

Draft

Maribyrnong Climate Response Strategy

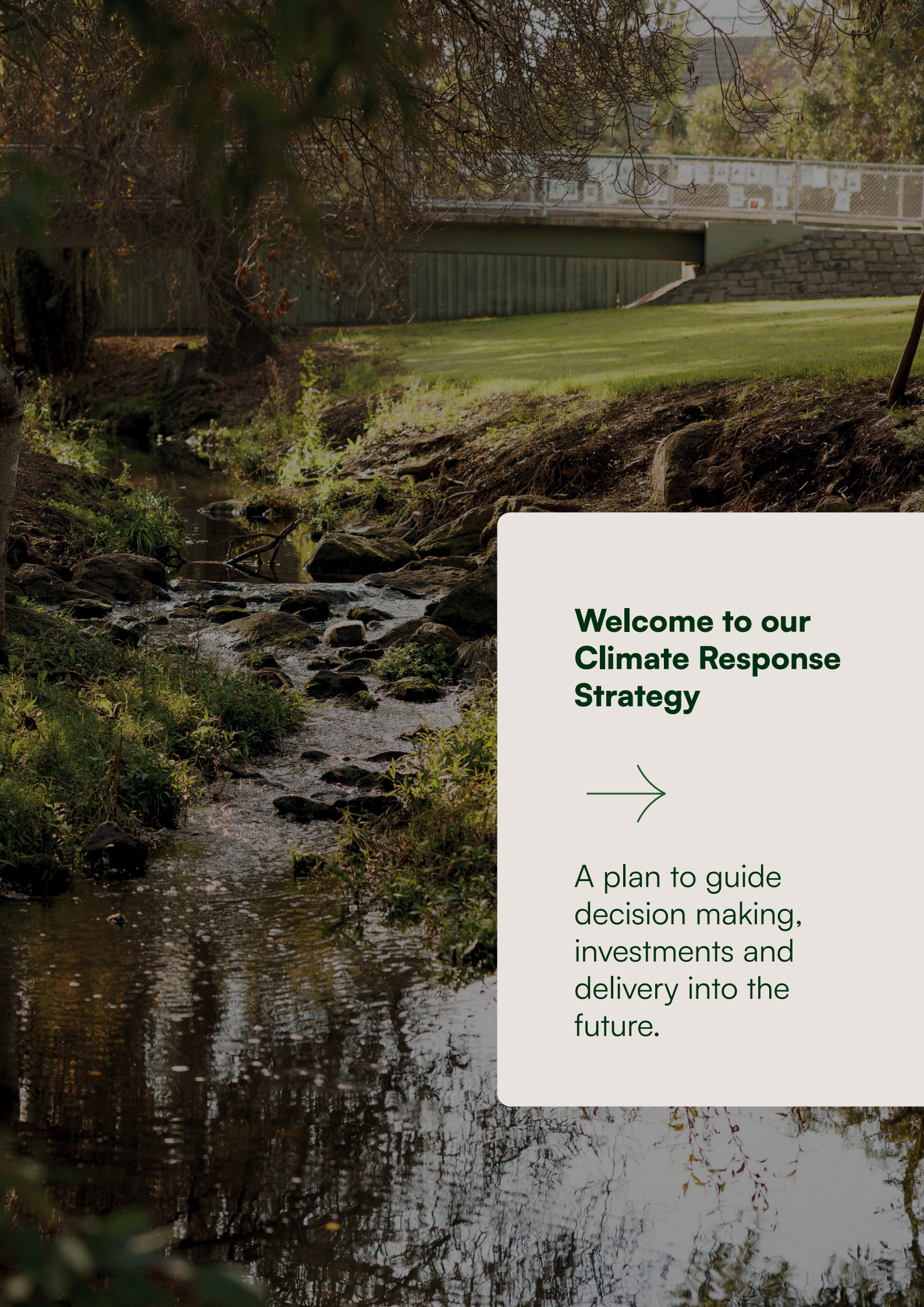


Acknowledgment of Country

Council is proud to represent a municipality with important and significant Aboriginal history. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Kulin Nation, and acknowledge the rich culture and considerable contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have made and continue to make to this City.

We recognise and celebrate the enduring connection of First Nations peoples to land, waters, skies and living systems. Responding to climate change requires respect for this continuing knowledge, care and responsibility.

Council is committed to working in partnership with First Nations communities to support caring for Country, cultural knowledge, climate resilience and a future grounded in equity, respect and shared prosperity.



