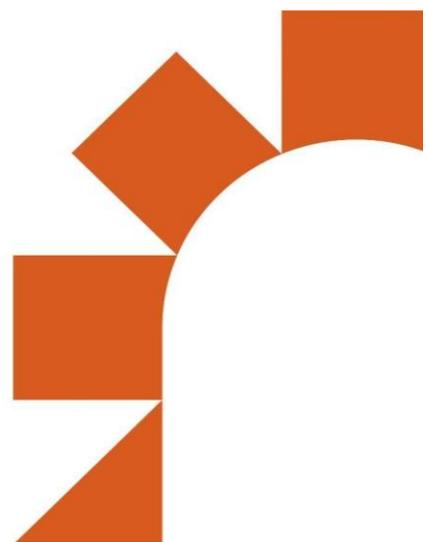


**Northern Alliance for  
Greenhouse Action**

**Annual report  
2020–2021**



## About NAGA

**The Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) is a network of nine councils in Melbourne's north, working together to create a zero-carbon society and provide maximum protection against the impacts of climate change in the NAGA region and beyond.**



NAGA formed in 2002 as a network that shares information, advocates for change, and cooperates on the research and development of innovative projects. It is one of seven active [Greenhouse Alliances](#) across Victoria.

NAGA's work is guided by our [Strategic Plan 2020-25](#). This sets out eight aims that will guide our work for the next five years:

- Increase the resilience of member councils and their communities to respond to projected climate change impacts in the region.
- Ensure that responding to climate change is deeply embedded within the governance practices of member councils.
- Deliver a pro-active program of advocacy to support our climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives.
- Develop and deliver a program of initiatives to reduce emissions from the non-residential sector, through investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- Investigate, support and deliver energy efficiency and renewable energy programs to reduce emissions in the residential sector.
- Work to overcome energy market barriers to the uptake of renewable energy, both for corporate and community needs.
- Assist member councils to move rapidly away from dependences on fossil fuels, both for corporate and community needs.
- Ensure sound management of the network and deliver value for members.

## Key achievements 2020–2021

Like many organisations NAGA had to adapt to changed circumstances in 2020 with the outbreak of COVID-19 in Melbourne and resulting restrictions.

One of the major activities in the NAGA calendar is the annual Victorian Greenhouse Alliances Conference, when hundreds of council staff and councillors come together to hear about the latest climate-related initiatives in and out of the local government sphere. The 2020 conference was postponed to October 2021 due to the degree of uncertainty associated with holding in-person events. Plans are being developed for the 2021 conference in partnership with the other Greenhouse Alliances and the Victorian Government.

A large part of NAGA’s core work week-to-week also involves bringing NAGA council staff and councillors together to progress current projects, share lessons and enable collaborative advocacy and action. Meetings of both NAGA’s Executive and Implementation Forum moved to an online format, and NAGA also hosted a number of webinars to provide learning and connection opportunities for council staff while working from home.

Highlights of the year included the following projects.

- The Victorian Energy Collaboration was launched (see below and over page).
- We strengthened our relationship with the Department of Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), resulting in securing funding for and delivering projects that have benefitted our member councils while also contributing to the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Greater Melbourne. This included the Your Council and Climate Change Training project (see over page), Exploring Vulnerabilities, and the commencement of Embedding Climate Change in the Council Plan, a scoping study for an adaptation cost-benefit analysis tool and other projects.
- Climate Emergency Australia was established (see over page.)



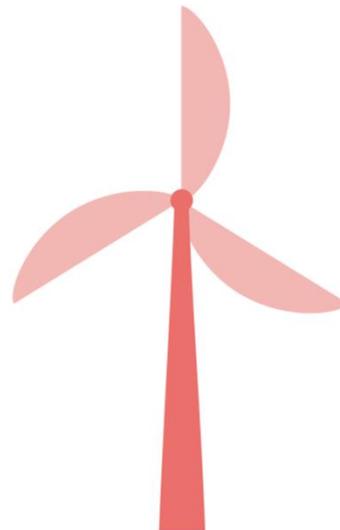
## **Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO)**

The Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO) is the largest ever emissions reduction project undertaken by local government in Australia.

