

Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22 Activities Report

Working towards a clean green and sustainable community







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Acknowledgment of Country

We, in the spirit of Reconciliation, acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as traditional custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah, where Indigenous Australians have performed age-old ceremonies. We acknowledge and respect their unique ability to care for Country and their deep spiritual connection to it. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



Introduction

Maroondah City Council is pleased to present the *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22 Activities Report* to the Maroondah community.

This report details Council's achievements and outcomes of climate change adaptation actions over the three-year period of the strategy from 2018/19 to 2021/22.

The strategy plays a key role in delivering on sustainability outcomes identified in the *Maroondah 2040 – Our future together*, providing a strong foundation to deliver a more liveable and sustainable environment in Maroondah, and was an outcome of the Sustainability Strategy 2016-2020.

Some of Council's implementation highlights of the *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22* include:

- Integrating the risk posed by climate change into Council's risk profile, ensuring ongoing prioritisation of climate change mitigation and adaptation across Council.
- Working with EAGA to assess the resilience of our emergency relief centres, and assessing the suitability of smaller sites to provide emergency relief services as needed by our community.
- Installing water sensitive urban design (WSUD) treatments across Maroondah to reduce local flooding and improve water quality in local creeks.
- Implementing Stage 1 of the Re-imagining Tarralla Creek Project in partnership with Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water and DELWP.
- Supporting Maroondah residents and businesses through EAGA's Solar Savers and Energy Savers programs, and the My Energy and Water Saver Kits in Eastern Regional Libraries.
- Maroondah is a signatory to Living Melbourne (formerly Resilient Melbourne) and leading a project from the Our Metropolitan Urban Forest Strategy implementation plan.

- Monitoring rare plant populations and working with local Indigenous community nurseries to grow rare and declining indigenous plants.
- Recognising and planning for the impacts of climate change on the safety and mental health of Council staff and volunteers.

It is acknowledged that many of the key directions outlined in the Strategy are not single actions, but instead involve integration and implementation of climate change adaptation practices into business-as-usual and are therefore not "Completed", but instead "Ongoing". While we plan as best we can, the nature of climate change means we will need to continue to adapt and evolve existing processes and asset and biodiversity management to support a strong, prepared and resilient Maroondah.

We would like to thank the many people who have contributed to the implementation of the *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy*, including the Maroondah Environment Advisory Committee (MEAC), the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) and the Maroondah community. Your contributions and commitment to climate change adaptation have played an important role in the success of this strategy.

Council looks forward to continuing to work with our partners to deliver a comprehensive plan to address climate change mitigation and adaptation in line with the principles of the *Sustainability Strategy 2022-2031*. For more information on the *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22*, call the sustainability team on 1300 88 22 33.

Table 1: Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22 key direction status overview

Key direction		Status
Outcome Area 1 – People		
1.1	Manage community safety and emergency risk through an evidence-based approach in consideration of Council’s Municipal Emergency Management Plan and sub-plans.	In progress
1.2	Help pensioners to save on power bills and afford to use cooling units in their homes, through extending the Solar Savers program.	Ongoing
1.3	Participate in multi-agency events and exercises to support communities and organisations to better connect and make safer and more informed decisions.	Ongoing
1.4	Work with local partners such as the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and the EAGA, to raise awareness of local climate change impacts and how to address them, for residents in the Maroondah area.	Ongoing
1.5	Strengthen Council’s planning and protocols for events (e.g. leisure activities) and human resources.	Ongoing
Outcome Area 2 – Places		
2.1	Use the natural environment to build adaptive capacity by incorporating green infrastructure involving an integrated approach to land use that maximises economic, social and environmental benefits. Examples include; wetlands, rain gardens, tree pits and green facades.	Ongoing
2.2	Work with stakeholders including the Australian Government, Victorian Government, Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Parks Victoria and local community groups to improve waterways, enhance local flora and fauna and connect communities.	Ongoing
2.3	Strengthen regional collaboration with other asset managers (e.g. water and transport authorities) and take a leadership role in the Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Catchment Strategy by meeting targets for the native vegetation Council owns and manages.	In Progress
2.4	Pursue resilience from droughts and waterway flooding impacts by addressing water quality and improving the flood mitigation and permeability of urban areas. Adopt Integrated Water Management (IWM) and water sensitive urban design practices in buildings, open space water bodies and street design.	Ongoing
2.5	Together with Melbourne Water pursue the Tarralla Creek Connects project – a place-based renewal of the Croydon Parklands and Dorset Recreation Reserve along Tarralla Creek in Croydon.	In Progress
2.6	Progress distributed water sources and enhanced water corridors, particularly in low SEIFA Index of Disadvantage areas following concept planning and detailed design.	Deferred
2.7	Support work with partners to address fire and flood prone areas including community education initiatives.	Commenced
2.8	Work with regional partners to accommodate changes in storm and rainfall patterns, for better water security and to ensure resilient and connected landscapes in consideration of Council’s Water Sensitive City Strategy and Council’s Open Space Strategy.	In Progress
2.9	Support sustainable design to encourage new buildings and renewals to integrate building vulnerability assessment.	In Progress



