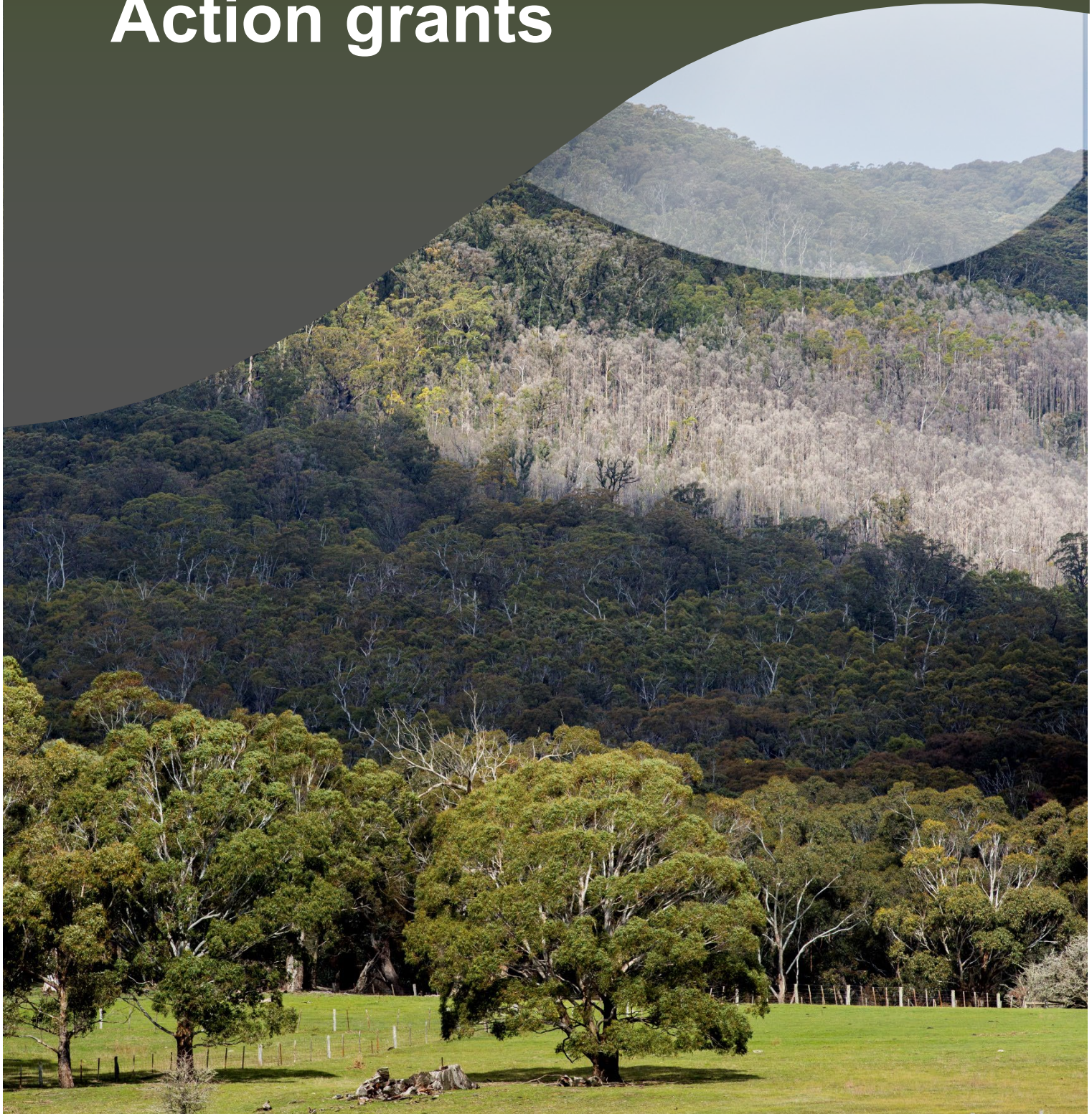




**Macedon  
Ranges**  
Shire Council

**Strategic Planning  
& Environment**

# **Biolink Boost and Community Climate Action grants**



## Acknowledgment of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, and present.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

### Artwork by Taungurung artist Maddi Moser

"Both artworks talk about our connection, connection to Country, connection to places and connection to each other. This is signified by the whimsical circles that form the 'rivers'; that wrap around our lands and ourselves. It reminds us that we should look out for one another."



## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Environment – Biolink Boost Grants .....	4
Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network .....	4
Newham and District Landcare Group .....	5
Woodend Landcare Inc .....	6
Campaspe Valley Landcare Group .....	8
Friends of Black Hill Reserve, Kyneton .....	9
Baynton and Sidonia Landcare Group .....	10
Campaspe River and Land Management Group .....	11
Macedon and Mount Macedon Landcare Group .....	13
Greening of Riddell .....	14
Deep Creek Landcare Group .....	15
Community Climate Action grants .....	16
Wash Against Waste Action Group .....	16
Permies at the House.....	16
Riddells Creek Cool Changes .....	17
Renewable Energy Action Group (Electrify 3442) .....	18
Friends of Daly Reserves.....	18
Sustainable Malmsbury.....	19

## Introduction

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is proud to support the Environment Grant and Community Climate Action Grant programs in recognition of the significant contributions to the environment and climate action our community groups make.

### **Environment Grants**

#### **Program aims and objectives**

The program aims to support groups with capacity building and biolink enhancement to benefit the community and natural environment of the Macedon Ranges Shire.

The Environment grants program aligns with the strategic goals of Council's:

- The most recent version of the Biodiversity Strategy;
- The most recent version of the Environment Strategy;
- The most recent version of the Climate Emergency Plan; and
- Environmental Management Plans and Master Plans for individual Council-managed reserves.

### **Community Climate Action Grants**

#### **Program aims and objectives**

The objective of the program is to support projects and activities that align with the priorities of the Climate Emergency Plan 2023-30 and actions outlined in township Community Climate Action Plans created throughout the Cool Changes program.

For more information on Council's grant programs, visit [Find a Grant](#)

### **With Thanks**

Council and community partners, Macedon Ranges Community Enterprises Limited (MRCE) and Community Bank, Gisborne and District, collaborated to co-fund the Biolink Boost Grant.



**Macedon  
Ranges**  
Community  
Enterprises

# Environment – Biolink Boost Grants

## Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network

### Project: Mount William Range Biolink Boost Project

The Landcare Network delivered two planting days and achieved revegetation of 1200 indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses. Landholders were engaged to restore strategic locations on the properties, contributing towards a larger goal of creating a biolink along the Mount William Range. The network partnered with Deep Creek Landcare Group to promote the events through their member network and utilise their expertise and planting equipment.

Community members had the opportunity to meet other locals, forming new connections. New landholders to the area attended and learnt that their land is part of a targeted area of the Mount William Range Biolink and expressed interest in being involved in future projects.

Follow up monitoring is planned and will include maintenance (checking guards, checking weed competition). Tree guard removal is another possible follow-up activity. Some replacement planting may be required due to dry conditions or browsing by wild animals.



## Newham and District Landcare Group

### Project: Enhancing biodiversity within the Cobaw Biolink

Over 4000 native indigenous plants were provided free to residents within the Cobaw Biolink area. Through neighbour interactions and events, the group were able to increase membership.

Using a broad range of indigenous native plant species, chosen for their suitability for each individual site, the plants were planted in multiple locations within the Cobaw Biolink, mostly on private land. This has allowed protection/enhancement of existing native vegetation by increasing the number of species present and establishing buffers of revegetation around them. Neighbours across property boundaries were vital to improving connectivity and also dealing with pest plants and animals.

NDLG has approximately 110 member households, the majority of whom have property within the Cobaw Biolink and are aware of its importance. NDLG targeted new residents in the area, to ensure they are aware of the Biolink, its importance, and the ways they can contribute to its development and success as a functioning Biolink.

NDLG also worked with school students to enhance the diversity of native species within school grounds.

NDLG volunteers also expanded revegetation on the public land known as the Andersons Road triangle.



## Woodend Landcare Inc

### Project: Five Mile Creek Black Gum Biolink Enhancement Project

The implementation of the Black Gum Biolink Project saw four planting days conducted plus other activities and working bees, watering, weeding and television filming.

In total 1,924 seedlings covering 36 different species were planted. This wide array of species was matched to the variety of conditions within the sites, from shaded spots within the billabong near the creek, to the north facing exposed areas 150m upslope where there was previous only mown grass and no trees or shrubs.

Creating habitats such as these will provide food and shelter for various indigenous wildlife, increasing the biodiversity of both flora and fauna.

To protect the current mature Black Gums, 36 Black Gum seedlings were planted to create a mixed age population which will be more resilient. Mulching and revegetating the areas around the Black Gums will also reduce soil compaction, reduce root damage from mowing and increase soil biodiversity and soil stored carbon at the site.

The planting days were attended by a combined total of 65 adults and 27 youth. A special Friday evening planting event was run with Woodend Scout Venturers, planting future trees at the two project locations within the biolink area that are near the Scout Hall.



