optimal 'source separation' by residents and business service users, as well as government/waste sector investment in resource recovery (e.g. for soft plastics, compostable packaging etc).
- **Circular economy participation / accessibility** - More community participation (e.g. in buying/selling second-hand, repairing, leasing, borrowing etc) and more local circular initiatives being offered by community groups, businesses and not-for-profits.

Council 2030 goals – we will strive to deliver on these goals:

- **Optimised kerbside waste and recycling services** – A cost effective service with lower contamination and resource loss in kerbside bins (compared to 2021 audit baseline), achieved through service reforms together with waste education and compliance programs.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
4.1	Advocating for system change (Circular Economy Strategy Focus Area 1)	Our new Circular Economy Strategy recognises that the transition to a circular economy requires system-wide change to address the economic, environmental and social costs of the linear system of production and consumption. To reflect the principles of a circular economy, these system changes must: design out waste and pollution; keep products and materials circulating at their highest value; and regenerate nature. Council's advocacy to state and federal governments will push for high priority reforms including: • Robust and mandatory whole-of-life product stewardship schemes for more products • Mandatory national minimum product design and import standards to ensure goods are durable, reusable and recyclable at end-of-life. Refer to Appendix 1 for high priority 'advocacy asks' of State and Federal Governments.	Lead: Sustainable Communities Unit M9 Waste Management & Resource Recovery Association Australia (WMRR)	Within existing operating budgets.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
4.2	Circular economy programs and support for community (education and behaviour change for waste avoidance) (Circular Economy Strategy Focus Area 2)	Deliver community engagement and behaviour change initiatives to promote and incentivise community adoption of circular economy practices. Priority activities include: • Continue provision of recycling stations at Customer Service Centres for hard to recycle and/or hazardous waste • Continue providing subsidies for purchase of home composting equipment, reusable cloth nappies and period products, and consider program expansion to include incontinence products and/or buy-back for second-hand nappies. • Continue to support sustainability/waste education within schools and early learning centres • Promote, support, develop programs to increase community use of reusable products instead of single use disposables at Council facilities e.g. crockery, cutlery and coffee cups • Deliver targeted educational workshops, programs and events on key topics/behaviours e.g. cloth nappies (promoted through Maternal and Child Health), zero waste cooking with cultural groups, home composting, clothes mending/repurposing, food waste avoidance • Promote, support and normalise available platforms, programs and initiatives that increase participation in the circular economy e.g. libraries-of-things, repair cafes, garage sales / second-hand markets or shops, swap events • Develop a directory, map or guide to zero-waste living in Merri-bek with information on where to find circular products and services	Lead: Sustainable Communities Unit CERES Sustainability Victoria Recycling Victoria Community organisations and social enterprises	Within existing operating project budget for 2025/26. Subject to business case / funding from 2026/27 onwards.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
4.3	Optimised kerbside waste and recycling services, and community education (Circular Economy Strategy Focus Area 3)	Continue to reform our kerbside waste collection services to maximise recycling and reuse, and to equitably and cost effectively meet the needs of residents and businesses. Priority activities include: • Trial fortnightly rubbish collection during 2025/26 and, pending outcomes of trial and Council decision, roll out municipal-wide as the final stage of Kerbside Waste Reform program. • Communications and education to support waste service users (residents and businesses) to 'Recycle Right', with the aim to minimise contamination (and associated service costs) and keep recycling and FOGO out of landfill. • Conduct regular audits of kerbside bins (annually or biannually) to monitor composition and contamination levels. • Develop a contamination management plan that establishes an escalation process for compliance /enforcement action in cases of repeated/ongoing bin misuse. • Investigate tailored kerbside services for businesses and multi-unit developments (i.e. review of Commercial Plus service model): ◦ Potential for tailored (e.g. increased frequency) FOGO collection service for food businesses/manufacturers and other medium-scale organic waste generators ◦ Investigate potential to scale 'best practice kerbside in retail precincts' method or alternative (e.g. Foleys Mall) • Explore opportunities to increase resource recovery through the hard waste service, including potential partnership with a nearby transfer station. • Investigate a partnership arrangement with a nearby public access transfer station to provide additional recycling drop-off options for residents. • Consider drop-off days for priority materials and/or hard to access recycling services e.g. e-waste, textiles, household chemicals.	Lead: Waste Services Unit (with Sustainable Communities support) Recycling/Glass/FOGO receiveal and collection contractors M9 Collaborate with Economic Development Unit on tailored waste services for business	Within existing budgets (waste charge funded) Implementation of significant service changes requires cost recovery through the waste charge.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
4.4	Promote and foster waste minimisation and 'circular economy' principles within businesses (including social enterprises) and charities (Circular Economy Strategy Focus Area 4)	Consistent with our Economic Development Action Plan, Council will: • Showcase circular businesses and/or speakers at Council's business learning and networking events to increase awareness of circular economy business models and opportunities. • Promote local circular businesses through stories, case studies etc to consumers and other businesses. • Deliver at least one workshop per year on circular economy and/or environmental sustainability within Council's annual program of business knowledge and skill development seminars and workshops.	Lead: Economic Development Unit	Within existing operating budgets.
		Investigate collaborative opportunities to help local business take up of circular economy practices and opportunities. Pending resourcing, priority activities would include: • Work regionally with stakeholder groups, including Circular Economy Officers in neighbouring councils, to identify, showcase and where possible support local and emerging circular economy initiatives across Melbourne's North region and beyond. • Trial delivery of a training program that assists businesses, social enterprises and charities to develop a circular business strategy or roadmap for adopting circular economy principles and practices. • Investigate and promote opportunities and/or existing platforms that can enable business-to-business resource reuse, exchange and sharing. • Explore opportunities identified through the Material Flow Analysis to increase the diversion of priority materials in the C&I waste stream i.e. food organics, plastics and cardboard.	NAGA Melbourne's North Food Group CEBIC ACE Hub Sustainability Victoria (Buy Circular Service) Universities Social enterprises Exchange platforms	Investigations within existing operating budgets. New programs/initiatives subject to business case / grant funding.