Outcome Area 2 – Places (cont.)		
2.10	Support the planning of buildings for improved building performance in extreme weather and incorporate thermal comfort, drainage, and water storage considerations into building designs.	In Progress
2.11	Manage the urban heat island effect through material selection, energy efficient design and landscaping.	Ongoing
2.12	Design and plan for increased tree and vegetation coverage, ensure the municipality’s weed management activities support thriving ecosystems, seek opportunities to enhance monitoring of climate impacts on biodiversity, and build community understanding.	Ongoing
2.13	Provide leadership to facilitate improved water, soils and vegetation through community-based planning and capacity building to engage and inspire local participation of landscape-based solutions.	Ongoing
2.14	Where appropriate, work with stakeholders for planned burning programs in the region.	Ongoing

Outcome Area 3 – Embed Adaptation		
3.1	Strengthen work at scale – support the Resilient Melbourne Program and the State-Local Partnership Agreement (2017) for climate change (i.e. Resilient Melbourne Strategy, Victoria’s Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2020 respectively).	Ongoing
3.2	Identify climate change adaptation opportunities in Council’s Asset Management Strategy and Capital Works Implementation and Management Strategy.	Complete
3.3	Promote a ‘risk aware’ culture throughout Council in consideration of Council’s Strategic Risk Management Plan.	Complete
3.4	Develop the Risk and Resilience Plan and framework including Business Continuity Management systems and testing in consideration of Council’s Strategic Risk Management Plan.	Complete
3.5	Ensure Council’s risk profile is properly reflected in the insurance program to ensure appropriate mitigation of financial risk in consideration of Council’s Strategic Risk Management Plan.	Complete
3.6	Help staff track climate change impacts on Council’s assets, operations and services and evaluate responses over the long term.	Deferred
3.7	Support climate change advocacy by EAGA and other greenhouse alliances for effective policy action on climate change at the Victorian and Australian Government level.	Ongoing





Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22

The Maroondah Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy was developed in 2018 as a priority action from the *Maroondah Sustainability Strategy 2016-2020* and supports the clean, green and sustainable community vision presented by Maroondah 2040.

The strategy was developed following extensive community and stakeholder engagement, using vulnerability and adaptation planning and the most up-to-date climate projections from the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO.

Climate change is recognised as a significant threat to Council operations and assets, as well as the wider Maroondah community. It is accepted that regardless of emissions reductions, some level of climate change is locked in, and it is therefore essential that Council prioritises climate change adaptation and building resilience across Maroondah. The *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy* sought to prepare Maroondah for the impacts of climate change, including rising average temperatures, more heatwaves and droughts, less annual rainfall, and increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events that may result in power outages, localised flooding, asset damage, biodiversity loss and risk to human health and safety.

The strategy identified 42 climate change risks to Council and presented four overarching objectives, including:

1. Plan for and manage the risks of climate change, in particular, drainage and extreme weather events.
2. Seek opportunities for partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders and the community that support climate change adaptation.
3. Use the natural environment to build our adaptive capacity – while a risk itself, the natural environment can also be used to help in climate change management.
4. Encourage future proofing design – foster places capable of adapting to change and responding to current and future risks.

COVID-19

It is important to acknowledge the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 and the impact on Council operations, community resilience, and the associated implications to our climate change response. Predictions show that rising temperatures associated with climate change may also contribute to a greater risk of future pandemics. The combination of extreme weather events during times of disease outbreaks whereby Council may be impacted by multiple environmental and social disasters at the same time, as has been experienced on numerous occasions over the last two years, must be taken into consideration for risk planning and adaptation.