The landmark Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) will enable 46 Victorian councils to switch to 100% renewable energy from mid-2021. The 'buyers' group' aggregates nearly half of the entire sector's electricity load – equivalent to powering 48,000 homes with renewable energy or taking 90,000 cars off the road each year.

The contract will secure renewable energy to power municipal offices, leisure centres, streetlights and community buildings. Councils participating in this project recognise the benefits of renewable energy for local economies and job creation, environmental purposes, and reducing costs.

The project was initiated and facilitated by the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances and led by Darebin City Council. Four NAGA councils are part of the Buyers Group, whilst three of our councils are part of another renewable energy buying group - the [Melbourne Renewable Energy Project](#).



## **Your Council and Climate Change Training**

NAGA worked with councils across Victoria and RMIT to develop content for a training package for councillors and executives at councils across Victoria to build their understanding of climate risk and how to respond at their councils.

*Your Council and Climate Change: Understanding the risks and learning to adapt* covers:

- Climate risks and current and projected impacts in Victoria, including the impacts on community and local environment, and impacts

on council business, assets, services and operations

- Councils' roles and responsibilities in addressing these risks and impacts
- Current best practice in local government in adapting to and managing climate impacts
- Tools and resources available to help councils achieve best practice in this area.

The training was developed and delivered by Mosaic Lab on behalf of the Victorian Government during April and May 2021.

## ***Climate Emergency Australia***

Following its key role in establishing Climate Emergency Australia (CEA) in 2020-21, NAGA managed the CEA Secretariat throughout 2021-22.

Our work included:

- Establishing and managing regular meetings of a Strategic Advisory Group.
  - Delivering two pieces of advocacy. The first was a letter to the Prime Minister advocating for a sustainable recovery from the pandemic, and the second was feedback on the Climate Change Bill proposed by independent MP Zali Steggall.
  - Developing an advocacy strategy through a series of workshops. The main focus areas of the strategy will be 100%+ renewables, climate risk for councils and their communities and improving carbon drawdown.
- Running six webinars:
    - Issues for Coastal Councils (September 2020)
    - Climate Reality Check Report (October 2020)
    - Best Practice in Climate Emergency Planning (November 2020)
    - Dealing with Climate Impacts (February 2021)
    - Protecting Our Communities (councillors only - May 2021)
    - Community Engagement in a Climate Emergency (June 2021)
  - Establishing and managing an online forum, where we currently have 189 officers from councils around Australia who have been engaged in 195 separate discussions on climate change responses by local governments.

# NAGA achievements 2020–2021

Strategic objective (Five-year plan)	Year 1 highlights
<p><b>A. Adaptation</b></p> <p><i>Increase the resilience of member councils and their communities to respond to projected climate change impacts in the region.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed Exploring Vulnerabilities, a research project supported by DEWLP looking at the impacts of climate change on at-risk communities and business sectors and how to address them. As part of the project, workshops were provided to businesses and community sector organisations to help them understand the issues and options for addressing them.</li> <li>Commenced a scoping study for a cost benefit analysis of adaptation measures for council assets. This is also supported by DELWP as part of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Greater Melbourne.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Climate Governance</b></p> <p><i>Ensure that responding to climate change is deeply embedded within the governance practices of member councils.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed a new national network - Climate Emergency Australia - and established a membership model to continue for another financial year.</li> <li>Formed a Climate Risk Working Group made up of risk and sustainability officers across member councils.</li> <li>Commenced a research project on how councils are integrating climate change into their Council Plans (supported by DELWP).</li> <li>Produced a guide for councils on how to integrate climate change into their Council Plans (supported by DELWP).</li> <li>Developed content for climate change training for staff and councillors (supported by DELWP – see <i>Your Council and Climate Change Training</i>, page 4.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>C. Advocacy</b></p> <p><i>Deliver a pro-active program of advocacy to support our climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Made submissions to the Australian Government on a green recovery from the pandemic, and in support of Zali Steggal's Climate Change Bill respectively</li> <li>With other Greenhouse Alliances, submitted a response to the AER electricity distribution price review for 2021-25, resulting in savings of \$3.1 million over the next five years.</li> <li>Commenced research to inform a new advocacy campaign on embedding climate change in the land use planning system.</li> </ul>

