



NAGA Strategic Plan

2015 - 2020

1. Introduction

This strategic plan has been developed through a collaborative process involving the members of the NAGA Executive and Implementation Forum, guided by the NAGA Governance working group. This strategic plan document reflects the research conducted by the NAGA Executive as well as the current strategic priorities of NAGA member councils and relevant stakeholders, such as the Victorian government.

This strategic plan replaces the former strategic plan, which ran from 2011 to 2015, and was a result of the Towards Zero Net Emissions (TZNE) strategy. TZNE set targets for emissions reduction across different sectors, including residential, transport, industry and commercial, to be achieved by regional collaboration. This strategic plan recognises a changed operating environment, both in terms of relationships between local government and other levels of government and a shift in emphasis to capture emerging themes, such as the necessity to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

2. Strategic Plan Development

NAGA commenced development of this strategic plan at a workshop, held on 15 December 2014, involving NAGA Executive, NAGA Implementation Forum and the NAGA Secretariat. The workshop identified a need to continue using the current framework of a five-year plan, but to also develop short-term objectives for the 2015-16 financial year, based upon agreed criteria. The workshop considered project selection criteria, grading them into Must (those criteria that are essential for a project to be considered), Should (less essential criteria) and Like (those criteria which are useful but not essential to selection of the project). The criteria are ranked below:

Must	Does the project deliver objectives set out in the NAGA Strategic Plan?
Must / Should	Does the project benefit all members?
Must / Should	Is the project scalable through the resources available through potential funding?
Must / Should	Does the project assist the promotion of conversations about environment in the community and persuade others of political value?
Should	Does the project deliver measureable financial benefits to NAGA member councils?
Should	Does the project reduce carbon emissions in a measureable way?
Should	Does the project increase the resilience of the community to climate change?
Should / Like	Does the project have the capacity to scale-up without additional funding?
Like	Does the funding opportunity enable the research and/or testing of innovative approaches to reducing emissions?
Like	Does the project deliver measureable social benefits to NAGA members?

Like	Does the project significantly advance the cause of NAGA in terms of advocacy on funding?
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In addition, the workshop agreed on a need to examine the current funding model for NAGA, given the likely financial pressures councils will face in the coming years. Allied to this was a desire to work more closely with other greenhouse alliances on projects, in particular those that are able to attract state government funding. Both of these objectives are reflected in the final strategic plan.

Following the workshop, the NAGA Governance working group met in January 2015 to establish a process to complete this strategic plan. This included an analysis of the strategic objectives of NAGA members, as well as relevant key stakeholders, including the Victorian government and other greenhouse alliances. This work has been completed and is reflected in the review of NAGA's operating environment.

3. Operating Environment

NAGA councils represent more than one million people in northern metropolitan Melbourne. In their work to create a low-carbon society adaptive to the impacts of climate change, NAGA councils are also influenced by external factors expressed at the international, national and local level, including political, economic and social factors. These are set out below:

Environment	Factor	Impact
Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing number of nations and states taking climate change mitigation action, including emissions trading schemes (EU, UK, NZ, Korea, states in China and US, and others), providing a platform for growing global ambition for increased emissions reduction. • Global commitments to limit warming to 2⁰C are being linked to the concept of carbon budgets (i.e. moving beyond annual targets to consider the larger context). • The concept of ‘unburnable’ fossil fuel resources (identified by International Energy Agency and others), growing focus on stranded assets, as well as ‘divestment’ campaigns from fossil fuel investments by public authorities (e.g. churches, government, universities), and scrutiny on provision of finance by banks and other financial institutions. • Gradual switch away from coal-based energy by major importers (China and India). • Australia under increasing pressure to act in a meaningful manner, expressed through international forums (e.g. G20 and negotiations for Paris 2015) • IPCC release of Fifth Assessment Report in 2014, confirms previous science and projected impacts. • Next international talks at Paris, in December 2015 – sets targets for national emissions. Lack of Australian ministerial representation at many global meetings on climate change. 	<p>Overall, increasing pressure on Federal Government to act meaningfully.</p> <p>May lead to enactment of safeguard mechanism, which may act as de facto price on carbon emissions.</p>

