



Climate Change Inquiry
Submission S108
Received 27/08/2019

27 August 2019

Committee Manager
Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

ClimateChangeInquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

INQUIRY INTO TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE IN VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Victorian Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee's *Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities*. Please note this submission has been compiled by council officers and has not been endorsed by Councillors.

Greater Shepparton City Council has been implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation measures for over 12 years. During this time, there has been significant awareness of climate change in the community. A number of groups have formed with a variety of responses to tackle these challenges.

Council is fortunate to have a proactive and effective relationship with these community groups, meeting bi-annually to discuss environmental and sustainability issues and working towards common solutions. Understanding and partnerships will be at the heart of finding a productive and sustainable way forward under the impacts of climate change.

If you require any further information to support our submission, please contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Sharon Terry
TEAM LEADER SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Ref: C19/24714

Actions being taken by community members and organisations to mitigate the severity of climate change, including actions to reduce greenhouse gas emission

Group Name	Action
Goulburn Valley Community Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessee and developer of GV Link Solar Farm; • Goulburn Broken Indigenous Seedbank for sourcing local provenance seed for revegetation and biodiversity activities; • Tatura Future Energy Project - Stabilising local energy supply renewably and providing local job opportunities to reduce reliance on distant facilities - this project is still in development.
Beneath the Wisteria	Community focused education group increasing understanding of climate change science, impacts and mitigation activities. Monthly public discussion; guest speakers.
Friends of the Botanic Gardens Shepparton	Community volunteer action group creating the new Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton on the old Kialla landfill site and protecting and restoring the surrounding woodland. Activities include introducing and caring for drought-resistant native plants, rare and threatened species, reused/recycled infrastructure and community education programs.
Landcare Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting for biodiversity and emission reduction; • Education on sustainable farming; • Seminars on climate variables and change management
RiverConnect	Community and land management project to promote, understand and enhance the environmental, cultural, recreational and economic value of the rivers. Activities include revegetation of indigenous plants for biodiversity, emission reduction and urban heat island effect reduction.
Greater Shepparton City Council	Energy tracking, monitoring and reporting for reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions and energy consumption.
	Energy Reduction Plan - reduce council's 2014 energy consumption by 20% by June 30 2020. By the end of this financial year, this will have included the installation of over 417.5kWh of panels on 6 of council's largest energy using sites.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric vehicles - 2 EV's will be procured for inclusion in council fleet this financial year; • Lead council on a Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance project - Building a case for electric vehicles in regional council fleets and participating in the 'Charging the Regions' project.
	Environmental Upgrade agreements - Greater Shepparton City Council was the first regional council to adopt this initiative.
	Greater Shepparton Community Sustainability Grants - grants up to \$2000 available to schools and communities to reduce their carbon emissions, energy and water use and promote sustainable living practices.
GVCE Community Solar project - Greater Shepparton tendered for a solar farm development to the south of Mooroopna. GVCE were the successful tenderer.	

	<p>Streetlighting efficiency upgrades - Watts Working Better replaced over 3,400 high energy using lights with energy efficient lighting throughout Greater Shepparton; partner in the current Main Road streetlighting upgrade project through the Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance; continuously upgrade lighting to LED lighting.</p> <p>Participating in the current Darebin led Power Purchasing Agreement with 38 other Victorian Local Governments - Greater Shepparton has committed to purchasing 100% renewable energy for all electricity accounts.</p>
<p>Actions by community members and organisation to adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change</p>	
Group Name	Action
Transition Tatura	Community focused education group increasing understanding of climate change science, impacts and mitigation activities. Actions include Sustainable Living Festival, Film events, and promoting local actions to increase community resilience
SLAP Tomorrow	Community focused education group increasing understanding of climate change science, impacts and mitigation activities. Public forums and events with guest speaker's experts in impacts of climate change and identifying solutions.
Zero Waste Shepparton	Community led education group promoting a shift to a waste free society. Activities include film events, regular meetings and a Facebook network sharing resources, promote sustainable, waste-free and minimal waste solutions, and advertise related businesses.
Goulburn Murray Landcare Network	Farm forums, projects and education on land management, soil health and soil carbon.
Goulburn Valley Environment Group	Advocacy and lobbying for action on environmental impacts of current activities: advocacy for better water management to maintain local environments; bringing together knowledgeable people to share expertise.
RiverConnect	Community and land management project to promote, understand and enhance the environmental, cultural, recreational and economic value of the rivers. Activities include educating children about the local environment and threats, undertaking habitat and flora and fauna surveys, building nest boxes for hollow dwelling mammals and birds, coordinating outdoor activities to connect residents with nature, partnering in the Deakin University wetland carbon sequestration research, and implementing education/behaviour change initiatives to target illegal dumping.
Greater Shepparton City Council	Climate Adaptation Plan - risk based adaptation plan that outlines the key risk areas for Greater Shepparton service delivery to our community under climate change.

