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Cool-ER Changes workshop outcomes report

Macedon Ranges Shire Counci







Image: 'Always' by Rachel Derum

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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.

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Cool-ER Change launch

About Cool-ER Changes

We know that everyone, regardless of circumstances, will be impacted by climate change, and that residents of the Macedon Ranges are calling for more urgent action across all industries, governments and community. The Cool-ER Changes project will result in a Council's inaugural shire wide Climate Emergency Response Plan, and will outline the key strategic approach to enacting our Declaration of a Climate Emergency.

This project extends on the Cool Changes program, which enabled residents across the Macedon Ranges to develop their own place-based Community Climate Action Plans.

The ultimate aim of Cool-ER Changes is to critically analyse the climate actions already underway within our community groups, businesses and Council operations and identify additional actions and opportunities to respond and flourish within a changing climate.



Cool-ER Changes launch

About this report

Effective climate action happens with collaboration and so a series of community and stakeholder workshops were held to help shape the Cool-ER Changes Plan (see over page for more information about the workshops).

This report summarises the insights collected through each of the Cool-ER Changes workshops. It is intended to:

- Capture the voice of the attendees; and
- Support Macedon Ranges Shire Council to select the best actions and develop content for the Cool-ER Changes Plan.

The verbatim notes from each workshop are documented as separate appendix documents.

IMPORTANT NOTE

This report is being written cumulatively, with new chapters added after each workshop. The last workshop will be held on Thursday 1 June so the final report will be available shortly after that date.

Community and stakeholder workshops

The six Cool-ER Changes Themes include:

- Nurturing Nature
- Climate Ready Communities
- Post Fossil Fuels
- Health and Wellbeing
- Waste and Circular Economy
- Adaptation and Emergency Response

Cool-ER Changes was launched with stakeholders and the community on 2 March 2023 with approximately 120 people attending. Participants were invited to imagine what Macedon Ranges might look like, feel like and sound like with the successful implementation of Cool-ER Changes in 2030. Community input from this visioning exercise cumulated in six Theme statements, provided in the pre-workshop Information Packs.

Six workshops (one per Theme) have been designed to facilitate community and stakeholder input with the aim of prioritising key actions for inclusion in a Shire wide Climate Emergency Plan.

Each workshop includes an assessment activity where the large group divide into small groups based on the Theme's topics. The small groups discussed each Action and assessed them, relative to each other, on their effectiveness in responding to the climate emergency. The criteria referred to in the workshops included: benefits, partners, existing momentum, resources required, and effort required to deliver. Each action received a score out of 10. Each of the actions were stuck up on a wall in order of their score.

A prioritisation activity concluded the workshops with participants voting for their three "must do" actions with sticky dots. The actions with the highest scores and most number of sticky dots indicate the actions with the most support and effectiveness in responding to the climate emergency.



Participants told us their future vision for each of the Cool-ER Changes at the launch



Assessment Action Card utilised in the six Theme workshops

Climate Ready Communities

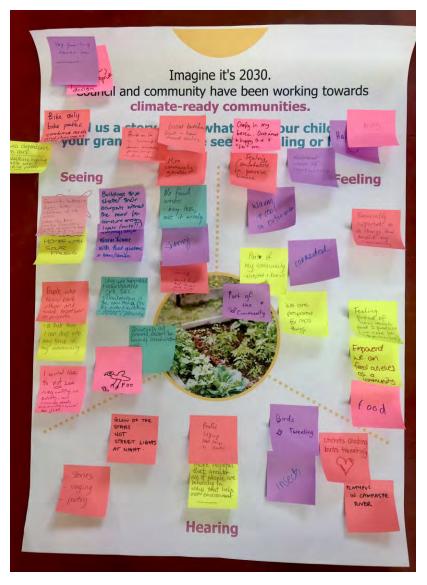
The Climate Ready Communities workshop was held on Thursday 30 March 2023 at the Kyneton Library.

Number of workshop attendees: 23

Climate Ready Communities 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 climate ready community has a well established sharing culture where we swap and share local food, skills, community resources and knowledge. We are prepared and hopeful with accessible and safe cycle paths, community batteries and local renewable energy. We have re-localised in every sense of the word. Waste is an outgrown concept - everything is a resource. Our community is caring and kind and our homes are comfortable using renewable resources and passive solar design.