Environment	Factor	Impact
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Government Direct Action plan and associated Emissions Reduction Fund (worth up to \$2.55 billion but with stringent conditions which makes it difficult for local government to access). First auction for ERF money in April 2015. • Repeal of carbon tax. Safeguard mechanism in Direct Action program may act in its place. • Retention of key bodies including Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC), due to support of minority parties in the Senate. • Loss of Climate Commission from Federal Government; public support for Climate Council as replacement. • Negotiations on-going over future of Renewable Energy Target (RET), resulting in more uncertainty in market. • Little public debate on climate change as an issue, as led by government. • National electricity market with reform program focused on network augmentation, peak demand, decentralised systems and smart grid development. 	<p>Unlikely to be opportunities for funding from ERF.</p> <p>NAGA advocacy to continue for retention of RET, post 2020 emissions reduction targets and clean energy.</p> <p>Reform of electricity market opens opportunities to work more closely with electricity distributors.</p> <p>NAGA to advocate for energy market reform through processes such as the Electricity Distribution Price review, the Australian Energy Regulator Consumer Consultative Committee, etc.</p> <p>Residential solar continuing to grow despite the lack of national support. Concerns about the lack of accessibility to solar for low-income and rental households.</p> <p>Impact on investment in renewables from global companies in Australia, due to continuing policy uncertainty.</p>
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ALP government in November 2014. • Renewal of interest in climate change from whole of state government, but in particular from key departments and agencies (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Sustainability Victoria, Department of Economic 	<p>State government departments still determining priorities, though generally positive.</p> <p>Opportunities for advocacy (e.g. VEET, fair price for solar, renewable energy</p>

Environment	Factor	Impact
	<p>Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VEET will continue – about to be reviewed but with a view to strengthening and extending the scheme. • Future of current Statewide Adaptation Planning, and Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability Partnership (VASP) uncertain. • Greenhouse alliances keen for VASP to be replaced by something more akin to Sustainability Accord. • ALP committed to Green Jobs plan – details emerging. • Climate Change Act up for review in 2016. • Adaptation Strategy due to be reviewed in 2016. • Government has eased restrictions on wind farm development. 	<p>action plan).</p> <p>Unclear what future of adaptation will be in state government remit.</p>

Environment	Factor	Impact
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued local government commitment and growing ambition for effective climate change action (e.g. City of Melbourne’s Renewable Energy Purchasing Group). • Stronger linkages between climate change, health, economic development, and planning. • Growth in planning for decentralised/renewable energy systems for both single sites and precinct-scale. • Transport and waste identified in local government strategies, as key climate change contributors. • Prospect of rate capping in Victoria placing additional pressures on member councils. • Continued focus on adaptation and mitigation. 	<p>Councils maturing in project development and delivery – lead and share role for NAGA.</p> <p>Increasingly close linkages between greenhouse alliances.</p> <p>Adaptation allows for alignment with more sectors of government.</p>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing community concern about climate change and the need for action (though this is not necessarily translating into action). • Integration of mitigation and adaptation actions, responses and projects. • Energy generation and distribution, network augmentation, decentralised systems. • Approaching price parity for solar PV with mainstream electricity generation; questions now arising on the electricity distribution ‘business model’ and future directions, with increasing decentralised systems, and storage technology advances. • Rising price for gas as well as electricity as Eastern States gas 	<p>Increasing shift to developing and delivering practical solutions.</p> <p>Key audiences (low income, rentals and business) still problematic – NAGA can assist with trials and pilot projects.</p>

Environment	Factor	Impact
	<p>market opens to international pricing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional-scale projects: governance and management structures and processes; funding. • Less funding available through government grants. • Greenhouse alliances actively considering other finance mechanisms to support corporate and community programs: Energy Performance Contracts, Environmental Upgrade Agreements, community ownership and funding, Sustainable Melbourne Fund. • Increasing community interest in models for community renewable energy (largely solar), following establishment of Australia’s first community owned wind farm at Hepburn. • Extreme weather events explicitly linked to climate change by scientists including the Climate Council. • Climate change data and forecasts updated by CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology. • Continuing strong relationship with MEFL and Yarra Energy Foundation. 	

4. Council Strategy Objectives

The NAGA Secretariat has conducted a review of existing member council climate change relevant strategies to ensure alignment between this Strategic Plan and these strategies.