Council as Role Model: Creating a zero carbon, circular and climate resilient city

Council 2030 goals – we will strive to deliver on these goals:

- **Planning:** Planning and development is delivering affordable and size-efficient housing to cater for population growth, without compromising measures to ensure long term liveability and amenity (e.g. tree canopy/greening, water, material efficiency, climate resilience etc)
- **Electrifying Council facilities:**
 - Pending external grant funding, a further 2 gas-heated aquatic centres have been electrified, cutting their energy-related emissions to zero. Priority sites for electrification by 2030 include Oak Park Sports & Aquatic Centre and Brunswick Baths.
 - At least 30 of Council's remaining 44 small sites that consume gas will have been electrified through a rolling upgrade program to replace gas heating and appliances with efficient electric alternatives.
- **Coburg Library and piazza:**
 - Coburg Piazza is contributing to the resilience of the local environment through climate positive design, leadership in integrated water management, regenerative landscape and urban biodiversity, and sustainable and durable materials.
 - Deliver the new Coburg Library in a way that embraces sustainability and meets agreed vision and principles.
- **Climate resilient community facilities:** Climate vulnerability improvements (e.g. insulation, flood-proofing, shading) have been completed on at least 5-10 community venues.
- **Public realm infrastructure (roads, bridges, paths, parks, streetscapes, wetlands etc):** Council has a formal policy, design guidance, technical notes and transparent processes being implemented to prioritise, deliver, monitor and verify consideration of zero carbon, circularity and climate resilience in its infrastructure projects.
- **Council light fleet:** Council's annual consumption of fossil fuels by our light passenger vehicles (sedan, hatch) has reduced to zero, and fossil fuels consumed by light commercial vehicles (utes, buses, vans) have reduced by 90%, against a 2024/25 baseline.
- **Council heavy fleet:** Council's annual consumption of diesel by our heavy fleet (primarily waste trucks) has reduced by between 26 to 37%, against a 2024/25 baseline. And at least 10% of Council's heavy fleet to be zero emissions vehicles by 2030.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
5.1	Advocate for systemic changes to enable a zero carbon, circular	Merri-bek will enhance its influence across all levels of government through strategic and collaborative advocacy campaigns and partnerships by: • ensuring climate and circular economy in all Council's advocacy	Lead: Sustainability and Climate Branch	Within existing operating budgets.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
	and climate resilient city.	- supporting a stronger local government voice and effective advocacy - supporting our community and community organisations to be advocates. Refer to Appendix 1 for high priority 'advocacy asks' of State and Federal Governments.		
5.2	Planning and compliance to achieve zero carbon, climate resilience and circularity in new homes, commercial and industrial developments	Continue to play a leading role in Victorian local government efforts towards more sustainable development through zero carbon buildings, green infrastructure, climate resilience and material circularity (low embodied carbon). Leadership and priority activities will include: - promoting the significance of embodied carbon impact in private development - promoting smaller, smarter, and more affordable housing, with size-efficient design, through engaging and educating industry - supporting planning permit applicants to assess the climate resilience of their developments - advocating for strengthened Planning Scheme standards - continuing proactive compliance and enforcement programs.	Lead: Planning & Environment Directorate Council Alliance for the Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE)	Within existing operating budgets.
5.3	Evolve policy and practice to ensure Council buildings are planned, designed and constructed to be 100% renewably powered, low embodied carbon, reflect circular economy principles	Council will continuously improve its approach to delivering building projects, progressively ensuring facilities are zero carbon, low embodied carbon, and more climate resilient throughout their lifecycle. Continuous improvement activities will include: - Apply a climate vulnerability assessment framework to prioritize facilities serving at-risk communities and integrate resilience ratings into capital works decisions - Deliver climate vulnerability improvements to 5-10 existing community buildings, prioritising buildings used by at-risk groups (e.g. older people, infants and young children),	Lead: Capital Works Planning and Delivery Branch (in collaboration with Sustainable Built Environment Unit and other teams delivering building projects.	Within project capital budgets