Welcome to our Climate Response Strategy



A plan to guide
decision making,
investments and
delivery into the
future.

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About this Strategy

Climate change is already shaping the way people live, work, move through and care for Maribyrnong.

Hotter days, heavier rainfall, flooding, pressure on trees and open space, rising costs, disrupted services and risks to health and wellbeing are no longer future concerns.

They are practical issues for our community, our local economy, our infrastructure and the services Council provides every day. This Strategy sets out how Council will respond with urgency, care and accountability.

It recognises that we need to keep reducing emissions while also preparing our places, services and communities for the impacts we are already experiencing. It also recognises that climate action must be fair, practical and connected to people's daily lives.

Council cannot do this work alone. We will need to work with Traditional Owners, residents, community organisations, businesses, neighbouring councils, the Victorian Government and the Australian Government. But Council has an important leadership role:

in the assets we manage, the services we provide, the decisions we make, the partnerships we build and the advocacy we undertake on behalf of our community.

This Strategy is more than a statement of intent. It is intended to guide decisions, investment, delivery and public reporting over time. We will use it to strengthen accountability, embed climate considerations into Council systems, and keep improving as risks, evidence, technology and community needs change.

Climate impacts in Maribyrnong

Climate change is already affecting everyday life in Maribyrnong. It influences how comfortable our homes are, how safe our streets and parks feel during extreme heat, how well our drainage systems cope with heavy rain, and how reliably services, businesses and community facilities can continue to operate during emergencies.

These impacts are not felt equally. People who are more exposed to heat, flooding, poor air quality, energy stress, social isolation, insecure housing or limited access to cool and safe places

may experience greater impact. Climate change can also place extra pressure on people with existing health concerns, caring responsibilities, or financial stress.

This is why climate action is about more than reducing emissions. It is also about creating cooler streets, safer homes, healthier public spaces, stronger community connections, more resilient services and practical support for the people and places most at risk.

What is changing in our environment

Climate science is clear. Human activity is changing the climate, leading to hotter temperatures, more extreme weather and long-term environmental change. With more frequent and severe extreme weather events, there are risks to health, infrastructure, the economy, the environment and essential services.

See Figure 1 below



 Changes in climate	 Effects of climate change	 Health impacts	 Interventions and strategies
Increased global temperature Extreme weather and disasters Precipitation extremes Sea level rise Changes in land use and growing seasons	Extreme heat Air and water pollution Reduced food and water quality Changes in infectious diseases and vector transmissions Increasing allergens	Heat related illness Cardiovascular disease, stroke, and other chronic conditions Injuries and death Mental and neurological disorders Zoonotic, vector- and water- borne diseases Respiratory diseases and asthma	Early warning and preparedness Prevention or reduction of disease, illness and injury Community engagement Education and awareness raising Adoption and integration

Figure 1 - Source: National Institute of Environmental Health Science (Human, 2023)



What this means for Maribyrnong

Hotter days and heatwaves



Which can affect our health, comfort, how we use public spaces, community facilities, energy use, outdoor activity and the way people move around the city.

Heavy rainfall



Heavy rainfall, storms and flooding can place pressure on drainage, roads, buildings, open space, local businesses, mobility and essential services.

Poor air quality



Poor air quality and compounding emergencies can affect physical health, mental wellbeing, service continuity, community connection and people's ability to recover.

Flood preparedness and community resilience

Climate impacts are already affecting our community

Across Maribyrnong, flooding affects more than roads, drainage and buildings. It can disrupt access to services, affect local businesses, damage community facilities and make recovery more difficult for people already facing social, health or financial challenges. The climate risk assessment identified flooding as one of the municipality's most significant climate risks, while community participants highlighted the importance of understanding local risks and preparing before emergencies occur.

“People want to know what flood risk means for their own street, their own home and their own neighbourhood, and what they can do before an emergency occurs.”

Synthesised from community workshop feedback on preparedness, flood information and local resilience.

What this demonstrates



Climate resilience starts before an emergency occurs. Evidence, preparedness, community knowledge and coordinated action all play a role in helping communities adapt to a changing climate.

What we learned from the previous Strategy

Council's previous Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan created an important foundation.

It helped build momentum for emissions reduction, sustainability programs, community partnerships, waste reduction, cleaner energy, active transport, urban greening and climate awareness across the organisation and community.