	<p>Urban Forest Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase urban forest canopy cover in each town to 40%; • Reduce the number of vacant street tree sites to zero; • Improve urban forest diversity by age and useful life expectancy; Increase the number of biodiversity links through each towns street and road network; • Include urban trees in all major Council infrastructure projects at planning, design and implementation phase; • Ensure best practice urban tree management is being delivered across all Council programs.
	<p>Greening Shepparton objective that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Forest Strategy; • One Tree Per Child (major revegetation project that plants a plant for every child in the municipality - 16,664 and increases the number every year by 10%); • Greening the entrances to towns; • Water Sensitive Urban Design - all new developments must have 'natural' stormwater treatment methods, primarily in the form of constructed wetlands.
	<p>Partner to State Government Healthy Homes Program which offers free upgrades for low-income households where at least one person has a need for home care support services or has an existing health condition. The program is will measure health benefits and energy bill savings that result from making homes more comfortable in colder weather.</p>
	<p>Eastbank Lake project – a remnant anabranch of the Goulburn River has been identified as an ideal location to undertake stormwater treatment to allow for reuse on neighbouring open space. The project is currently in the business case phase.</p>
	<p>Protecting native vegetation - Greater Shepparton has a number of activities underway to protect remnant native vegetation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid and minimise forum - local irrigation designers, agencies and landholders attended a forum where the avoid and minimise principle was explained in an effort to minimise the loss of large old habitat trees due to irrigation development; • Year of the Scattered Tree - marketing campaign to increase the awareness and appreciation of our scattered trees; • Scattered tree research forum - relevant research will be presented to stakeholders and the community; • Local Panning Policy amendment investigation underway to identify ways to increase the protection of remnant native vegetation while supporting agricultural development.

Ways government can best support communities in their efforts

- Continue to support renewable energy supply and technologies; assist households and communities to access renewable energy;
- Strengthen protection for ecosystems that store carbon (e.g. forests, grasslands);
- Support revegetation activities, particularly those that enhance opportunities for rare species or those that will find migration due to climate change difficult;
- Provide support for climate refuges for vulnerable species; provide support for farming communities to transition to renewables and increase carbon abatement to offset higher risks in climate;
- Develop climate change risk management plans for communities;
- Improve housing standards and guidelines to ensure residents can survive extreme weather events with power failure such as heatwaves, storms and flooding;
- Assist communities recover from extreme weather events such as storms and flooding - clean-ups take community members away from their work, families and other activities
- Provide research and investment in helping rural farming communities adapt to climate change. There is little understanding of the impacts of climate change and how we can adapt to it while continuing to be productive.
- Planning scheme amendments that support:
 - Sustainable transport - increase the use of bikes and pedestrians, separating vehicles.
 - Environmental sustainable building design and function.
 - Environmental Sustainable Design for new residential and commercial sub-divisions.
- Advocate for changes in the electricity market and regulator to speed up the opportunity for micro-grids and virtual networks.
- Time is a critical resource for community groups - support them to develop projects and negotiate government bodies.