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
	and are climate resilient	- Implement circular economy practices, including whole-of-life assessments, preferencing reuse and refurbishment over rebuilding where feasible, and specification of products and materials that are low embodied carbon, high recycled content and durable. - Enhance building thermal performance and outdoor environments using tools like the Green Factor Tool to improve comfort while reducing energy demand. - Aim for world's best practice sustainability standards for the new Coburg Library. - Electrify Oak Park Sports & Aquatic Centre as well as 30 of Council's remaining small sites that currently use gas. - Seek grant funding to enable electrification of Brunswick Baths		
5.4	Ensure <u>Council infrastructure</u> (being streetscapes, public realm, roads, playgrounds, bridges etc) is designed and constructed to be low carbon, circular and climate resilient	Council will plan, design, build, maintain and upgrade over time to create efficient, net-zero, low embodied carbon infrastructure that is more resilient to climate extremes. Activities to achieve this include: - Assess climate risk for existing and proposed Council owned infrastructure and improve our assets accordingly - Develop and deliver a new Sustainable Infrastructure Policy which supports: - increased use of recycled content, low carbon, or 'carbon positive' materials in construction projects (e.g. high recycled content asphalt, use of cross-laminated timber to replace steel etc) - the use of durable products with a focus on repairable end-of-life solutions - complementary greening and cooling through trees, vegetation, and shade structures	Cross-Council teams delivering infrastructure projects IPWEA Sustainability Victoria's Buy Circular Service	Within project capital budgets

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
		- Develop and maintain sustainable infrastructure guidelines to define minimum standards and design principles for common public realm projects such as carparks, and to better articulate the provision of shade or irrigation in public gathering spaces. - Create a system to track and reduce embodied carbon emissions across construction projects including establishing a baseline. - Update technical notes for all Council work areas to provide clear standards and expectations for all and make available to the public for use in complementary projects.		
5.5	Sustainable Procurement	Maximising our positive impact requires Council to use our 'purchasing power' to foster sustainable practice and innovation along our supply chains. Council will continue to evolve our procurement policy and guideline documents, processes and assessment criteria to stimulate demand in the supplier market for circular products and services. We will also: - Explore 'goods as services' contracts for relevant products (e.g., lighting, heating, ICT hardware) - Adapt tender specifications to increase the use of low embodied carbon and recycled content materials; and products that are durable, repairable, reusable and recyclable (ref with Actions 5.3 and 5.4)	Lead: Finance Northern Councils Alliance Sustainability Victoria Buy Circular Service	Within existing operating and capital budgets
5.6	Continue addressing Council's transport emissions – operational fleet, contractor diesel, staff travel	Significant reduction in Council's transport emissions is critical to meet our corporate emissions target. Activities include: - Complete the transition of Council's light passenger vehicle fleet to zero emissions vehicles - Reduce emissions from Council's heavy and light commercial fleets through application of Council's Fleet Selection Policy (2024), which mandates the switch to zero emissions vehicles where these meet our operational needs	Lead: City Services Branch State Government Zero Emission Vehicles	Progress within existing operating and capital budgets. Any unfunded opportunities subject to

