Cool-ER Changes workshop outcomes report

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

LET ME BE FRANK.
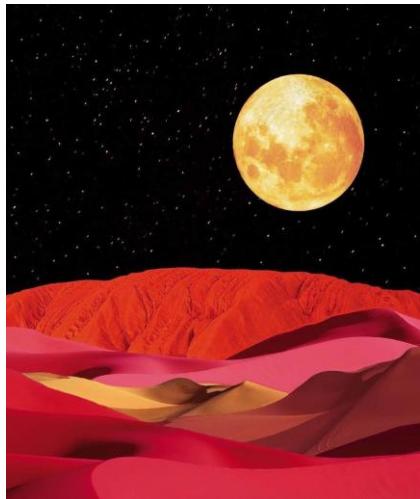
Once upon tomorrow.

Image: 'Always' by Rachel Derum

This report was developed on Aboriginal lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, whose sovereignty was never ceded.

We recognise that First Nations people have deep knowledge and experience of resilience and sustainability that is critical to heal country, people, and communities. Despite the ongoing impacts of colonisation, First Nations people are still generously sharing knowledge and working towards reconciliation and treaty. For this, we pay our respects and deep thanks to First Nations elders past and present, and extend this to all First Nations people. We endeavour to learn from and lift up First Nations expertise in our work.

We live, work and play on Aboriginal land. 1% of our income is paid to Traditional Owners. We encourage everyone to Pay the Rent.

Let Me Be Frank is a member of 1% for the Planet. We donate 1% of our annual income to environmental organisations. We are proud to be part of a global network that is accelerating smart environmental giving.

Adaptation and Emergency Response

The Adaptation and Emergency Response workshop was held on Thursday 1 June 2023 at the Woodend Community Centre.
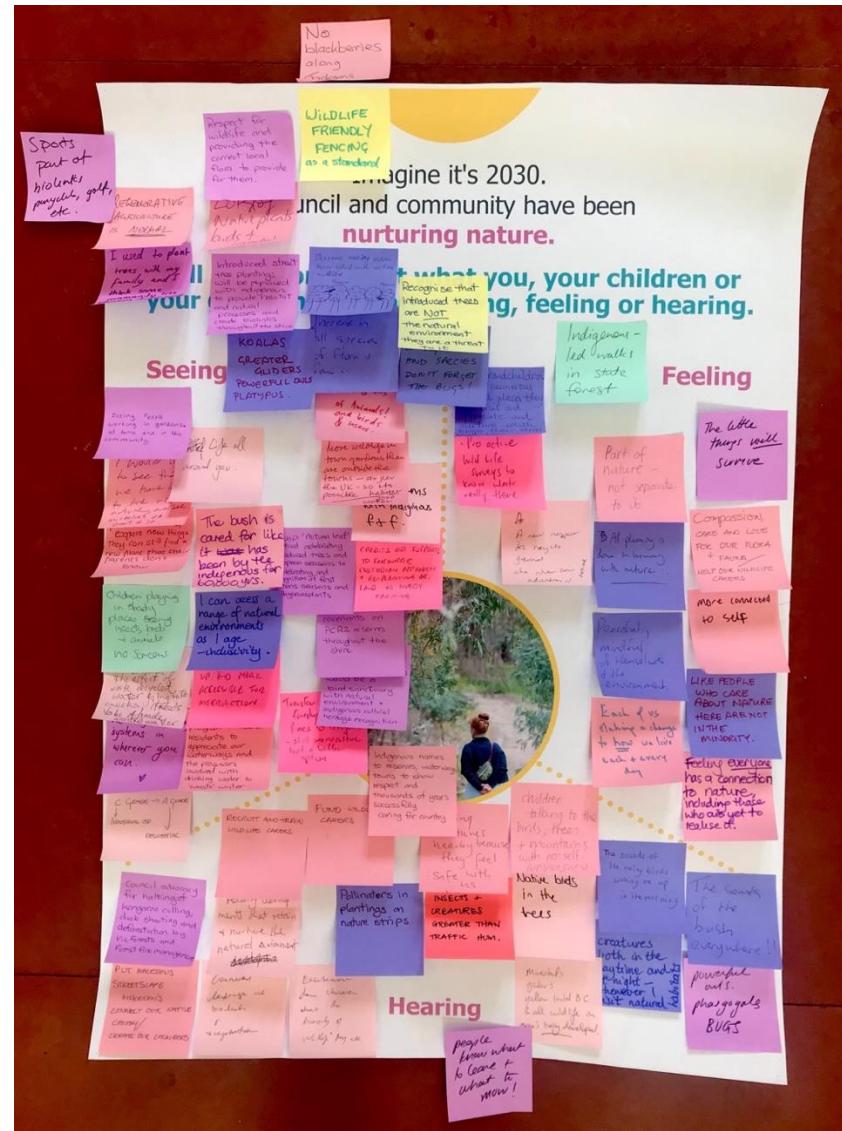
Number of workshop attendees: 10