On 22 October 2024, the Channel 9 program Postcards visited us. The presenter (Brodie Harper) and film crew produced a segment on Woodend Landcare activities based at the Black Gum Biolink site. This was a great media promotion for Woodend Landcare and Black Gum. Unfortunately, they edited out comments thanking MRSC and Bendigo Bank for the funding of the Black Gum Biolink project. See <https://www.9now.com.au/postcards/season-2025/episode-3>

See article over page

## News

# Postcards wanders Woodend

Postcards presenter  
Brodie Harper with  
Woodend Landcare  
members.



Travel and lifestyle TV show *Postcards* visited Woodend last week to highlight some of the wonderful food and leisure options available in town.

The program included the lovely walk along Five Mile Creek through the middle of town, which has been the focus of Woodend Landcare's revegetation works over the past 30 years.

Presenter Brodie Harper interviewed Woodend Landcare's Nicole Middleton about the community group and their activities as they took a stroll along the creek path.

"There are many reasons why people should join a community group such as Woodend Landcare," Nicole explained.

"Some of these include getting out in the fresh air, doing some exercise, helping to protect and enhance the local environment, meeting new people and socialising.

"Our caterers Chris and Kate put on a delicious morning tea for

everyone who helps out at our Sunday working bees.

"People can get involved with Woodend Landcare by coming along to one of our Sunday or Thursday working bees or signing up as a financial member.

"Working bees are advertised on posters around town, on our Woodend Landcare blog and facebook and in the Woodend Rotary's *New Woodend Star* magazine."

Other members of Woodend Landcare were present to demonstrate planting an endangered black gum (*Eucalyptus aggregata*) seedling within the site of a recent planting event.

The Black Gum BioLink Enhancement Project is funded by a grant from Macedon Rangers Shire Council together with Bendigo Bank.

Black gum is an endangered gum tree within Victoria, as it only grows within 4km of Woodend.

The episode of *Postcards* featuring Woodend will air early in 2025.

## Campaspe Valley Landcare Group

### Project: Blackwells Paddock seed planting and revegetation 2025

The project aimed to enhance private land along the Campaspe River with a selection of naturally occurring grasses, shrubs and trees as per EVC recommendations.

The plantings were planted in open grassland with easy access to mechanical equipment to do the site preparation and seeding. Approximately 500 trees were planted along the ridges and rocky outcrops selected from the local EVC lists.

It was discovered that kangaroos created a major issue when planting trees, requiring a more substantial guard. Strong mesh was used along with recycled star posts.

A three-year maintenance plan of the site includes weed control and replacing damaged/dead tube stock.



## Friends of Black Hill Reserve, Kyneton

### Project: Understory revegetation for woodland birds

This project saw the Friends of Black Hill group plant native species within Black Hill Reserve Kyneton. The aim was to enhance biodiversity and to strengthen ecological connections from Black Hill to Green Hill.

The project involved planting approximately 300 indigenous plant species, sourced from local suppliers. The diverse mix will support pollinators, birdlife, and small mammals while improving habitat structure and ecosystem resilience. The project creates a vital biolink, connecting fragmented bushland and encouraging wildlife movement.

Through thoughtful species selection and community involvement, the planting enriches the reserve's natural values and contributes to long-term conservation outcomes for the region's unique flora and fauna.

The project increased community interest and saw many new faces participating in activities.



## Baynton and Sidonia Landcare Group

### Project: Baynton Sidonia Tree Project

Through this project, 2798 plants were planted in the Baynton Sidonia area with milk carton tree guards.

Communication of the project was mainly done via email with members, and the demonstration day was advertised in the Midland Express and through the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network.

On the 24th of May at Baynton Hall, the Landcare group held a workshop called “Plant it Right” with 63 participants in total. This educational workshop educated the community on planting methods and practices. Participants were then asked to join planting efforts for revegetation days.

The group have increased the skills of their members to deliver similar projects in the future. The newly replenished members will increase the capabilities of the group.



## Campaspe River and Land Management Group

### Project: Consolidating Campaspe River Rehabilitation

The group worked to rehabilitate revegetation corridors along the Campaspe River as it flows through Kyneton while engaging the community to raise awareness that local people can make a local difference.

Several activities were carried out, including rubbish removal on Clean Up Australia Day, conservation walks for the Daffodil Festival and plantings with the community on National Tree Day. Students from a local secondary school participated in identifying flora and fauna for National Threatened Species Day.

2656 plants were planted in areas comprising fertile river flats that are good for growing desirable indigenous plants, it's also good for weed recruitment too! Further management of the area will be to control weed regrowth and to monitor planting success.