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
		• Increase electrical capacity at Hadfield Operations Centre to support the necessary charging infrastructure • Encourage Council's waste collection service providers to move to zero emissions vehicles, in accordance with Council's Fleet Selection Policy • Explore deployment of green hydrogen waste vehicles in Council and waste collection service provider fleets • Progressively optimise the size of Council's fleet • Continue to promote and incentivise sustainable travel and commuting by Council staff.	manufacturers and importers Heavy vehicle manufactures	business case / grant funding.
5.7	Buy 100% renewable energy	Continue to purchase only electricity backed by renewable energy certificates from the Crowlands Wind Farm to supply Council sites and infrastructure (including leisure centres and public electric vehicle chargers) Encourage and support Council tenants to switch to zero-emissions electricity	Lead: Finance	Within existing operating budgets.
5.8	Continue to upgrade public lighting to be energy efficient and renewably powered	Consistent with our Public Lighting Policy, we will progressively deliver/upgrade public lighting (e.g. sportsfields, public carparks, shared paths, public space etc) to be highly efficient and renewably powered whilst avoiding inadvertent light pollution or negative impacts to wildlife.	Lead: City Infrastructure Directorate Sports clubs	Within existing capital budgets.
5.9	Sustainable operations of Council facilities	Progressively reduce the environmental impacts of Council facilities, staff events, meetings and activities, including actions such as: • Reduce single use packaging, improve bin use compliance and continue roll out of 4-bin system across Council facilities and venues	Lead: Business Transformation, with support from Sustainability and Climate	Within existing operating budgets.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
		• Establish 'sustainability protocols' for corporate gifts, giveaways and rewards • Provide guidance (e.g. on order form) to reduce food waste caused by over catering and increase plant-based / healthy food options in Council catering. • Develop and implement zero-waste guidelines for staff events (e.g. eliminating single use coffee cups) • Increase take-up of reusable crockery at town halls and community venues • Mandate use of 100% recycled paper for all out-sourced print jobs • Explore recycling and reuse options for ICT hardware		
5.10	Evolve our festivals and cultural events towards zero carbon, circular and climate resilient	Through program design and delivery, act to progressively reduce the environmental impacts of Council festivals and cultural events across energy/emissions, waste management, water use, food and beverage, and transport. Priority activities include: • Evolving Council's festivals program to consider and reduce the risk (and associated cost and environmental impacts) of event cancellation due to extreme weather (e.g. avoid summertime, hold multiple smaller events rather than one major summer festival/event etc). • Trial alternatives to reliance on diesel generators at outdoor events and if feasible, invest in roll-out. • Trialling and implementing feasible approaches to reduce waste generation (e.g. reusable crockery for food and beverages) and enhanced waste segregation (e.g. recycling and FOGO waste stations) at festivals and cultural events. • Supporting vendor compliance with Plastic Wise Policy to minimise single use plastics.	Lead: Arts & Culture Unit with support from Sustainability and Climate	Within existing operating budgets. Switch from diesel generators to batteries subject to business case / grant funding.

Ref #	Actions / programs	Description / activities	Lead and potential collaborators	Resources
5.11	Integrate climate risk into Council processes and systems	Embed climate risk assessment and resilience considerations into all relevant Council strategies, policies, planning instruments, asset management, and operational decision-making, with attention to: • Risk management framework to ensure climate-related risks are identified, assessed, reviewed, and appropriately managed • Governance and decision-making processes, particularly for relevant projects and major programs, policies, and strategies • Financial planning, budgeting, and investment decision-making and continue aligning financial disclosures with climate reporting frameworks • Asset management processes and life cycle planning and management • Service delivery and planning to maintain continuity and equity in service delivery under changing climate conditions	Lead: Sustainability & Climate Branch	Within existing operating budgets

Complementary strategies and plans

Over the next 5 years, actions to deliver the Circular Economy Strategy, Climate Risk Strategy, and Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 Framework will be driven through this Action Plan. Beyond the actions reflected in this Action Plan, Council is also responding to the climate emergency through other strategies and plans, with key documents and links summarised below.