Adaptation and Emergency Response Community Statement

Cool-ER Changes was launched with our community on 2 March. Attendees were invited to imagine what success looks like for this theme in 2030. This is a synthesis of what we heard:

Our community is well aware of the risks that may occur and have in place plans making us feel prepared and safe.

Everyone has a part to play including children. "we're all in it together!".

Safe community hubs are established with reliable renewable energy and communications and we know how to look after ourselves for at least 48 hours, so that emergency services can help those most vulnerable. We value indigenous wisdom and knowledge which is applied to land management. We look after native wildlife understanding the important role they play.

Cool-ER Changes Launch Visioning activity

Adaptation and Emergency Response Action Rankings

Given the smaller number of community workshop attendees, the activities used to assess and prioritise actions for Adaptation and emergency response were altered to maximise conversations around a feasible number of actions.

To start with as a large group, participants voted using silver sticky dots on the actions they wished to assess during the workshop. Then in small groups participants assessed and scored their actions. Assessed actions were then prioritised with green sticky dots.

The table below provides the synthesised results of the small group assessment activity and the large group prioritisation activity. The Actions are provided in a table in order of their score (between 1-10, with 10 being the most effective responses to climate change while 1 the least) plus the number of sticky dots or votes each action received.

0   Represent the number of sticky dots each action received.

Action name and ratings	Notes provided for the action
Small group action score: 10	

Community off-grid relief centres (Safe places)	• Update action description to: Develop relief centres that serve the community during a crisis that also include renewable power and batteries
	• Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council with collaboration from neighbourhood hosues and community houses
	• Priorities – neighbourhood houses, relief centres (four relief centres)
	• Next up: Kyneton Racecourse and Romsey Footy Club rooms
	• Benefits include:
	   o Community readiness
	   o Reduced energy costs for neighbourhood houses (noting this is an ongoing benefit, beyond use during times of emergency)
	• There is some momentum behind this action. Macdon, Romsey and Lancefield improves project (generator, solar and battery storage being unded by DEECA. Relief centre batteries in Macedon and Riddells
	• This action was identified as medium effort
	• Funding source, plus agreements with hosts are required
	• What is the role of the new sports precincts?
	
	Note: this action is related to the Assure Energy action

Assured energy (Safe places)	• Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council
	• Need to follow up re existing grant for generators for these sites:
	  ○ MEOC – Gisborne
	  ○ ICU – Gisborne
	  ○ Depot – Woodend
	• This action was identified as low effort as it is already happening
	• What is the risk of floods on Jacksons Creek?
	• Electric garbage trucks could provide backup power (see Newcastle example)
	
	Note: this action is related to the Community Off-grid Relief Centres

Small group action score: 9	

| Building capacity for community led recovery (new) | • Support co-design processes to build capacity for community led recovery. Raise awareness and consciousness. Connect organisations and help them respond to the question "what could we do?"
• Macedon Ranges Shire Council could play a coordination role for this action. All social networking groups, clubs, and organisations could participate
• Education to agencies about how they can help (not disempower)
• The approach should consider that collaboration is not 'information giving'
• Don't forget Council's role is to support the community
• Seek a 'threat by threat' approach
• The benefits of this action could include:
   o Ability to identify gaps and how the community can fulfil
   o Build capacity / upskilling
   o Communities recovering faster and better
   o Emotional benefits
   o Build connectivity of people in response
   o Aligning community energy to council attention
   o Build vertical support
• There is some momentum behind this action:
   o Lou Mitchell is a good contact for examples
   o Resilient Riddell
• This action was deemed to be high effort. However trials and pilots could start the process with less resources
• There are some programs from other councils that could provide inspiration or resources:
   o Yarra Ranges Council, Leah Rushford
   o Strathbogie, Mansfield and Murrindindi Councils run the LEAP program
   o Internationally, in British Columbia there is 72 hour self-reliance approach
• Don't reinvent the wheel |
| **Key targets** (Coordinated and informed response) | • Quantifiable action and role clarification in the Council Plan across all parts of Council
• Benefits include heightened sense of responsibility
• This action was identified as low effort
• Needs to go into the Plan
• Yes, we need quantifiable goals, e.g. host 5 fire meetings per year
• Focus on outcomes not activities e.g. 30% of home pass fire readiness audit |