That work should be recognised and brought forward. The next phase is not starting from zero. It builds on existing commitments, projects, partnerships and lessons. At the same time, the review of the previous Strategy shows that the next phase

needs to be more focused, measurable and embedded. Climate action cannot rely only on goodwill, individual projects or separate sustainability work. It needs to be built into the systems that shape everyday Council decisions.

The key lessons shaping this Strategy are:



Embedding climate risk into everyday decisions

Factoring climate risks directly into everyday Council decisions—from budgets and town planning to buying supplies and managing risks.



Focusing on real results

Moving from just checking off to-do lists to showing the actual impact of our work.



Playing to our strengths

Directing our energy where Council can make the biggest difference, while empowering our community and businesses to lead and share the load.



Clear accountability

Making sure every action has a clear owner, dedicated resources, measurable targets, and regular progress updates.



Tracking what really matters

Measuring the true difference we make, including cutting emissions, protecting vulnerable communities, partnering with First Nations people, and building long-term resilience.



What we learned through engagement

The climate risk assessment and engagement process highlighted four important themes.

- 1 Climate impacts are already affecting Maribyrnong.
- 2 These impacts are not experienced equally.
- 3 Community members, organisations and businesses are already taking action.
- 4 The role of the Climate Response Strategy is to help Council respond in a more coordinated, equitable, accountable and effective way.

Together, these insights helped shape the Strategy's priorities and approach to implementation.

What role we can play and how we work with others

Over the past five years, the way governments, businesses and communities respond to climate change has become a core part of planning for the future, managing risk, making investment decisions and protecting community wellbeing.

Expectations are also changing. Councils and other organisations are increasingly expected to show how climate risk is considered in planning, infrastructure, investment, procurement, emergency management, service delivery and public reporting, as outlined in figure 2.