<p><b>D. Non-Residential Emissions</b></p> <p><i>Develop and deliver initiatives to reduce emissions from the non-residential sector.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commenced discussions with councils interested in developing a power purchase agreement for businesses.</li> <li>● Held three meetings of Economic Development Officers to share lessons on supporting businesses with climate change action.</li> </ul>
<p><b>E. Household Emissions</b></p> <p><i>Investigate, support and deliver energy efficiency and renewable energy programs to reduce emissions in the residential sector.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Worked with councils on development of messaging for households to get off gas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>F. Local Energy Markets</b></p> <p><i>Work to overcome energy market barriers to the uptake of renewable energy, both for corporate and community needs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facilitated a working group for councils interested in developing a white labelling initiative with an electricity retailer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>G. Dumping Carbon</b></p> <p><i>Assist member councils to move rapidly away from dependence upon fossil fuels, both for corporate and community needs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Established a working group for fleet coordinators to share lessons on decarbonising their fleet; held two meetings.</li> <li>● Surveyed councils on fleet types, infrastructure and policies.</li> <li>● Commenced discussions with industry about potential heavy fleet partnership project.</li> <li>● Interviewed councils electrifying their buildings and developed case studies to share knowledge.</li> </ul>
<p><b>H. Management</b></p> <p><i>Ensure sound management of the network and deliver value for members.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Established and facilitated officer working groups outlined above.</li> <li>● Hosted webinars for councils on the emotional impact of climate change, how to talk about climate change and solar on leased buildings.</li> <li>● Developed new branding and updated website.</li> <li>● Set up new LinkedIn page and connected with NAGA council councillors and staff and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>

## Member highlights 2020–2021

### **Banyule**

- Banyule committed to procure 100% Green Power via two Power Purchasing Agreements (PPAs) through Procurement Australia PPA and the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO) PPA.
- The new Better Score Program commenced and has supported over 40 Banyule households to undertake energy efficiency upgrades including installing solar, upgrading their hot water systems, heating and cooling, and has achieved an average energy efficiency improvement of 2 stars.
- Banyule council has also established a Sustainable Procurement Framework which will embed sustainability into procurement practices and support climate action. The framework includes an implementation roadmap and increases the prioritization of sustainability in tender evaluations.

### **Darebin**

- Darebin led the establishment of VECO (see page 4), lunched on 20 May 2021 and installed 90kw solar on two of its own buildings.
- Jesuit Social Services was engaged to deliver a Climate Justice Engagement project, working to build climate resilience in the Darebin community, and the Community Skills for Climate Action series got underway with participants from Cities of Yarra, Moreland and Darebin.
- The four year Solar Saver program came to a close with the target of doubling solar in Darebin having been met and exceeded.

### **Hume**

- Most of Hume Council's facilities and all street-lighting moved to 100 per cent GreenPower in 2020/21 with the remaining large facilities switching on 1 July 2021. This is reducing emissions by around 17,500 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e per year.
- More than 500kW of solar panels were installed on Council buildings in 2020/21 with further funding allocated to continue installations on Council facilities.
- The Household Energy Program commenced with the appointment of a Household Energy Officer and the launch of the Hume Solar Roll-out program. The Energy Savvy program for energy efficiency retrofits, Bring Your Bills Days and one-on-one energy support are also being provided for Hume residents.