A number of councils are in the process of updating existing strategies (e.g. Darebin) or developing new strategies to capture adaptation responses (Moreland, Whittlesea, Nillumbik). Where appropriate, NAGA's work, such as the development of a regional adaptation strategy will feed into these new strategies. Most of the existing strategies set specific actions and targets for work sectors, including corporate emissions, commercial buildings and residential emissions. Key issues identified in the strategies include:

- Reduction of *council corporate emissions*, achieved both through energy efficiency technologies as well as the replacement of existing power sources with renewable energy. The scope of works includes street lighting improvements, installation of solar and energy efficiency measures on council facilities and the development of a renewable energy purchasing group.
- Engagement with *commercial sector*, both in terms of improving the quality of new buildings through planning guidelines as well as by encouraging the uptake of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures. In some instances, tied to a broader objective of developing a thriving green economy.
- Providing leadership and educating the *residential community* to respond to climate change through moving to more sustainable lifestyles. Actions include supporting uptake of renewable energy, providing information to make appropriate choices and improve energy efficiency.
- Increase the *resilience of communities* by implementing climate change adaptation programs. These range from developing an adaptation plan to minimising the urban heat island effect to storm water harvesting.

Whilst there is generally close alignment between NAGA's objectives and those set down in the council strategies ,

a key point of difference is that a number of councils specifically target transport and waste emissions.; As there are existing networks, such as the Metropolitan Transport Forum and the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group , and NAGA has a focus on stationary energy, these work areas are not included in the NAGA Strategic Plan 2015-20.

In general, the NAGA Strategic Plan 2015-20 is designed to support and complement existing work being carried out by member councils, primarily through providing opportunities for networking and information sharing, and advocacy to relevant external stakeholders. In addition, the Strategic Plan seeks to “fill in the gaps” at a regional level through the development of innovative projects that advance the degree of knowledge and capacity of its members. In particular, the increasing emphasis on adaptive actions in the various council strategies is recognised in this Strategic Plan.

5. Greenhouse Alliances

The NAGA Secretariat also undertook a review of strategic plans, either existing or under development, of other Victorian greenhouse alliances. NAGA works closely with its partners in developing collaborative projects and joint advocacy positions to State and Federal governments, as well as key stakeholders, such as electricity distributors.

The current strategies of the other Victorian greenhouse alliances establish similar scopes of work focusing on building and supporting partnerships to create reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and also implement adaptation initiatives, work at a regional level on community-based emissions that complements council corporate emissions reductions, and information sharing and capacity building. This final point (capacity building) has been highlighted in the NAGA Strategic Plan 2015-20 as a key area of work.

6. State Government

Since the change of government at a state level at the end of November 2014, government departments have been working to develop new policies and processes that reflect the new (Labor) administration. While these have generally been positive (such as the increasing emphasis on climate change as an issue to be addressed), they have not yet filtered down into hard policy.

The government has announced that a new renewable energy action plan and an energy efficiency statement, will be developed in the 2015-16 financial year, that the current state adaptation plan and climate change act will be reviewed in 2016, and that the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target will be strengthened in the current calendar year. There is no indication, at the time of writing, of new funds being released to support climate change mitigation and adaptation work, beyond a promised green jobs fund, or what the relationship between the state and local government sectors will be in responding to climate change.

7. Vision

As a result of consideration of the current operating environment, including alignment with the strategies and policies of its members and key stakeholders, NAGA has established the following vision to encompass its operations in 2015-20:

To contribute to the creation of a low-carbon society resilient to the impacts of climate change in the NAGA region.

NAGA Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020

A. Climate Change Mitigation

Objective

NAGA will deliver a program of work to support member councils and directly decrease greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

Strategic Actions

NAGA's mitigation objective will be achieved by the following strategic actions:

- A1 Develop and deliver projects to improve energy efficiency amongst councils, households, businesses and community organisations within the region.
- A2 Develop and deliver projects to increase the uptake of renewable energy amongst councils, households, businesses and community organisations within the region.
- A3 Develop and deliver effective energy demand management programs to households within the region.
- A4 Maintain and continually improve the Municipal Energy Profiles to track the effectiveness of existing programs and identify opportunities for future programs.
- A5 Create and maintain NAGA as a hub of expertise for local government seeking to transition to a low carbon future.

B. Climate Change Adaptation

Objective

NAGA will increase the resilience of its member councils and their communities through delivery of its regional climate change adaptation plan, *Adaptation in the North*.