COVID-19 restrictions implemented since March 2020 changed the way many Maroondah residents and businesses operate. During significant periods of lockdown, there was a shift to working from home and remote learning for those who could, increasing our reliance on technology and internet

to remain in contact with work, school, and loved ones. Throughout this period, Maroondah experienced numerous extreme weather events that led to property and asset damage and power outages that, in some cases, lasted for weeks. In instances such as these, power outages led to significant pressure on an already vulnerable workforce and community, stripping productivity and cutting important lines of communication.

Reviews of Council processes and emergency management following these events have resulted in the identification of opportunities to support community resilience that, at the time of writing of the *Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy* in 2018, may not have been foreseen or considered. Council acknowledges these learnings will play a significant role in the new Climate Change Plan, highlighting the importance of remaining agile in evolving our response and priorities to meet unforeseen circumstances.





Outcome Area 1 People

Maroondah’s people are climate resilient, with vulnerable groups prioritised – both community and Council’s staff.

Focus Areas

2040 Outcome Area: A clean, green and sustainable community.

Key directions from *Maroondah 2040 – Our Future Together*:

- Mitigate and adapt to the effects and impacts of climate change.
- Work in partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the community in adapting to a post peak oil environment.
- Be responsive and adaptive to new environmental opportunities and threats as they occur, building resilience and capacity within the community.

Our priority action highlights

We delivered the Municipal Emergency Management Plan

Council has delivered the Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2020-2023. The plan recognises the increased vulnerability of Council and the Maroondah community to the impacts of climate change, including the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events predicted and the associated Council response. The plan takes a holistic approach to emergency management education, planning, risk management and response across Council, ensuring preparedness for scalable emergency events across the municipality. It highlights Council’s approach to emergency management that addresses preparedness, response and recovery planning, as well as the importance of coordinating emergency management planning and service provision with other emergency agencies and neighbouring councils.

We continued to develop our Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

Council has continued developing Council's Safety Management System, consistent with ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems. This incorporates environmental factors for hazard identification and risk control strategies, such as for Council staff and Bushland volunteers who may be exposed to high ambient temperatures, direct sunlight, or humidity, while also considering the level of physical exertion required for the task. Increased frequency of extreme weather events over the past few years led to storm damage and localised flooding, requiring powered equipment such as chainsaws and wood chippers for clean-up purposes. Another consequence of climate change is periods of intense rainfall combining with warm temperatures, which has led to excessive weed growth in 2021, increasing the physical demands for hand weeding. Council has also recognised the importance of being mindful of the impact of extreme weather events, such as storms that may cause property damage or power outages, on employees experiencing burnout, particularly when these events are combined with COVID-19.

We supported the Maroondah community to invest in solar PV through the Solar Savers Program

Since 2017, Council has participated in the Solar Savers program, delivering 68 solar PV systems to the Maroondah community, 64 of which were to pensioners and low-income households. Solar Savers is run through the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA), which is hosted at Maroondah and currently includes 10 councils from around Victoria. The program has been designed to remove some of the barriers faced by home owners, tenants and businesses in installing solar PV, including access to qualified and trusted installers, and support accessing available rebates and low interest loans for those eligible.

Solar Savers was originally piloted from 2017-2019 to support pensioners installing solar PV systems and reduce their energy bills. Solar Savers recognises the vulnerability of low-income households to climate change, with high energy costs associated with running air conditioners during heat waves, and increased temperatures leading to increasing rates of heat related morbidity and mortality. The pilot phase included 41 installations for pensioners, with a further 27 installations between 2019 and 2021.

We supported the Maroondah business community through Energy Savers

Energy Savers is a program run through the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) with the goal of assisting local businesses to access funding through Sustainability Victoria and the Victorian Government's Energy Upgrade initiative. The program supports businesses to replace existing equipment with energy efficient products, and includes upgrades to LED lighting, heating and air conditioning, hot water systems, and refrigeration. The Energy Savers program simplifies the Victorian Energy Upgrades programs by confirming eligibility and connecting businesses to suppliers who can provide advice, quotes, and complete the upgrade and required paperwork. In doing so, businesses will achieve savings on their energy bills, while reducing their vulnerability to equipment breaking down and reducing peak electricity demand during hot weather events. The program began in August 2021, with 28 Maroondah businesses registering for upgrades between August 2021 and February 2022.