Cool-ER Changes Launch Visioning activity

Climate Ready Communities Action Rankings

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.

Represent the number of sticky dots each action received.

Action name and ratings	Notes provided for the action
Small group action score: 10	
Support Community Programs (Community participation & low impact living)	 Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council to provide targeted assistance to community groups engaging in climate action Collaborate with local events like the Mountain Writers Festival and establish partnerships with church groups, ethical sources of possible funds and grants like Bendigo Bank and Bank Australia, libraries and neighbourhood houses Requires information / education resources relevant to local areas, and "link workers" to connect people to services, as trusted information and services to help people change the way they live Look into ways to establish a central hub for support, possibly in form of emergency management program, like a "recovery hub"
Healthy landscapes 2026 (new)	 Train the trainer model for peer-to-peer learning and broaden programs reach More Productive Land Co-operatives Champions in different areas as the like-minded members Ongoing educational offerings – webinars and farm visits Add a financial element Can promote to people new to the area, young people, and landless residents

Planning for Smaller Houses (new)	 Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council and advocacy with state government to establish new guidelines and planning scheme amendments to reduce the size of future houses. Take into account planning for future populations, retaining public open space Aim is for smaller houses requiring less resources to build and operate (energy). Reduces cost to heat and cool future homes Similar to Cape Patterson eco village
New Residents Kit Revision (new)	 Revise and redeploy Council's New Residents Kit to include localised information about passive solar house design, gardens and biodiversity, renewable energy etc (embed actions people can take to respond to the climate emergency and a contact list so people know where to go for local services and how to get involved) Create a regular communication forum/newsletter with local case studies and stories to facilitate momentum Aim is to mainstream climate action for new residents given the recent high turnover of residents Low effort and high benefit
Ethical Finance (community participation & low impact living)	 Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council in collaboration with local libraries, churches, community groups, finance institutions (Bendigo Bank and Bank Australia) Connect with the "solar savers" program and Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUA's)
Support Private landowners – Healthy Landscapes (agriculture)	 Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council partnering with soil biologists, crop experts, tree ecologists and water specialists Existing high momentum Farm visits a highly impactful aspect to the program (providing practical knowledge, incentivising farmers to host) Working with the land limiting fertiliser/fossil fuels, tree planting activities, adaptation focussed learning, build community resilience connecting people. Action backed by community, ways to communicate i.e. WhatsApp
Cool spaces (new)	 An action to support disproportionately affected people during extreme weather days. Where do the people go when it's hot? We need a place in each town where people can retreat to. Consideration needs to be given to places that can accommodate dogs/pets too Suggested lead with Macedon Ranges Shire Council with support from Neighbourhood Houses The libraries already provide respite on hot days This action was identified as low effort
Small group action score: 9	

Education and support for those who need it most (community participation & low impact living)	 Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council with libraries, community groups and churches Focus on climate change information, preparedness for extreme weather and building resilience Information provided via a permanent "recovery" Hub – the hub would provide information on climate change impacts, how to live to reduce impacts and information on extreme weather events and how to prepare Prepare safe places and refuges in addition to emergency relief centres (libraries, pools) e.g. Darraweit Guim
Incentives and less restrictions for off-grid housing (new)	 Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council Streamline (fast track) approvals for tiny house and small footprint housing that is off grid and sustainably focused Flexibility for farming zoned properties and small rural sustainable villages Sustainable hamlets and community land trust governance options
Urban cooling strategy (sustainable development)	 Lead by Macedon Ranges Shire Council (is an existing action in an action plan) Collaborators could include CFA, State Govt and residents Benefits include greenspace for mental health, increased walking and cycling which can support wellbeing and physical health Streetscaping is needed – shady street are happy streets Likely to be medium effort to deliver action Need to get community on side to see the value of increased canopy and collaborate. Street trees are being removed by residents who don't see value Bushfire risk needs to be considered (there is State Govt work to draw on here) Selecting the right trees is important. E.g. consider indigenous plantings to provide habitat and evergreen trees
Community Climate Action Plans (community participation and low impact living)	 Led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council in partnership with communities This action requires more urgency to respond to the climate emergency
Community produce swaps and farmers markets (local food webs)	 Key organisation could be local farmers markets This action could be low effort Need to identify villages that don't have them and implement them in these locations