Three actions rolled into one:	• These three actions were rolled into one to create a multi-pronged approach to community preparedness plus recovery from existing and future climate related risks such as extreme weather. The key elements of this action include:

• **Community preparedness education**
• **Home disaster assessments**
• **Extreme weather support**
 	
(Community readiness and resilience)
	o Information and awareness: via website, events (like webinars, movie screenings, workshops, new residents packs for town and rural properties, information circulated to real estate agents to pass on, support famers markets stalls)
	   o Home assessments/property visits by council
	   o Council's internal emergency management and approaches to sharing info with the community
	• MRSC has a role as connector of multiple organisations and amplifier of existing information. As an action identified by council and the community, this action relies on partnerships
	• Organisations like SES and CFA have community safety officers who already deliver community awareness raising programs on disasters. Potential to feed into and amplify existing messages – assist with communication and reaching a broad audience. A role for council to escalate climate resilience knowledge relating and linking to the climate emergency
	• A role for council to assist cross pollination of information and compelling communication to build knowledge the community can act on
	• Bring together skills for preparedness and recovery to improve confidence of community and council; engage/deliver/promote events that assist in connecting community, agencies and council (i.e. Fire and Friends Bonfire night see Kerrie)
	• Seasonal workshops "Prepare your house for summer". Council to support and promote CFA and SES events/bbqs and support dissemination of material. Volunteer support – council can organise events for CFA etc to attend
	• Home disaster assessments:
	   o FRRR is a potential source of funding for community actions
	   o Target high risk areas / vulnerable communities
	   o Council to support volunteer base and build capacity
	   o Promote existing kits: Bushfire Building Council of Australia Checklist and AIRAH Resilience Checklist (see Sue Barker)
	   o

6

Small group action score: 8.5

Place for recovery (Safe places)	• We have a recovery centre – Macedon Ranges Shire Council responsibility
	• Update action description to: Embed libraries and neighbourhood houses as key preparation sites in emergency management. Council to provide additional support and resources to assist neighbourhood houses and other providers. Support community to prepare for disaster and extreme weather
	• Important to clarify the definition of recovery. After 6-12 months neighbourhood centres become hubs but need resourcing for years
	• Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council with collaboration from neighbourhood houses and libraries, CFA, SES. Council to provide resources and education
	• The benefits include a better prepared community
	• There is a some momentum behind this action:
	   ◦ Existing partnerships with neighbourhood houses
	   ◦ Riddells neighbourhood house doing a lot around this e.g. volunteer support
	• This action was identified as medium effort but the effort required isn't yet clear cut
	• Council needs a permanent recovery team for resilience and preparedness. Council need to create funding to coordinators to provide this role
	• Need to meet with neighbourhood house to see if they have responsibility

Small group action score: 8	
Council services (Adaptation projects) 6	• To be led by MRSC to better understand and act on the risks posed by climate impacts on council's operations and service delivery • Undertake in consultation with community groups to maximise knowledge transfer and build collective understanding of risks and actions to be taken • Feed into preparedness activities • Opportunity to undertake with deliberative engagement approach to bring community along on the journey
Small group score: 7.5	

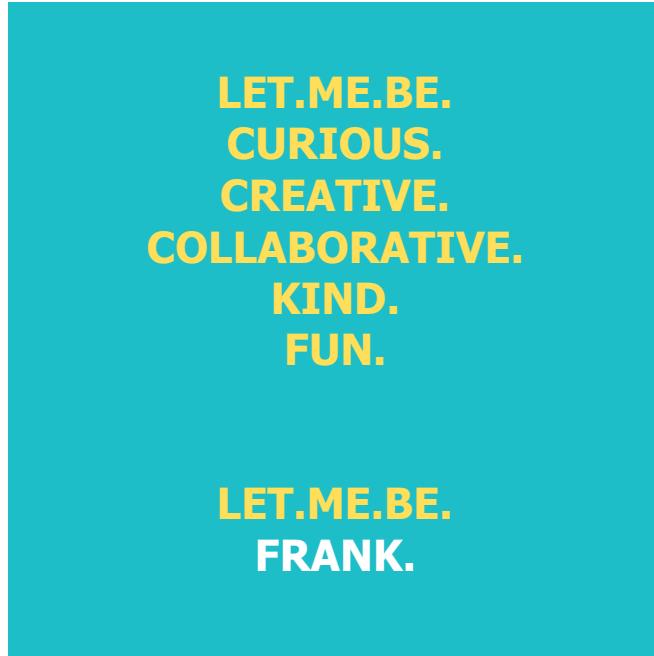| A prepared and trained Council (Coordinated and informed response)	• This action to be led by council to build capacity and capability of council staff • The function of emergency management with MRSC is currently a "nuts and bolts" approach during an emergency event. The gap is that there needs to be continuity in emergency management; an annual program working with the community – meeting the community where they are at and responding to their needs • Could develop a council capacity building program staring with eLearning and modules of specialist training (note: not to focus on "white knight" mentality • Budget allocation would be required and resources to design the training • Opportunity to add transparency to council processes and involve the community – the program could extend to building community capacity to be involved in disaster response (see Wellington Region Emergency Management (https://www.wremo.nz/)
Small group action score: 7	