### **Manningham**

- Manningham is one of the councils participating in the VECO wind power contract, which was finalised this year. They have also developed a 5-year solar program with installations of solar systems and batteries already underway at two community centres. They have also replaced 100 kilowatt solar system at the depot and upgraded Mullum Mullum Stadium to a 450 kilowatt solar system for full grid export. The installation of electric vehicle charge points at the Civic Centre and Depot is also underway.
- Community members in Manningham can access the Australian Energy Foundation residential energy saving advice service.
- Manningham engaged Ernst & Young to advise Council on best practice climate actions following their 2020 climate emergency declaration and have drafted the Council Plan 2022-2025 with a significant environmental theme.

### **Melbourne**

- City of Melbourne has been working in partnership with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on a pilot project called *City Engine* to investigate the impact of extreme heat on critical interconnected urban systems and services across inner Melbourne and consider potential interventions.
- In response to the climate and biodiversity emergency, City of Melbourne has completed a gap analysis to improve the integration of sustainability, climate resilience and circular economy into whole of lifecycle asset management.
- City of Melbourne endorsed a planning scheme amendment to embed Sustainable Building Design and the Green Factor tool, which is awaiting Ministerial authorisation before progressing to public exhibition.

### **Moreland**

- Moreland established a New Zero Carbon team, [Zero Carbon Moreland](#) website, [Facebook](#) page and monthly e-news.
- Moreland built the capacity of the community through the Women's Environment Leadership Scholarship, Mike Hill Fellowship, Student Climate Workshop and Community Skills for Community Action program with Yarra and Darebin.
- For the reporting period between 2019 and 2020 Moreland was aiming for a 30% reduction in corporate carbon emissions (with 2011 being the baseline year) but more than doubled this, achieving a 69% reduction.
- Already boasting the largest Council EV fleet in Victoria (with 23 electric vehicles) Moreland's City Council's new public EV hub is the busiest electric vehicle charging hub on the Chargefox network in Australia.

### **Nillumbik**

- Nillumbik Council entered a contract for the supply of 100% Renewable electricity (from 2023) sourced from a solar farm of up to 5MW to be developed at Nillumbik's rehabilitated Plenty landfill site.
- Nillumbik has completed large energy projects at a number of community facilities including:
  - a 267kWp solar system at Eltham Leisure Centre with four charging points for electric vehicles, batteries and public monitoring
  - a 147kWp solar system at Diamond Valley Sports and Fitness Centre, with two EV charge points and public monitoring.
- Nillumbik also completed a public lighting audit and upgraded inefficient lights.

### **Whittlesea**

- Whittlesea council installed 611 kW of solar PV and 221 kWh of batteries across 16 sites in 2020/21, making a total of 1.7 MWh of solar PV installed on 66 sites since the start of the Solar Scale-up program. An additional 2,500 LED street lights were installed, resulting in significant financial and emissions savings.
- Whittlesea Water for All 2020-2030, Whittlesea's first integrated water management strategy was endorsed and an Integrated Water Management Hub has been established.
- A two year project to create Whittlesea's first Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan continued with community and stakeholder consultation to develop city-scale targets and initiatives now complete.

### **Yarra**

- Yarra commenced a new [Take Climate Action](#) initiative delivering more than 20 online workshops, conversations, forums and events supporting our community to reduce emissions and push for policy change.
- Yarra worked with local community service organisations to explore how climate change impacts their sector and tools to respond equitably to climate risks.
- Yarra is transitioning small council-owned buildings from gas to renewable electricity. Gas cookers, heaters and hot water systems are being replaced with electric systems in 20 buildings over the next 2 years.
- Yarra and Moreland Councils are leading a [joint planning scheme amendment process](#) to raise ESD standards for new developments. This will include targets for zero carbon developments.