Hard town boundaries to protect farm and conservation land (new)	 Lead by Macedon Ranges Shire Council Benefits identified include smaller towns that are easier for using active and public transport Gisborne and Romsey are missing these boundaries – one step is to finish these Macedon / Mt Macedon / Riddells Creek / Woodend – no rezoning of bushland
Home Retrofitting Assessments & Retrofitting Workshops / Programs (sustainable houses and buildings)	 Group saw a need for this service to be made available to more people across the Shire – means tested Tailored help available to those who need it Might need additional funding to expand and provide the support the community needs
Small group action score: 8	
Water Literacy Education (sustainable houses and buildings)	 Community led action involving council and water authorities (Melbourne Water, Coliban Water, Greater Western Water, Nth Central CMA, Sth Rural Water). Need to involve EPA Crucial for future population projections involving secure water supply, energy use associated with pumping, water treatment and disposal Water is a finite resource and we need to look after (value) water for our future resilience. Human resilience and ecosystem resilience Build in future scenarios for climate change and education for households There is already lots of information and it needs to be curated into a "package"
Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group – regenerative farmers action group (agriculture)	 Benefits could include doing stuff that Council can't do, continue momentum, localised information Local groups are important to deliver on ground outcomes There is some momentum behind this action but more support is needed. A funded support person, a meeting place (Council hall), support to apply for funding and promotion A clear purpose needs to be established and more research into MRRF

Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group - Sustainable Development Action Group (sustainable development)	 Led by Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group Collaborators could include developers, State Govt, Stockland, MRRA, other peri-urban councils Benefits could include more sustainable subdivisions, adoption of new technologies and practices This action includes advocacy, which could deliver high reward There is some momentum via CVGA and CASBE on the Sustainable Subdivision Framework. Most Melbourne Council have good example of better developments This action could be high effort Council would need more planners with skills to better assess applications (e.g. sustainability planner) Consideration should be given to impact on affordable housing Ultimately real change comes through the building regulations. State Government approval is required
Embed and Expand Council Sustainable Buildings Policy and Practice (sustainable houses and buildings)	 There was strong agreement that Macedon Ranges Shire Council needs to lead by example and having this policy is very important There was strong agreement that this needs to be extended beyond council to incentivise and encourage sustainable homes and renovations across the Shire with a focus on local sustainable design. Include design for extreme weather (refer to Bushfire Resilience Report) Link to Sustainable Development Group – need a new mechanism to upgrade all homes including those only having a minor renovation Benefits are many – reducing insurance premiums, resilient to future hazards, liveable homes, cheaper to run – Addresses mitigation, adaptation and resilience Couple with communication provision providing good news stories, local case studies
Carbon Neutral Firewood (community participation & low impact living)	 Partner with Wood for Good Benefits include protected biodiversity and wildlife habitat through tree planting Wood available at Transfer Stations so may be better to promote use of this wood? Consider wood fire stoves at home under the Health and Wellbeing Theme
More Productive Land Co- operative (new)	 More information and education needed Look into biodiversity and carbon credits (aggregate)

(sustainable development)	 on this action. Strong support for a new WSUD council position Benefits include improved water quality in creeks and rivers, slower stormwater flow, fewer floods, improved biodiversity, urban cooling Needs include new skillset and education for residents (on WSUD and its value)
Small group action score: 7.5	
Farmer connection events (new)	 Like open studios for farmers Farm visits open to community members in townships Food Producers Expo – knowledge building for community and big issue talks Key organisations include Kyneton Agricultural Society, AFSA, VMFA, Co Bendigo, Vic Health Food Hub. Council could facilitate Benefits identified include broadening community knowledge, improved health and wellbeing, and connection
Local food webs, community gardens and edible verges (local food webs)	 Key organisations include Macedon Ranges Shire Council - Council could provide land for community gardens – neighbourhood houses and churches Collaborators could include hall committees, schools, kindergartens, aged care homes, friends of groups, lions and rotary clubs, wholefoods co-ops, scouts, sports clubs Benefits could include freshers and cleaner food, community engagement across generations, reduced cost of living, beautification, education, environmental benefits, biodiversity improvements, and mental and physical health, shorter food supply chains (building resilience) There is already momentum for this work via Kyneton Transition Hub, Romsey Produce Swap, Tylden Primary School, SAKGF, Riddles Creek, Kyenton Primary School food forest, Macedon Houses permaculture course. Castlemaine Community House is a good example in a neighbouring shire This action could be medium effort Resources needed include land, water, infrastructure, broader community involvement, expertise, people power Consider indigenous food verges to provide habitat and wildlife and pollinator corridors

