

03.04.23 V2 - DRAFT

Cool-ER Changes workshop outcomes report

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

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BE FRANK.** **Once upon tomorrow.**





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.

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

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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

HOME ENERGY ASSESSMENTS & RETROFITTING WORKSHOPS / PROGRAMS	1. Who needs to be involved and what will their role be?	2. What benefits could this action have?	3. Is there momentum behind this action? I.e. is it already happening or is planning under way? Are there successful examples?
<p>Improve access to information, assessment equipment, up-skilling program, access to trades to enable houses to retrofit homes.</p> <p>Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group's Healthy Homes Project: provides energy efficient assessments and retrofitting assistance to disadvantaged homes for thermal comfort.</p> <p>Equipment is available to rent from Gisborne & Woodend Library. MRSG also loan out a thermal camera.</p> <p>A community identified action.</p> <p><small>Photo below thanks to Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group.</small></p>	<p>Key organisation / community groups:</p> <p>Collaborators:</p> <p>4. How much effort is needed to deliver this action? Consider funds need and human power.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High effort <input type="checkbox"/> Medium effort <input type="checkbox"/> Low effort</p> <p>Comments/notes:</p>	<p>5. Are other resources are needed? E.g. land, access to community meeting spaces.</p>	<p>6. Is there anything else Council should know about this action?</p> <p>Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group's Healthy Homes Project: provides energy efficient assessments and retrofitting assistance to disadvantaged homes for thermal comfort.</p> <p>Equipment is available to rent from Gisborne & Woodend Library. MRSG also loan out a thermal camera.</p>
<p>7. Considering the likely benefits vs likely effort required, please score the project out of 10. Effort outweighs the benefits 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 10 Benefits outweigh the effort</p>			

Assessment Action Card utilised in the six Theme workshops

Nurturing Nature

The Nurturing Nature workshop was held on Thursday 16 March 2023 at the Gisborne Community Centre.

Number of workshop attendees: 31

Nurturing Nature Community Statement

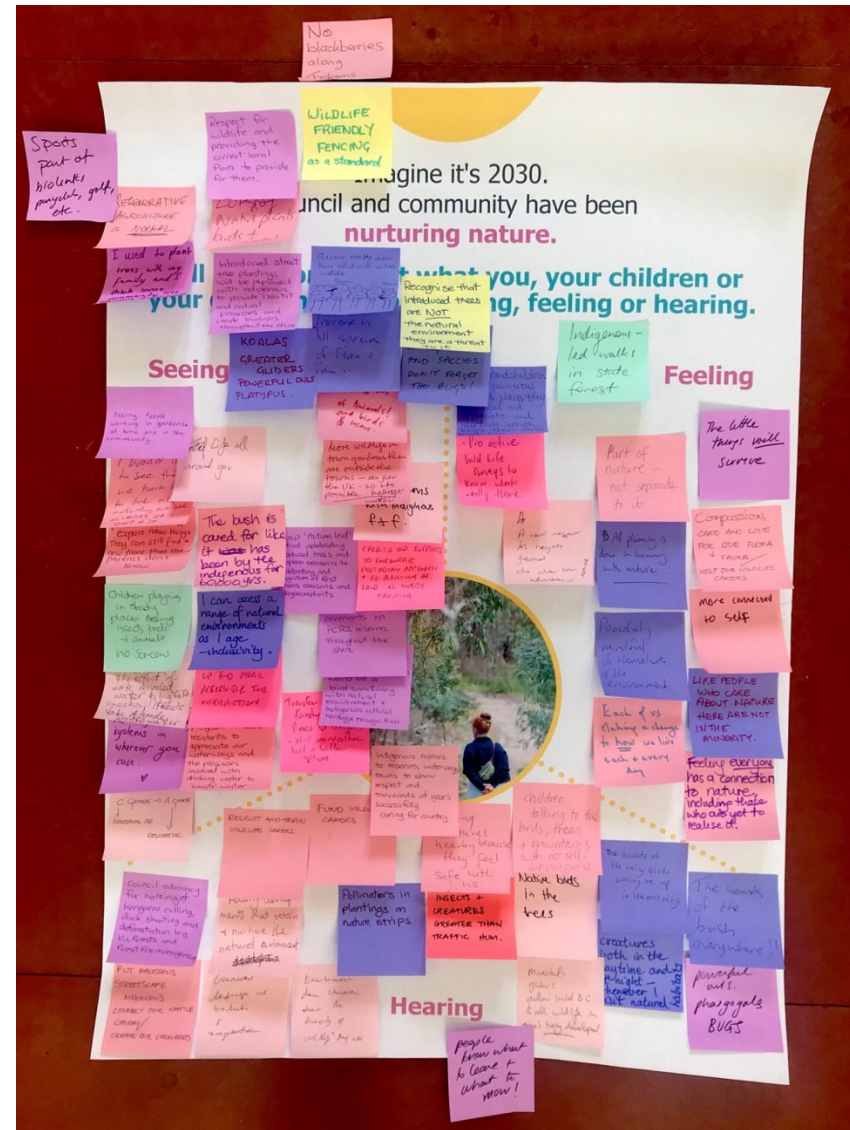
Cool-ER Changes was launched with our community on 2 March. Attendees were invited to imagine what success looks like for this theme in 2030. This is a synthesis of what we heard:

Together; individually and as a community we are CONNECTED AND CARE FOR COUNTRY everyday.

We respect and nurture nature and all around us nature is thriving.

The buzz of insects and bird calls are louder traffic and children play and learn in bountiful native ecosystems under shaded canopies. We all take daily action to look after our natural environment and reduce our impact. Through restorative and regenerative work, the community is more connected with each other and works together as stewards for the environment.

Water is valued and waterways provide biodiverse wildlife corridors where trees form bridges through our towns for possums to clamber over. Nature and the natural environment forms the basis for all future decision making, acknowledging the quality of life nature enables.



Cool-ER Changes Launch Visioning activity

Nurturing Nature 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.

0 Represent the number of sticky dots each action received.

Action name and ratings	Notes provided for the action
Small group action score: 10	
Protect and Enhance Biolinks (biodiversity) <div style="text-align: right;">12</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led by Council with partners to include; Parks Vic, Vic Roads, VicTrack and potential collaborators; landholders, Landcare, Catchment Management Authorities, Biolinks Alliance Important for restoration and erosion mitigation as well as protecting remnant vegetation Important for wildlife too There is existing momentum with Greenhill to Blackhill, Deep Creek, Coliban most successful Opportunity for Biolinks to be incorporated in the Planning Scheme to protect Biolinks from development. Incentivise and legislate developer conditions Embed indigenous knowledge and wisdom
Integrated water management (waterway enhancement) <div style="text-align: right;">11</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led by Council with support by Melbourne Water, Great Western Water, SRW, Coliban Water, NCCMA, DEECA (especially on crown land), EPA (licences for spills), developers (purple pipe) Plan was developed 5 years ago but needs updating Council officers need resources
Support biodiverse backyards and public spaces (biodiversity) <div style="text-align: right;">10</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update action name to Support Biodiverse Climate-ready Plantings and Public Spaces Key organisation: Macedon Ranges Shire Council with Partners and collaborators to include: DEECA, NCCMA, Parks Vic, Melbourne Water, Sporting Clubs, Landcare and Traditional Owners Benefits include planting climate ready species for effective climate change adaptation, reduction of chemical use, rewilding, local seedbanks Action to include mapping to determine and prioritise planting opportunities

<p>One million trees (or more) (carbon offset projects)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that this Action's name be changed from One Million Trees (or more) to Community carbon project • Can this project offer offsets for Council, local community, events and businesses? • Traditional owners and custodians could have a role • Ensure this is not just about trees but also improves overall habitat
<p>Support private landholder to regenerate (biodiversity)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by Council • Work with Landcare and supporting farmers (e.g. Ashbourne). • This will support soil carbon and biodiversity • Consider employing a biodiversity consultant
<p>Extension to Biolink Action – "Biolinks and Roads" (biodiversity)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by Council and Vic Roads. • Extends the Biolink action by enforcing reduced speed limits on all roads through Biolinks, retrofitting wildlife road crossings and signage for wildlife crossings • Roadside Management Plans for all Biolink zones as well as no expansion of roads in Biolink zones
<p>Council led carbon plantings (new)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plantings on roadsides, waterway reserves, public space • Links to Community Carbon Sink action • A pilot project is being planned involving 4 local councils. The north central CMA, and Coliban Water, to offset emissions from their operations
<p>Small group action score: 9</p>	
<p>Waterway Restoration (waterway enhancement)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by Macedon Shire Ranges Council and supported by Melbourne Water, NCCMA, Coliban Water • Group suggested to combine this action with Waterway and Catchment Management Plans • Opportunity to guide Works Program • Water will determine what our future looks like – DJAARA Country Plan – water as a principle. • Protect existing vegetation as a priority