## Macedon and Mount Macedon Landcare Group

### Project: Riddells Creek / Bruce Street Revegetation

Students from the local school joined parents and Landcare members in planting over 650 endemic grasses and sedges in a section of Riddells Creek, located on Council land, opposite the school.

An ecologist from Melbourne Water lead a session with students, looking at aquatic macroinvertebrates. The group sourced plants and equipment that enabled them to learn how to collect, identify and record a variety of aquatic macroinvertebrate species.

Importantly, they learnt how to use this information to determine the health of the waterway and ways in which biodiversity can be improved.

The group aim to carry out ongoing macroinvertebrate monitoring with school students. Building on the planting with the school, the group organised a community wide planting event, with support from Landcare Victoria, further increasing native plant numbers and reducing weeds.



## Greening of Riddell

### Project: Riddells Creek excessive reed burden cull

An area of *Phragmites australis* was cut from Riddells Creek near the road bridge on Kilmore-Gisborne Road. The creek can now be seen and new green growth in the warmer months will freely grow without the overburden of tall dried canes, which was perceived as a fire threat by some in the community.

Areas of Bulrush were treated so that water could flow unimpeded. It was cut, dug out and some areas poisoned thus slowing its spread both up and down stream.

In the area that previously had a dense, impenetrable area of *Typha*, a platypus was seen heading upstream. The project was completed with the help of 4 young volunteers from the NAB bank. A school planting will still go ahead with plants we have in stock.



## Deep Creek Landcare Group

### Project: Enhancing Deep Creek's biodiversity

The project aimed to increase the native vegetation cover along Deep Creek and Five Mile Creek in Romsey. At a working bee in August, we planted 271 indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses along a 50 m section of Five Mile Creek and gave away plants to attendees. In early October we will add 500 indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses at the Doggetts Bridge Streamside Reserve, primarily as understorey in support of a 1995 planting of mainly trees by our group. We will also give away plants to attendees. We postponed the planned September planting until October 5. The project also sought to engage the community and to raise our profile in our area. Romsey was a particular target so in autumn we had two plant giveaways in Romsey. At the first giveaway we gave away 354 indigenous plants and at the second we gave away 469 plants.



## Community Climate Action grants

### Wash Against Waste Action Group

#### **Project: Transitioning the Wash Against Waste Trailer to Net Zero Clean Energy Production and Consumption.**

This project successfully installed a 'smart' battery and additional solar panels to the Wash Against Waste trailer (used at approximately 36 shire events in 2024-25). In doing so, the trailer now operates 'off-grid' and independently of fossil fuel generated electricity. This significantly reduces the trailer's carbon footprint and supports MRSG's and Council's commitment to sustainable, environmental responsible practices. Successful delivery of this project enacts the mitigation of climate change by:

1. Contributing to Council's Climate Emergency Plan priority to "rapidly transitioning away from fossil fuels"
2. Contributing to low carbon systems by adopting solar generated energy as principle power supply for the portable dishwashing trailer
3. Actively using solar panels and connected battery system at community events we serve as a practical demonstration of renewable energy solutions in action, educating the community that sustainable practices are possible.

The applicant is committed to additional educational opportunities to show off the use of solar and the intelligent battery system, as it has visual displays of incoming and outgoing power use and responds in real-time to solar input and condition changes.

Extending the impact of this project, the solar panels and battery system can be loaned to other community groups or Council affiliates, as it has been designed to be uncoupled simply.

### Permies at the House

#### **Project: Nature Connection & Village Building Workshops**

The applicant hosted two workshops across two days. These workshops aimed to support the local community to generate connections with each other & the natural world by offering positive and meaningful interactions with nature and an opportunity to gather and build grounded connections that would set the scene for future collaborations.

The Nature Connection Workshop supported the Macedon Ranges Climate Emergency Plan goal of protecting ecosystems by offering residents an opportunity to feel a connection to the living systems in their local area and a commitment to protect them. Attendees of the Nature Connection Workshop deepened their sense of connection to nature and belonging to place, and felt inspired to continue these practices independently. Research has shown that people who feel a sense of connection to nature are more likely to commit to actions that protect and regenerate natural systems.

The Village Building Workshop brought community members together to build connections for future partnerships and collaboration and develop skills for mobilising around the impacts of climate emergency.

Participants gained valuable relationships, as well as skills and tools to collaborate and mobilise people within and across their diverse groups and organisations in the community.

Attendees were drawn from the Macedon & Mt Macedon area and were invited to consider how we can build our capacity, skills & relationships so that we're all more resilient, more connected, and better prepared for the coming years and decades. The Village Building Workshop was positioned as a limited attendance event, with an application process to screen attendees and gather information about their community participation.