Investigate alternative methods for product to plate (new) Storm water management (sustainable development)

- Community supported agriculture (CSA). Can learn from Southern Harvest (aggregate CSA model) and 'REKO rings' (Finnish food supply model)
- REKO is an independent marketplace between local people and local food producers, which subverts the supermarkets and unsustainable supply chains.
- Key organisations could include Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group Regen Ag group
- Collaborators could include Macedon Ranges Shire Council Healthy Landscapes, City of Bendigo
- Inspiration from Slow Food Movement & Helena Norberg-Hedge from Local Futures
- Benefits could include resilience for farmers and residents, stronger local economy, improved health and wellbeing

• Lead by Macedon Ranges Shire Council (is an existing action in an action plan)

- Collaborators could include Melbourne Water and Greater Western Water
- We need to improve the function of existing assets and identify places to install
- Benefits would be similar to WSUD benefits, resource management and flood mitigation
- Biodiversity corridor could be a co-benefit
- A WSUD officer position at Council is in progress
- Likely to be medium effort to deliver action
- Requires funds to implement, collaboration with other agencies, new modelling (e.g. for extreme / changing whether conditions)
- Consider the value of doing things well from the start

Small group action score: 5

Conservation buffer zones for new developments (sustainable development)

- It was suggested that this Action's name be changed from Conservation buffer zones for new developments to Conservation zones for new developments
- Lead by Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Collaborators could include Landcare, friends of groups, Melbourne Water, CFA, State Government (DEECA)
- Description could include waterways and wildlife corridors
- Benefits could include improved biodiversity and water quality
- Council could increase the open space contribution from developers (from 5% to 10%)
- Likely to be high effort to deliver action
- Need to consider resourcing and on-going maintenance of public space

Small group action score: 3

Connecting to local producer and growers (local food webs)	 Key organisations could include Council, State Govt, Tourism Vic Collaborators could include industry peak bodies, open food network, street trader, VFMA, agricultural show, DMT Benefits could include creating markets for local farmers, better produce for consumers, tourism, decreased food miles, local resilience, community engagement and health Vic health has good hub grants that could support
1	 Resources for promotions and marketing materials would be needed Is there potential to create Macedon Ranges brand or trail Don't reinvent the wheel. The open food network are already doing a good job – promote this
Upskill Local Trades (sustainable houses and buildings)	 The group believed that although this action is a good idea, education is already available and many tradies do not want to be upskilled – builders who are interested seek it out themselves (early adopters) and those who are not interested wait until changes are legislated Link to economic development for the Shire If this was going to work it would need to be like a Bunnings BBQ (incentivise and mainstream) The action could be refined / updated to include: getting gas out of Macedon and include older sustainable trades (re-use, repair, local hand makers, knowledge sharing)
This action was proposed to be withdr	awn
Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group – Sustainable Homes Action Group (sustainable houses & buildings)	This action was proposed for withdrawal for the reason it is a group and not an action

Overarching insights for Climate Ready Communities

- The Actions with the highest scores (1-10) tended to be those receiving the most number of votes, providing confidence that the larger group supported the ranking process undertaken in small groups.
- We need to balance productive land for farming, housing (within townships) and nature.
- There are multiple linking actions for the topic Sustainable Homes & Low Impact Living and Sustainable Development. There may be benefit in synthesising related actions.
- To maximise efforts and outcomes of actions related to sustainable building design; it is suggested that actions are rolled up to include multiple approaches such as:
 - Policy: A policy from council that informs the sustainability of future council and residential buildings.
 - o Education: Information sessions and a climate emergency hub where the community and Trades can access information and services.
 - o Sharing skills: Workshops where community, council and industry can teach new skills and knowledge.
 - Communication: A regular communications forum where local case studies and stories of climate ready/sustainable design house design are shared to inspire momentum
- Of the 29 actions assessed in the Climate Ready workshop, nine actions were proposed as "new".
- As much as learning emerging technologies for reduced impact is important, there is also benefits in re-learning old trades and skills that are less carbon intensive.



Climate Ready Communities workshop

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