<p>Rivercare (waterway enhancement)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that this Action's name be changed from Rivercare to River, creeks and waterway care • It was suggested that the action description be updated: Provide engagement and connection opportunities by co-ordinating project that rehabilitate waterways • Combine with all waterway plans • Suggest Council lead the action with support from Melbourne Water, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Landcare, Coliban and Great Western Water, Jackson's Creek Eco Network • Likely cost \$50 – 100,000 • Current momentum includes Campaspe River in Kyneton Masterplan – actions need to be funded
<p>Busk kinder (connection to nature)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce seasonal calendar • Could cost less than \$10,000 to run
<p>Community education and connection to place workshops (connection to nature)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that this Action's name be changed from Community education and connection to place workshops to Community education and connection to place workshops and signage • Action should connect people back to traditional owner and custodian seasons (beyond the 4 seasons) • Use storytelling as a tool • Improve signposts for walking tracks across the Shire. Include stories and interpretive signage so people can learn on-site and self-direct their connection to nature. Ensure appropriate traditional owner and custodian knowledge is included • Develop a walking map for the region that includes education and stories • Consider a welcome to the shire and education written from the perspective of native animals • Help people feel comfortable in nature (not scared of the unknown)
<p>Irrigation Enhancements for Public Spaces (waterway enhancement)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that this Action's name be changed from Irrigation Enhancements for Public Spaces to Passive and Recycled Irrigation Enhancements for Public Spaces • Led by Council with Greater Western Water as key collaborator • Benefits of this action include reduction of potable water use for irrigation in public spaces, reduction of grey infrastructure by using passive design and stormwater harvesting, protecting waterways by reduction in water harvesting • Council requires resourcing for WSUD Officer
<p>Small group action score: 8</p>	

Backyard Habitat Initiative (biodiversity) <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-left: auto;">3</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community identified action, collaborate with Council, Landcare and Gardens for Wildlife Vic • This action involves bulk buys and it is proposed that free plants are included to incentivise plantings • Action to include education about backyard biodiversity and pollinators and connecting people to nature, especially children. Ideas include: new residents pack on local biodiversity, a Sustainable House Day for gardens, Council nature strip strategy • Garden for Wildlife is a successful program in other Shires engaging local people and educating about biodiversity, starting in the backyard • Explore opportunity with developers via Landscape Strategy
Weed Management Initiatives (biodiversity) <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-left: auto;">2</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope of this action has been proposed to target all high threat weeds including pests • This recognises that to protect and restore biodiversity, eradicating weeds and pests are a critical element • Acknowledges that climate change exacerbates invasive species and that building ecosystem resilience is important • Lead by Council and in partnership with DEECA and Landcare • To include an education component
Small group action score: 7	
Mandatory education on waterways and water management in schools (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ecologist has been speaking at Gisborne Secondary School • Potential link to Earth Watch and Resource Smart Schools
Bushfire – Cool burns program (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Potential Council Action in partnership with CFA, DEECA, Newham Landcare, Traditional Owners. Indigenous led? • Develop an ecological and cultural burn program for reserves and roadsides • Contentious issue and small scale pilots required to understand ecosystem response to fire
Small group action score: 6	
Ongoing monitoring and citizen science (connection to nature) <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-left: auto;">3</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by Council. Collaborators could include nature stewards and field naturalists • Activists are often doing citizen science. How can we support them more? • Extend into schools (seed bombs, playing games with nature and storytelling)