## **Riddells Creek Cool Changes**

### **Project: Riddells Creek Cool Changes Enviro-Expo**

The primary goal of the Expo was to provide advocacy, education, and information to the public regarding climate action. This was achieved through a combination of key speakers, panel discussions, and informational displays. The Expo aimed to communicate the urgency of climate action and showcase the responses of scientists, governments, and institutions to the climate emergency.

Other key aims from the project were to:

- Enhance Community Awareness
- Empower Local Action: Equip individuals and groups with the skills, knowledge, and motivation to implement the MRSC Climate Emergency Plan by highlighting local resources
- Support Long-term Resilience
- Engage diverse audiences

The Expo utilised two key components to achieve its objectives:

1. Key Speakers and Panels: These were central to the Expo's educational efforts, highlighting the need for climate action and presenting information on the responses to the climate emergency.
2. Informational Displays and Stalls: Eighteen displays and stalls were set up to provide detailed information on the reasons for climate action and the efforts being made by various entities to address the issue.

Individual and collective action was promoted by having one-on-one experts roaming and available to consult directly with attendees. Display and stall holders who provided direct action opportunities for people to consider and 'roving experts, who were community people who had implemented some changes and were happy to discuss that with anyone who wanted to ask.

There were also wider groups to promote this key objective:

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Corporation, Greater Western Water, Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit, MRSG Action Groups, Macedon Ranges Shire Council (Waste, Environment and Emergency Mgmt units), Maribyrnong River & Waterways Association, Riddells Creek CFA.

## **Renewable Energy Action Group (Electrify 3442)**

### **Project: Household Electrification Planner**

the 'big picture' objective of the project is to encourage and facilitate households and businesses in the Macedon Ranges to reduce or replace their use of fossil fuels, replacing these with renewable energy. The driving objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, a priority in the Shire's Climate Emergency Plan.

The project's method to achieve this was by designing and printing a shire-specific step-by-step guidebook (or 'planner') to assist households advance toward.

With the Household Electrification Planner, the group aimed to reduce the "overwhelm" experienced by busy households by:

- highlighting the lifestyle benefits of electrifying homes within the Macedon Ranges
- helping households prioritise their electrification activities, and
- signposting the best resources

The design and production of 500 booklets has been completed.

## **Friends of Daly Reserves**

### **Project: Printed material to support nature walks**

This project provides educational resources to support the Nature Walks conducted by the Friends of Daly Nature Reserve in autumn and spring, for grade three students at Gisborne Primary School.

These walks in Daly Nature Reserve (run in-kind by volunteers) provide education in the natural environment and its importance as a functioning eco-system. The nature walks encourage connection to nature, in the urban area of Gisborne.

## Sustainable Malmsbury

### **Project: Malmsbury Neighbourhood Battery- Community engagement and planning**

The initial objectives of this project were:

1. Increase community awareness and knowledge regarding Neighbourhood Batteries and renewable energy storage
2. Enhance understanding of community goals and considerations in planning a Neighbourhood Battery, and
3. Engage the community and strengthen social licence to establish a Neighbourhood Battery in Malmsbury

A Malmsbury Neighbourhood Battery Working Group was formed to progress these objectives with the aim to developing a business case that supported a grant application to the State Government's 100 Neighbourhood Batteries Program. The working group ran a community survey with 78 respondents and held a successful Community Meeting in February 2025 with guest speakers from the Yarra Energy Foundation and 50 attendees.

The Malmsbury community expressed a strong interest in a battery on a community building which could act as a resilience hub during extended power outages. Once obtaining community guidance, the group consulted with the Renewable Energy Action Group and Yarra Energy Foundation to plan the project and investigate suitable sites.

Two sites advanced to more detailed consultant analysis, those being the Malmsbury Town Hall and Malmsbury Primary School.

The group coordinated meetings with Council, Heritage Planning Victoria, Malmsbury CFA, Malmsbury Primary School principal and school council, and the Victorian Schools Building Authority regarding the project. We also provided updates to the community at Farmers Markets, the MRSG website, and Sustainable Malmsbury monthly newsletter. We requested and received power outage data and support letters from Powercor and Council.

Malmsbury Primary School was identified as the preferred site as there were clear financial, environmental and community benefits to having a community battery sited there. While the principal and school were initially interested and requested information in a written document (May 2025) and a school forum (August 2025), on September 2nd the acting principal advised that school council had decided not to proceed with the project due school community concerns that the safety and liability risks would outweigh the benefits.

While the grant application was not submitted, the project has still been important to engage the community, understand the community's priority goals for a Neighbourhood Battery and the challenges and complexities in finding a suitable site willing to host the battery.