Strategy / Plan / Policy	Strategic links (in brief)
Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and 4-year Council Plan (in preparation)	The MHWP is integrated into the four-year Council Plan and is in the process of being developed for 2025 – 2029. One of the key priorities is tackling climate change and its impacts on health.
Municipal Emergency Management Plan	The MEMP guides our work in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies, include those that result from extreme weather such as extreme heat, floods and storms. Actions to build community climate resilience directly contribute to emergency preparedness.
Risk Management Framework	One of Merri-bek's strategic risks is "The impacts of climate change, including physical and transition risks, are not appropriately planned for or responded to". Climate risks are also integrated in operational risks and their management across Council.
Nature Plan (update in preparation)	A theme in the Nature Plan is to protect and enhance natural assets to build biodiversity value and to strengthen resilience to climate change. The Nature Plan's objective to connect people with nature is aligned with the work with the Merri-bek community on climate action.
Integrated Water Management Strategy and Action Plan	The Strategy and action plan outline how to transition to a Water Sensitive City which is crucial to becoming a resilient, climate adapted city. Sensitively managing water in the landscape can help absorb peak flows (reducing floods), recharge groundwater (combatting drought), sequester carbon (in wetlands), increase plant evapotranspiration (cooling the environment), improve local water quality and support local biodiversity.
Open Space Strategy and Action Plan	The Open Space Strategy recognises the potential impacts of climate change on open space and aims to ensure our open space network is adaptive, biodiverse, cooling, healthy, and resilient.
Urban Forest Strategy	The strategy aims to increase vegetation throughout Merri-bek to cool and green the urban environment. This includes planting of 5,000 street and park trees across the municipality each year, providing carbon 'drawdown' (sequestration) of an estimated 984 tonnes CO ₂ -e each year and partner to plant trees in private property. This links to Action 1.8.
Food Systems Strategy	The Food Systems Strategy fosters a sustainable, just and vibrant food system within Merri-bek. There are strong links

	to food waste avoidance, organics recycling, healthy plant-rich diets, food security and resilience in a changing climate.
Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan	There are multiple links to the UHIE AP including Actions 1.8, 5.3, and 5.4. Cooling initiatives will also be integrated as different policies are refreshed, such as the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and Streets for People Plan.
Human Rights Policy	The Merri-bek Human Rights Policy provides an overarching framework for delivering accessible, equitable and inclusive programs, services and decision-making processes. The impacts of climate breakdown will not be borne equally or fairly, between rich and poor, women and men, and older and younger generations etc. Consequently, there is a growing focus on 'climate justice', which looks at the climate crisis through a human rights lens and on the belief that by working together we can create a better future for present and future generations.
Social Cohesion Plan (update forthcoming)	The Social Cohesion Plan aims to promote social and cultural connection and inclusive places and spaces. Social connection is a key factor in supporting climate resilience. This links with Action 1.8.
Children, Young People, and Families Plan 2021 – 2025 (subsequent plan in preparation)	The current Children, Young People, and Families Plan includes the actions: to empower Merri-bek's young people to take action on climate change (3.1.4) and to engage children and young people in active travel and adopt sustainable transport modes (2.4.3)
Living and Ageing Well Framework and Action Plan	The Living and Ageing Well Framework and Action Plan includes an action to conduct a risk assessment to identify key climate-related risks for older people and priority opportunities to build climate resilience. Implementing the findings of the assessment is expected to be included in the next Living and Ageing Well Action Plan.

Monitoring and reporting our progress to 2030

Council will monitor progress towards the goals and actions in this action plan through our corporate reporting system (Pulse) on an annual basis (minimum) or quarterly, where relevant. Summary reporting to Council and community will also occur:

- on a quarterly basis as part of formal performance reporting against the Council Plan and annual Council Action Plan
- through news articles in the Community News (print newsletter), Council and ZCM websites and e-newsletters.

The following table outlines preliminary performance indicators for the action plan, noting that supplementary sub-indicators at the action and/or activity level may also be tracked.