We delivered the My Energy and Water Saver Kit for local residents

Council has partnered with Yarra Ranges Council, Knox City Council and Eastern Regional Libraries to deliver the My Energy and Water Saver Kits. The kits have been designed to assist local residents to assess the energy and water efficiency of their home, with the goal of helping identify energy and water inefficiencies or leaks, and reduce utility bills and the associated greenhouse gas emissions. Each kit includes a thermal imaging camera, power meter, stopwatch, thermometer, Energy Freedom Home Book, CSIRO Home Energy Saving Handbook and an instruction guide. Four kits are currently available for loan at libraries across the Eastern Regional Libraries.



Outcome Area 2 Places

Maroondah’s places, including the built environment, its biodiversity and waterways, are climate resilient, improving our health and wellbeing.

Focus Areas

2040 Outcome Area: An attractive, thriving and well-built community.

Key directions from *Maroondah 2040 – Our Future Together*:

- Ensure the management of infrastructure and prioritisation of capital works considers demographic change, the impacts of climate change, and accessibility for all ages and abilities.
- Coordinate and advocate for the increased utilisation, longevity and availability of fit for purpose public, private and not for profit buildings and spaces that can act as key places for neighbourhood connection.

Our priority action highlights

We are working on Re-imagining Tarralla Creek

The Re-Imagining Tarralla Creek project is a place-based improvement along Tarralla Creek in Croydon, co-funded and led by Melbourne Water, alongside Maroondah City Council, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Yarra Valley Water. The project is an integrated water management plan for a two-kilometre length of the creek stretching from Dorset Road to Eastfield Road, including the extension and renewal of the Croydon wetland, ‘daylighting’ piped areas and re-naturalising the creek, and stormwater harvesting to irrigate four adjacent sportsgrounds.

Proposed works have been divided into four stages, with the first stage, the extension and renewal of the Croydon wetland, expected to be completed by mid-2022, and the stormwater harvesting facility expected to be completed by late 2022. It is anticipated that further stages will be gradually implemented as funding becomes available. Community support and feedback has been central to the development of this project, and the Friends of Tarralla Creek group has become active in caring for the area and promoting community participation in citizen science along the creek precinct.

The project will deliver multiple benefits for the community and the environment. It creates an enhanced opportunity for nature-based recreation and connection for a large population who live, work and play around the adjacent Croydon Major Activity Centre, including workers and students at Swinburne University and cyclists and pedestrians using the regional Carrum-Warburton shared trail. Other benefits include:

- improvements to water quality in Tarralla Creek
- use of an alternative water source for irrigating sportsgrounds, reducing demand on our potable water supplies
- urban cooling and heat island mitigation from increased vegetation
- improved natural habitat and bio-links for local flora and fauna to support biodiversity
- creating an attractive place for community recreation and connection to nature, supporting mental and physical health.

We invested in building resilience at Emergency Relief Centres and Council buildings

The increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events due to climate change places both Council operations and community at increased risks due to power outages, storms, flash flooding, and bushfires. Council has invested in building the adaptive capacity of emergency relief centres in Maroondah, as well as Council buildings to ensure operations and services can continue during times of power outages. Emergency relief centres provide services such as shelter, food and water, and wifi and phone charging facilities to Maroondah residents who may be affected by an emergency event. Following the significant storm events in June 2021, Karralyka was opened to provide wifi and phone charging to nearby residents without power, while Aquahub was also opened following June and October 2021 storms to offer shower facilities.

Maroondah participated in the Resilient Emergency Relief Centres Project through EAGA. The project was jointly funded through a partnership with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and assessed the vulnerability of Emergency Relief Centres across EAGA, including two facilities in Maroondah. Key findings identified vulnerabilities in power supply reliability, thermal comfort, structural performance, indoor air quality, and weather proofing.

Electricity generators are now located at Council's offices at Realm and the Operations Centre to ensure Council operations and emergency response are not affected by power outages during extreme weather events. A generator has been purchased for the Karralyka Emergency Relief Centre and will be installed during 2022 to provide a back-up power supply for amenities, kitchen and function spaces for use during an emergency. Council has also completed audits of smaller Council facilities to determine their suitability for use as emergency relief centres in the case of smaller localised events. In instances of power outages for smaller emergency relief centres, plans for hiring temporary generators are in place.