Strategic Actions

NAGA's adaptation objective will be achieved through the following strategic actions:

- B1 Identify and deliver opportunities for improving heatwave communication to vulnerable populations amongst NAGA member councils (*Adaptation in the North A1-A4*)
- B2 Identify and deliver opportunities for improving coordinated delivery of services communication to vulnerable populations during climatic shocks and stresses (*Adaptation in the North A6-A7*)
- B3 Develop better understanding of delivery of emergency management services in the NAGA region and identify possible roles for NAGA (*Adaptation in the North B1-B4*)
- B4 Develop and implement vulnerability assessment tool for council buildings (*Adaptation in the North C1-C4*)
- B5 Ensure councils have access to high quality data to assist in planning to respond to projected future impacts of climate change (*Adaptation in the North D1-D4*)
- B6 Encourage the take-up of distributed generation sources of power to better cope with grid

damage from climatic events (*Adaptation in the North E1-E5*)

- B7 Assist council Economic Development officers to help their local industries to build resilience to climatic events (*Adaptation in the North F1-F3*)
- B8 Assist councils to help local business recover from climatic events (*Adaptation in the North G1-G2*)
- B9 Develop a systematic understanding of natural assets in the NAGA region (*Adaptation in the North H1-H3*)
- B10 Develop a system to gather data and monitor the health of natural assets (*Adaptation in the North I1*)
- B11 Enhance the region's natural assets to mitigate against heatwave impacts (*Adaptation in the North J1-J2*)
- B12 Ensure the region's planning framework is adequate to meet future projected climate impacts (*Adaptation in the North K1-K4*)
- B13 Help improve the resilience of the region's buildings through best practice ESD principles (*Adaptation in the North L1*)
- B14 Ensure local government planning officers have relevant climate data to assess the vulnerability of their current planning frameworks (*Adaptation in the North L1*)

C. Advocacy

Objective

NAGA will deliver a pro-active program of advocacy to support our climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives.

Strategic Actions

NAGA's advocacy objective will be achieved by the following strategic actions:

- C1 Update and deliver an annual advocacy priority plan, through the Advocacy Working Group.
- C2 Maintain NAGA position papers on relevant issues as basis of advocacy work.
- C3 Prepare and submit relevant submissions to state and federal government policy development processes.
- C4 Develop and deliver collaborative advocacy with other Victorian greenhouse alliances.
- C5 Ensure councillors from NAGA member councils are kept informed of NAGA activities, including current projects, recent networking opportunities and advocacy positions.
- C6 Ensure state government MPs representing NAGA electorates are kept informed of NAGA activities, including current projects, recent networking opportunities and advocacy positions.

D. Networking

Objective

NAGA will develop and maintain strong relationships between its members as well as with key external stakeholders in order to deliver organisation objectives and to build membership capacity.

Strategic Actions

NAGA's networking objective will be achieved through the following strategic actions:

- D1 Ensure strong relationships between Implementation Forum members to oversee projects and to build the professional capacity of members.
- D2 Ensure effective management of Solar Scale-Up Working Group to help develop and deliver solar projects in NAGA, and to build the professional capacity of members.
- D3 Ensure effective management of Business Engagement Working Group to help develop and deliver renewable energy, energy efficiency and materials efficiency projects in NAGA, and to build the professional capacity of members.
- D4 Ensure effective management of Adaptation Working Group to help develop and deliver the regional adaptation plan, *Adaptation in the North*, and to build the professional capacity of members.
- D5 Ensure strong relationships between NAGA and other Victorian greenhouse alliances.
- D6 Ensure strong relationships between NAGA and key external stakeholders to deliver NAGA objectives.
- D7 Develop and maintain NAGA Secretariat as a hub of expertise on climate change mitigation and adaptation, for members.

E. Governance

Objective

NAGA will ensure sound management of the network and deliver value for members.

Strategic Actions

NAGA's governance objective will be achieved by the following strategic actions:

- E1 Ensure effective governance of NAGA through the Executive and Implementation Forum.
- E2 Ensure effective management of Executive to oversee delivery of Strategic Plan.
- E3 Ensure effective management of Advocacy Working Group to oversee delivery of Advocacy Priorities.

- E4 Ensure effective management of Finance Working Group to oversee delivery of NAGA budget.
- E5 Ensure effective management of Governance Working Group to deliver good governance of NAGA.
- E6 Ensure that NAGA is financially stable.
- E7 Conduct regular planning to ensure NAGA effectively delivers this Strategic Plan.
- E8 Maintain an effective working Secretariat.
- E9 Update and maintain a public presence through the NAGA website
- E10 Develop and measure key performance indicators, which highlight value provided to members.