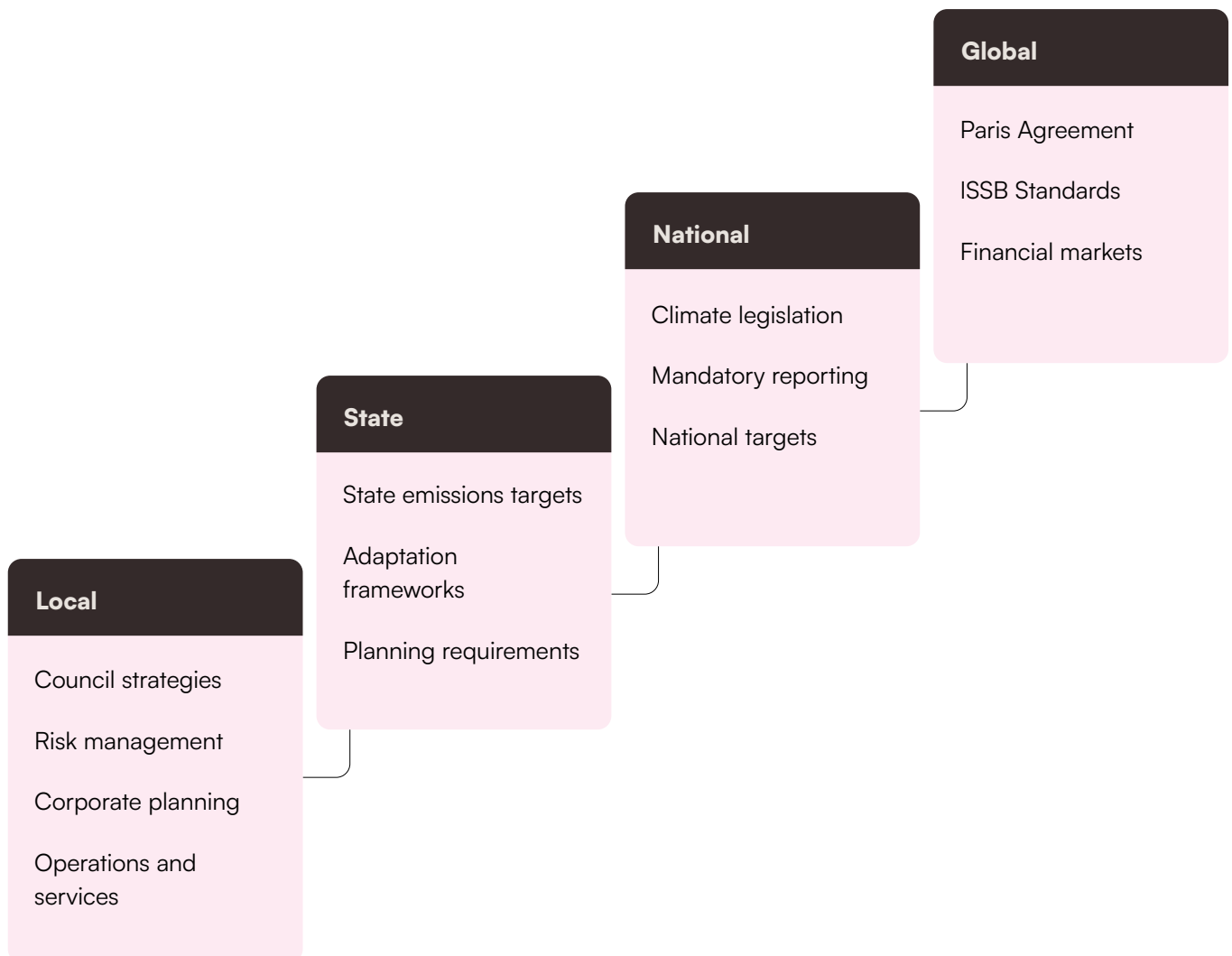


Figure 2: The Global, National, State and Local changes

Council's task is to do two things at the same time: reduce emissions where we have control or influence, and strengthen Maribyrnong's ability to adapt to a changing climate.

This Strategy brings these priorities together so climate action becomes more deliberate, visible, accountable and embedded in everyday Council business.

Responding to climate change is a shared responsibility. Council has an important role to play, but it cannot do everything alone. Some actions are within Council's direct control.

Others depend on partnership, influence or advocacy with other levels of government, organisations, businesses and the community.

Climate action works best when all levels of government, businesses, organisations and community members understand their role and work together.