We completed the Jubilee Park, Eastfield Park, and Dorset Rec Reserve Enhancement Plans

Vegetation plays an important role in mitigating the impacts of climate change, reducing the urban heat island effect, improving permeability, and supporting biodiversity. Council has completed Enhancement Plans for Jubilee Park, Eastfield Park and Dorset Recreation Reserve, which take a site-scale approach to the redevelopment of sporting facilities. In doing so, these projects have enabled the identification and protection of significant trees, inclusion of revegetation and rejuvenation of existing bushland and vegetation, and inclusion of the tree dieback mitigation strategy into pavilion re-development and facility upgrades.

We are working on building resilience into our natural environment and restoring regenerative processes

Rising temperatures and changes to rainfall patterns place Maroondah's natural environment and biodiversity under increasing threat. In 2020, Council released the *Vegetation Strategy 2020-2030*, which outlined Council's approach to protecting, enhancing and restoring vegetation across Maroondah. The strategy lays the foundation for incorporating green infrastructure, such as wetlands, rain gardens and tree pits, across the municipality by supporting coordinated decision-making around green infrastructure and using the development of structure plans to trial collaborative green infrastructure planning.



The Maroondah Habitat Connectivity Plan is a key action from the strategy and provides the critical basis for determining the locations for targeted community extension services aimed at benefitting local biodiversity.

Council has also implemented the following actions to build resilience against climate change within our natural environment, with a focus on restoring evidence-based regenerative processes. This includes:

- implementing a monitoring program to identify the impact of climate change on local biodiversity and tree decline
- working with universities and industry experts to identify appropriate strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change on Maroondah biodiversity
- monitoring rare plant populations and implementing strategies including direct seeding, seed farming, and field techniques, such as burning, slashing, mowing
- growing rare and declining plant species to introduce back into bushland reserves in the Operations nursery and using this experience to guide local nurseries in techniques to grow difficult and declining species, with a focus on improving genetic diversity
- ensuring Bushland Reserves are prepared for the fire season, including conducting ecological burns.

We are working with neighbouring councils on planning for regional habitat connectivity

Living Melbourne: Our Metropolitan Urban Forest (2019) was developed by The Nature Conservancy and Resilient Melbourne as a bold new strategy for a greener, more liveable Melbourne. Maroondah is one of the 32 local government signatories that contributed to its development, and now is leading an action as part of its implementation plan.

This action contributes to two of the six key actions identified in the Living Melbourne strategy:

- Action 1: Protect and restore species habitat, and improve connectivity
- Action 4: Collaborate across sectors and regions

Maroondah is coordinating a pilot habitat connectivity planning project amongst neighbouring eastern region councils (eight in all) to inform future metropolitan habitat connectivity actions. This project aims to clarify an approach for planning for habitat connectivity for the eastern region of councils that can provide a sound basis for securing resources, and a template for habitat connectivity planning across metropolitan Melbourne. It will develop a project brief/business case for undertaking detailed planning for habitat connectivity for the eastern region of councils.





Outcome Area 3 Embed adaptation

Community and staff capacity is increased through improved awareness, education and support for climate change adaptation practices.

Focus Areas

2040 Outcome Area: A well governed and empowered community.

Key directions from *Maroondah 2040 – Our Future Together*:

- Ensure responsible and sustainable management of Maroondah’s resources, assets, infrastructure and natural environment
- Foster a culture of innovation, cooperation, commitment, communication and continuous improvement that positions Maroondah City Council as a leader in local government
- Create opportunities for shared decision making through active community involvement
- Work in partnership to deliver services that recognise and are responsive to the interests and needs of the community.

Our priority action highlights

We embedded climate change risk in Council’s risk profile

One of the key outcomes of the Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy is that climate change has been formally recognised as a central risk to the ongoing sustainability of Council operations. Council has included the “failure to implement practical measures to alleviate the effects and impact of, and adapt to, climate change” in its risk profile, ensuring actions addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation are given high priority for implementation. This includes specific consideration of extreme weather events that may require emergency response, in addition to long term climatic changes, such as reduced rain fall and increased temperatures, which may require

more broad process-related changes. The Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy is central to this action and is specifically referred to within the risk register, recognising the risk of climate change to Council and community and the breadth of actions required to appropriately address risk. Financial risk, particularly that associated with public liability insurance, is also recognised, with insurance reviewed regularly to ensure appropriate cover to an evolving risk to Council.