Monitoring & evaluation question	Key indicators / issues to consider	Data sources/ method
How are we tracking to our community carbon reduction goal?	Total municipal emissions in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂-e) per annum • Takes a production/sector-based approach to emissions, consistent with Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Inventories (GPC) • Published annually with up to a 2-year lag. • Largely excludes embedded carbon, such as in food, consumer goods and building materials.	Snapshot Climate snapshotclimate.com.au/locality/municipality/australia/victoria/merri-bek/ See Snapshot website for methodology report
How are we tracking to our Council (operational) carbon reduction target range?	Total gross corporate emissions in tonnes of CO₂-e per annum • Consistent with the principals of the greenhouse gas protocol – corporate standard • Reflects emissions prior to any purchase of offsets (note: Council continues to explore options to invest in Australian-based offset schemes) • Focuses on direct (scope 1 and 2) emissions from use of fossil gas and petrol/diesel with some indirect (scope 3) emissions.	Annual greenhouse gas emissions inventory prepared by Council, with external review/ verification.
What impact is our advocacy for system change having?	• Policy /program change at state or federal level • # / topic of written advocacy submissions • # / topic of collaborative advocacy campaigns (leading / active contributor)	Council data Government announcements Political party policy announcements
How are we tracking to our goals for comms, resilience, and climate justice?	• Reach of communications such as eco e-news, visits and engagement on Zero Carbon Merri-bek website, attendance at events, Council communications channels. • Individuals and households participating in resilience programs • Number of trees planted in private property	Council data Tracking of outreach and engagement Program-level monitoring of outputs and outcomes
How are we tracking to our	• Solar capacity installed across Merri-bek (MW) • Energy storage (MWh)	Combining AEMO DER Register, Electricity distributors/ Snapshot tool

Monitoring & evaluation question	Key indicators / issues to consider	Data sources/ method
community energy transition goals?	- Fossil gas consumption p.a. (% change over time) - Number of households and businesses supported	data and ProfileID or equivalent, STC/VEEC etc Program-level monitoring of outputs and outcomes
How are we tracking to our community sustainable transport goals?	- Mode share - EV charging ratios	VISTA Travel Survey EV charging point counts and Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics datasets
How are we tracking to our community waste and consumption goals?	- Amount of total waste generated (across all 4 bins) per capita - Amount of organics (food and garden waste) in general rubbish stream - Amount of waste diverted from landfill (through mixed recycling, glass recycling and FOGO streams) - Number of people participating in circular activities and/or circular programs and services available in Merri-bek	Kerbside audit data Waste Services data (New) Social research every 4 – 5 years into home composting and circular economy participation)
How are we tracking to our Council as role model goals?	New metric/s required for tracking embodied carbon in buildings / infrastructure projects, with a focus on carbon intensive materials	Council and supplier data

Appendix 1 – Priority ‘advocacy asks’ across energy transition, sustainable transport, waste /circular economy and climate resilience

Council’s strategic approach to advocacy in response to the climate emergency is maturing via collaboration with other councils and community organisations. The below is a non-exhaustive list of high priority actions Council is seeking from Victorian and Australian governments to support the vision of a zero carbon, zero waste and climate resilient Merri-bek.

Energy Transition

That the Australian Government:

- Implement strong, long term, stable energy and climate policy aligned with the climate science and principles of climate justice (‘No new coal, oil or gas projects’)
- Establish a vertically integrated climate policy framework that enables the three tiers of government to work in partnership around shared objectives
- Fund energy upgrades for public, community, social and First Nations housing.
- Directly invest in deep and accelerated retrofits and the required support for low-income housing to address the inequity in the energy transition
- Reform the energy market so that it can achieve climate targets and embed environmental and socially just objectives.
- Extend and strengthen the Renewable Energy Target to 100% by 2030 (‘100% renewable energy generation and exports by 2030’).
- Support the orderly and just transition away from coal and gas-fired power (‘Funding for a just transition and job creation for all fossil fuel industry workers and communities’).
- Introduce an ambitious pathway towards zero carbon buildings through the National Construction Code (NCC).
- Provide financial support to Councils for energy efficiency and electrification upgrades of Council assets.
- Provide financial support and other assistance for businesses to undertake emission reduction actions, particularly to enable landlords to work with tenants.
- Remove regulatory and market barriers to the implementation of consumer energy resources to ensure benefits to consumers.
- Ensure a robust local offset market that maximises co-benefits for First Nations and regional communities and supports compliances schemes (without compromising carbon budgets).