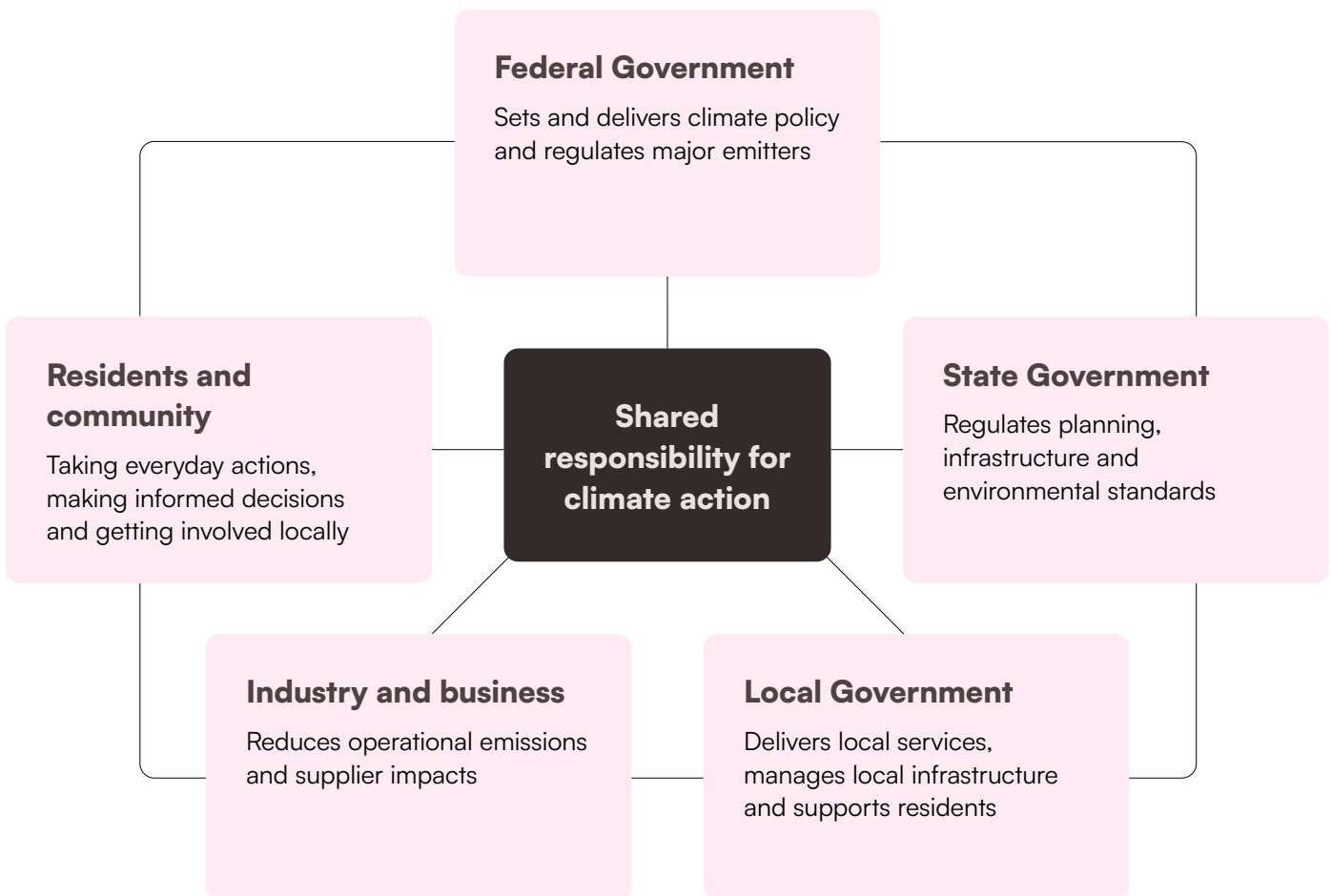


Figure 3



How Council will respond to climate change challenges

This Strategy explains the different ways Council can help respond to climate change. Sometimes Council can act directly. At other times, we need to work with the community, partner organisations and other levels of government to make change happen.

Control

Council will take action on the things it is directly responsible for, such as Council buildings, vehicles, services, budgets, local infrastructure, parks, waste services, community facilities and internal policies.

Partner and enable

Council will work with Traditional Owners, residents, community groups, local businesses, schools, service providers, government agencies and neighbouring councils to support local action, share knowledge and make it easier for people to take part.

Influence

Council will use its planning, policies, funding, education, communications and community connections to encourage better climate outcomes where responsibility is shared.

Advocate

Council will speak up for the funding, rules, infrastructure and stronger climate action our community needs, especially when decisions are made by state or federal government, infrastructure providers, business or industry.

What this demonstrates



This approach helps make Council's role clear. It shows what Council can do directly, where we need others to work with us, and where we will advocate for change on behalf of the community. It will also help us report back honestly on progress over time.

Figure 4

Our shared vision and targets for responding to climate change

Community Vision

A sustainable, vibrant city where history is acknowledged, differences are respected, and diverse communities are supported to connect and thrive.

This Climate Strategy supports that vision by helping Maribyrnong become respond: a city that reduces emissions, prepares for climate impacts, protects people and places most at risk, and makes climate considerations part of everyday decisions.

The Strategy will help us by:

- 1 **Building a climate responsive Council**
Preparing our team and operations to face climate challenges
- 2 **Creating safer, cooler spaces**
Designing cooler, greener streets and resilient public spaces to protect us from extreme weather.
- 3 **Strengthening our community**
Supporting each other so no one gets left behind.
- 4 **Protecting local nature**
Caring for and restoring our parks, waterways, and wildlife habitats.
- 5 **Driving a low-emissions future**
Doing our part to cut pollution and transition to clean energy.

What this demonstrates



Ultimately, this Strategy ensures climate considerations are embedded in Council's decisions, investments, planning and service delivery, helping create a fairer, safer and more sustainable Maribyrnong.



Council's Civic Precinct and Community Hub reflects our commitment to leading the way on climate action. As a 6 Star Green Star building, it sets an example for a healthier, more sustainable future for our community.

Targets

Organisation

Council will take direct responsibility for reducing emissions from its own operations. A staged approach will be adopted to ensure targets are achievable and reflect current constraints, including budget, data availability and operational dependencies.

Pathway

By 2030



Achieve zero emissions across Scope 1 and Scope 2 sources, excluding MAC and heavy fleet.

By 2035



Achieve zero emissions across Scope 1 and Scope 2 sources, including MAC and heavy fleet.

By 2040



Achieve zero emissions across Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions”.

Community

Council has an important role in enabling, supporting and influencing emissions reductions across the community. While Council does not have direct control over most community emissions sources, it can work in partnership with residents, businesses, industry, government and community organisations to drive meaningful action.

To align with national emissions reduction commitments and contribute to Australia’s transition to a net zero future, Council adopts the following community emissions reduction pathway:

Pathway

By 2030



Reduce emissions by 43% below 2005 levels.

By 2035



Reduce emissions by 62% to 70% below 2005 levels.

By 2040



Reach Net Zero emissions.

These targets will be supported by action plans that set out the work required to deliver them. The first action plan will cover an initial 18-month period to establish priority actions, build internal systems and maintain visible progress.