We worked with the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action to advocate for climate change adaptation

The Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) is a formal collaboration between eight Councils in Melbourne's east. The alliance seeks to support climate change action and adaptation at a regional scale, centralising resources and projects, and providing advocacy services. Maroondah City Council currently hosts the EAGA Executive Officer, EAGA Project Officer, Solar Savers Program Leader and Sustainable Energy Officer.

EAGA consists of the following member Councils:

- City of Boroondara
- City of Glen Eira
- Knox City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Monash City Council
- City of Stonnington
- Whitehorse City Council
- Yarra Ranges Council

Since 2018/19, Maroondah City Council has worked with EAGA and the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances (VGA) to deliver a broad range of climate advocacy pieces, including:

- The Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO), which resulted in 46 Victorian councils accessing a renewable energy power purchase agreement
- Climate Change and Planning in Victoria, which advocated to improve the response of the state planning system to climate change
- A Climate Positive Stimulus for Victorian Local Governments, which recognised the role of climate action in COVID-19 economic recovery
- Electricity Distribution Price Review, where a submission to the Australian Energy Regulator was made by a collaboration between the VGA, Ironbark Sustainability and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) regarding regulatory pricing proposals. The submission resulted in numerous benefits to Council, including significant savings in OMR charges and a funding contribution from AusNet to upgrade old mercury vapour lights to LEDs
- Exploratory Study on the Costs & Benefits of Adaptation Investment in Greater Melbourne
- EAGA is currently updating its Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap for decision makers in Melbourne's east to identify local priority areas for the implementation of adaptation measures





Evaluation

Local storm events in Maroondah over the past few years demonstrate there is a need for immediate action on climate change adaptation and mitigation of the related risk. The actions listed above demonstrate Council's commitment to climate change adaptation; however, it is important to recognise the opportunities to continue enhancing climate change adaptation in preparation for future climate change events.

The period since March 2020 has seen the significant impact of COVID-19 on Council and many of the actions outlined in the Strategy were impacted or delayed by COVID lockdowns and restrictions. While events such as COVID-19 may cause significant disruptions to everyday operations, the need for climate change adaptation does not stop or lessen as other priorities arise. It is essential that, regardless of other social or economic events, adaptation to climate change remains a high priority for Council and resources are allocated accordingly.

There is also a risk of complacency in planning for climate change, particularly in situations where opportunities to enhance adaptation actions may be missed or excluded from projects due to funding, expertise or resourcing limitations. Prioritising climate change action beyond business-as-usual plays a central role in delivering best practice for both Council and the Maroondah community. To achieve this, it will be important to better engage relevant teams within Council on an ongoing basis to ensure climate change remains front-of-mind. This may be achieved through improvements to climate change education and communications internal and external to Council, a climate change working group including relevant stakeholders, or finding ways to better embed climate change thinking into everything Council does. These findings will be integrated into future climate change planning for Council and the Maroondah community.

Conclusion

Climate change continues to pose a significant and increasing threat to the Maroondah community. Council is committed to managing these risks and implementing adaptation measures, in line with its responsibilities under the *Climate Change Act 2017*. The past two years have demonstrated the level of uncertainty and difficulty in managing climate change amid global disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, Council has remained flexible and willing to adjust processes to meet the immediate and emerging community need, while also recognising the importance of actions that support long term adaptation. The learnings from extreme weather events over 2020 and 2021 have been integrated into ongoing practices to place Maroondah in a stronger position to respond to emergencies in the future.

The Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy has been central to integrating climate change thinking into Council operations and risk management, however, there is more work to be done. The outcomes of this strategy present further opportunities to continue this work to ensure a sustainable Maroondah. It is proposed that the intentions of the Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Strategy and Carbon Neutral Strategy be combined into a single Climate Change Plan to address climate change in the future. A Climate Change Issues and Options Paper will be delivered later in 2022 to present options for community comment on how Council can best mitigate and adapt to climate change.