That the Victorian Government:

- Implement recommendations from the Hansen report “Climate Change and Planning in Victoria, including to amend the Planning and Environment Act and the Climate Change Act to explicitly mandate addressing climate change at all levels of the planning process.
- Introduces mandatory disclosure of energy performance of residential properties at point of sale and lease.
- Implement strategies to ensure Victoria’s renewable energy target of 95% by 2035 is met.
- Regulate to ensure disclosure of aggregated real time data from electricity distribution businesses.
- Fund a regional / state program to upgrade major road lighting to LEDs and upgrade to smart public lighting.
- Orderly phase-out of gas networks to ensure costs are not borne by consumers.

Sustainable Transport

That the Australian Government:

- Strengthen minimum vehicle emissions standards
- Provide tax incentives for lowest emissions vehicles and remove tax incentives that encourage unnecessary driving and vehicle purchase
- Prioritise and commit funding to significant public transport infrastructure over road infrastructure spending
- Develop an electric and zero emissions vehicle strategy to embed positive social and environmental outcomes
- Increase funding provided to local councils for active transport projects.

That the Victorian Government:

- Continue investment in improved public transport services, in particular:
 - More frequent buses for more hours of the day, particularly in the north of Merri-bek and east-west bus routes, including that buses should run from first train and tram to last train and tram in a 24-hour period.
 - More reliable bus, tram and train services, including ensuring buses and trams don't get held up in traffic as much.
 - More capacity on train and tram services to carry more people, including increased frequency on night time trams and trains.
 - Improved accessibility of all public transport services, for people of all abilities.
 - Better connectivity between different modes of public transport.
- Increase funding provided to local councils for active transport projects
- Revise the Speed Zoning Policy to enable safer speed limits in urban areas.

Waste and Circular Economy

That the Australian Government:

- Expand and make mandatory robust end-of-life product stewardship schemes to include more products, including batteries, packaging, textiles, soft plastics and electronics
- Introduces mandatory national minimum product design and import standards to ensure goods are durable, reusable and recyclable at end-of-life
- Introduces policy measures to incentivise repair, refurbishment and the use of recycled content (e.g. Right to Repair legislation, a tax on virgin resources etc)
- Urgently progress good packaging design guidance (via the National Design Standards Working Group) and a national regulatory scheme for packaging.

That the Victorian Government:

- Urgently invest waste levy funds to develop financially and environmentally sustainable waste management/resource recovery facilities and circular infrastructure in Victoria.
- Urgently reinstate funding for the Detox your Home program, delivered by Sustainability Victoria, to ensure that there is a pathway for the safe disposal of hazardous household products and chemicals.
- Introduce circular procurement targets for Victorian Government and support councils and businesses to do likewise.
- Introduce further bans for problematic products and materials (e.g. further single use plastic items, PFAS ('forever chemicals') in compostable and fibre-based packaging etc.
- Revise the Good Practice Guidelines for Service Rates and Charges to explicitly include funding of community waste education (including waste avoidance) and associated programs and services through local government waste charge revenue.

Climate Resilience

That the Australian Government:

- Ensure multi-level governance to clarify roles, responsibilities, and accountability of each level of government and across agencies, not only in planning adaptation, but in funding, implementing, and reporting on action plans.
- Provide funding for adaptation measures to support local governments, communities, and businesses to be climate resilient, reduce the impact of natural disasters and restore ecosystems.
- Invest in climate data and research to improve understanding of climate hazards, vulnerabilities, and impacts, and support evidence-based decision-making.
- Ensure that climate resilience policies and initiatives prioritise equity, social justice, and the needs of vulnerable populations, including First Nations communities, low-income households, and regional areas.

That the Victorian Government:

- Implement and fund the Victorian Climate Change Strategy, seven Adaptation Action Plans across Built Environment, Education and Training, Health and Human Services, Natural Environment, Primary Production, Transport, and Water Cycle and Regional Adaptation Strategies.
- Ensure State planning and housing targets do not have negative impacts on surface permeability and increased flood risk, and increase risk of urban heat.
- Enhance regulatory frameworks to integrate climate resilience considerations into planning, development approvals, and infrastructure standards, ensuring that new investments are resilient to future climate risks.
- Increase to minimum energy efficiency standards and compliance for rental homes, ensuring insulation, heating/cooling, and appliances converted to electric.
- Promote community –based adaptation approaches by fostering community engagement and capacity-building initiatives to raise awareness of climate risks, empower local communities to take action, and facilitate bottom-up approaches to adaptation planning.