Adaptation improvements (Adaptation projects)	• Update title to Adaptation improvements and partnerships
	• Advocate for better assets and ops / systems / roles. Need to have a better plan for flood response e.g. sandbags etc. Clarify who is responsible for floods
	• Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council in collaboration with Coliban Water, GVW, Melbourne Water, NCCMA
	• Benefits include better preparedness for heavy rainfall
	• There is some momentum behind this action:
	    o Melbourne Water is doing a flood study
	    o Council is getting a WSUD officer
	• Need a big picture review
	• This action requires strong partnerships
	• Experts are essential
	• Need to register the high impact areas and target them
	• This action was identified as high effort
	
	NOTE: preparedness scores higher actions

Two actions rolled into one: **Communications** (Community readiness and resilience) **Energy and communications interruptions** (New action) (3)	• The actions are aimed at building resilience (robust, spare capacity) into the communications and energy systems • Council's role is to 1) advocate to communications and energy providers (i.e. Telstra, Powercorp) to improve the resilience of services particularly when the region is experiencing extreme weather / bushfires and 2) where feasible within its own infrastructure, investigate local renewable energy microgrids, community batteries and portable internet for community centres • As a priority, implement back up power and reliable communication for Refuges • Explore and learn from existing community led examples (see Sarah at FRRR) • Link to Community Awareness action so that the community understand actions to take to be self reliant during disasters (water, energy, comms) See San Francisco 72 Hours - https://www.sf72.org/home

Small group action score: 5

Cool spaces (Safe places)	• Hot day out at Libraries – this already exist and can be relied on • We need data to understand what community needs are. Follow up with aged care team and safety committee • Need to go with friends or relatives • Pets are a challenge • Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council with neighbourhood houses, libraries and aquatic centres as collaborators • It's more important to help people help themselves. Potentially help people to make a plan for themselves • Council has a vulnerable persons register • Some other councils have engaged businesses (e.g. cafes) to be safe spaces on hot days • Are there wedding venues or ages care facilities in Macedon Ranges that could fill this role?

The actions below were suggested at the end of the session and could not scored the group

Organisational resourcing (Community readiness and resilience)	• The group decided there wasn't enough information to score this action and suggested it is reviewed once the Coll-ER Changes Plan is drafted to better determine resource gaps • A Climate Extension Officer was suggested to help integrate and provide climate consideration services to other areas of council – climate risk assessment • To enable all areas of council to act on the climate emergency and take action in their roles, KPIs could be developed for decision makers with incentives to support change management • Once draft plan is developed, assess where resources are best placed to deliver actions

Integrated water management (Adaptation projects)	• This action was not discussed however a comment was made to include the consideration of groundwater management and drought
Technology use (Coordinated and informed response)	• Not discussed

Overarching insights from Adaptation and Emergency Response:

- Even though there were fewer community participants, the workshop process allowed for participants to focus on actions that resonated most with them.
- Could Landcare be another group to involve in this theme? They are already linked to one another in regional groups
- Regarding community preparedness and awareness, it was acknowledged that there are many resources available and the issue is the information being presented in an accessible and compelling manner. If council was to partner with existing agencies (SES and CFA) to amplify existing messages that would be beneficial
- Providing consistent messaging linking extreme weather to the climate emergency would help with the opportunity to encourage climate resilience actions (about liveability and survival)
- Assisting both the organisation and community better understand future risks with regards to climate, will help facilitate future focussed conversations building a better collective understanding

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