<p>Regenerate drainage sites (waterway enhancement)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key organisations include ecologists, engineers (design and construction), Melbourne Water (larger basins) and Council (small drainage basins) • While there are some good examples of this on a small scale, most new developments are not contributing positively • Potential to incorporate naturing nature community working bees
<p>Public open space (connection to nature)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Scheme requires new growth areas to provide public open space within 400m walking distance for 95% of houses • Accessibility is important. Unlock heritage spaces • Benefits include connectivity, active transport
<p>Local Botanical Gardens (connection to nature)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Increase access to open space by local botanical gardens (including a seed bank). Maintain existing gardens as a seed bank” • Key organisations include Council and Melbourne Water partnering with Heritage Victoria , Friends of Landcare, NCCMA and Coliban Water
<p>Community Connection to Waterways (connection to nature)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include wild swimming to help people to connect to place (i.e. Campaspe River, Nursery Lake) • Expand beyond schools to broader community to promote connection to country and environmental stewardship that helps protect waterways
<p>Small group action score: 5</p>	
<p>Cultural Connections (Indigenous led conservation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by Council in partnership with Traditional Owners, CMA’s, Landholders, Landcare, CFA • Continue Council’s cultural heritage assessments and Traditional Owner engagement program. • To include landholder education program • Hanging Rock seasonal festivals – promote Indigenous knowledge and wisdom • Action aims to reduce fuel load, encourage native grasses, regeneration of certain plants, connection to Country and carbon capture • Existing momentum however lack of funding / resources has been a past constraint
<p>Nest boxes (biodiversity)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners to include Council and Mens Shed, plus technical knowledge about species specific boxes • Assists wildlife where vegetation has been lost and can assist in the development of biolinks • Momentum after June 2021 storm as part of storm recovery program • No more loss of large old habitat trees
<p>Small group action score: 4</p>	

Monthly mindful bushwalk (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This might fit better under a health and wellbeing theme • Also connects back to the action 'Community education and connection to place workshop' • Cost would be less than \$10,000 • Could be led by a neighbourhood house or Council and include special guests such as naturalists, artists and musicians to guide different walks • Some walks have already been held through Woodend Neighbourhood House and Riddles Creek Landcare
Small group action score: 3	
-	-
Small group action score: 2	
Come home to belonging festival (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A festival for all artforms that helps connection people to this place • Could be held annually and be tailored to appeal specifically to residents – for locals by locals • Develop a share language of this place and a spirit connection • Event is saleable. It could start small and grow over time • Collaborators could include regenerative agriculture networks, local galleries and art networks, Council arts team, Landcare, local artists etc
Indigenous-Led Climate Action (Indigenous led conservation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by Council and Traditional Owners. Council to fund a pilot approach to get off the ground • Aim to enable and assist Traditional Owner capacity and Council to play a key role and connect with Forest Garden Strategy and DJAARA Climate Policy • Participants indicated this should be embedded across all relevant actions
Small group action score: 1	
MRSB Bee Friendly Society - Honeybee Swarm management program (biodiversity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with Woodend Bee Friendly Society (MRSB), Garden Clubs, Bee keepers and producers • Connect with Gardens for Wildlife / Backyard Biodiversity action to increase awareness of pollinators • Unsure how relevant this action is to climate change, aligns more with Biodiversity Strategy
The actions below were suggested at the end of the session and could not scored the group	
Education and literacy (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: Education and literacy building of those groups who will need to adapt. For all ages
Eco-centre (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and eco-centre for community environment groups and agencies

Overarching insights for Nurturing Nature

- 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.
- Traditional owners and custodians should be invited to participate or have a role across all actions they feel are relevant (rather than having a specific action). Embedding Indigenous knowledge and wisdom into all actions could be an overarching Principle of the Cool-ER Changes plan.
 - One opportunity is to refer to the [Dhelkunya Dja Healing Country Plan](#) and to identify how the Cool-ER Changes Plan can contribute to its Vision, Principles and Goals.
- While connection to nature doesn't have a direct climate change impact, it is an important underpinning way to motivate locals to care for country and increase their environmental stewardship.
- Some Actions strongly interconnect with each other providing the opportunity to roll some of the Actions up including taking action coupled with education and awareness.
- Some of the Actions are relevant and connect to other Cool-ER Changes Themes for example, Mindful Bushwalking action to the Health and Wellbeing Theme. It might be beneficial to cross reference such Actions with corresponding Themes, acknowledging cross benefits.



Nurturing Nature workshop – small group activity

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letmebefrank.com.au
+61 438 030 112
hello@letmebefrank.com.au