This will be followed by three successive 3-year action plans across the life of the Strategy.

Each action plan will identify lead teams, shared responsibilities, indicative timing, resource implications and dependencies. Not every target is fully within Council’s direct control.

Some depend on community participation, market conditions, technology, regulation, funding or other levels of government. Where this is the case, Council will be transparent about its role and the partnerships or advocacy needed.

How this Strategy fits with Council's existing plans and strategies

Council already has a range of strategies, plans and policies that contribute to climate action, environmental sustainability and community resilience, see Appendix A — Climate-related Council strategies, plans and policies for more details.

This Climate Strategy connects these commitments, supports coordinated delivery across Council, and helps embed climate considerations into decision-making, planning and service delivery.



What we're committing to: Our priorities

The following priorities describe what Council will focus on over the life of this Strategy. They are not exclusive, they intersect with and influence each other. Each priority needs to connect to actions, decision-making, resourcing, reporting and community benefit.

Climate justice and inclusion

Climate action will focus on fairness, inclusion and equity, recognising that climate change affects people in different ways. Council will prioritise support for people and communities most at risk from climate impacts,

including impacts on human health and wellbeing, and will ensure climate programs consider gender equality, accessibility and the barriers people may face.

Heat-vulnerable neighbourhoods and places of refuge

Climate impacts are not experienced equally

In Maribyrnong, some neighbourhoods experience higher levels of heat exposure alongside other vulnerabilities such as age, health challenges, social isolation, housing quality and financial stress. Community facilities, shaded public spaces and strong local networks can all play an important role in helping people cope during periods of extreme heat.

“When temperatures rise, the impacts ripple through the whole community. People seek cooler places, services come under pressure, public spaces become harder to use and the natural environment experiences increasing stress.”

Synthesised from staff and community discussions about extreme heat and climate resilience

What this demonstrates



Climate resilience is also about inclusion. Understanding who is most affected by climate impacts helps ensure climate responses strengthen resilience across the whole community.

Emissions reduction, carbon drawdown, climate adaptation and resilience

We will take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support carbon drawdown and help our community prepare for climate impacts. By planning ahead and understanding climate risks - particularly impacts of

extreme weather events - we can better protect people's health and wellbeing, strengthen local nature, cool our streets and public spaces, and make Council assets and services more resilient for the future.

First Nations knowledge, culture and partnership

We will work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to support caring for Country, protect culturally significant places, and ensure First Nations knowledge, culture and priorities help shape climate planning and decision-making.

This means building respectful relationships and making sure climate action is informed by cultural knowledge, self-determination and long-term care for land, water, biodiversity and community.



Evidence-led, embedded and accountable climate action

We will make climate decisions based on evidence, local knowledge and community needs. Climate action will be embedded into everyday Council planning, investment, services and reporting, with clear responsibilities

and practical tools to guide decisions. We will track progress, share what we are learning, and keep improving our approach over time.

Community-led climate action

People are already responding

Throughout the engagement process, residents, community groups, organisations and businesses described climate action already occurring across Maribyrnong. These actions range from food growing, repair and reuse initiatives, and active transport, through to environmental stewardship, community education and neighbourhood-based resilience activities.

“People are already taking action in ways that matter to them. They are growing food, sharing skills, reducing waste, caring for local places, supporting neighbours and looking for practical ways to prepare for change.”

Synthesised from community workshop discussions about climate action, resilience and community participation.

The engagement process suggested that many people are not waiting to be convinced that climate action matters. Instead, they are looking for ways to connect, participate and build on momentum that already exists.

What this demonstrates



Climate action is strongest when it is shared. Council’s role includes supporting, connecting and amplifying action already occurring across the community.

Community-led and Council-enabled action

We know lasting climate action happens when communities are informed, connected and supported to lead. Council will help residents, businesses, community organisations and local groups take action by sharing trusted information, building local partnerships,

reducing practical barriers and supporting initiatives that make it easier for people to reduce emissions, prepare for climate impacts and strengthen resilience in ways that work for them and their communities.

How climate action will become part of everyday Council decisions

A key purpose of this Strategy is to make climate considerations part of everyday Council business. This means climate action should be visible in the practical decisions Council already makes. The following examples will guide our work in embedding climate action across the organisation.

Roads and drainage should consider heat, flooding, materials, maintenance, tree canopy, stormwater and long-term resilience.

Capital works should be tested for emissions, climate risk, lifecycle cost, cooling, shade, water, access and future operating impacts.

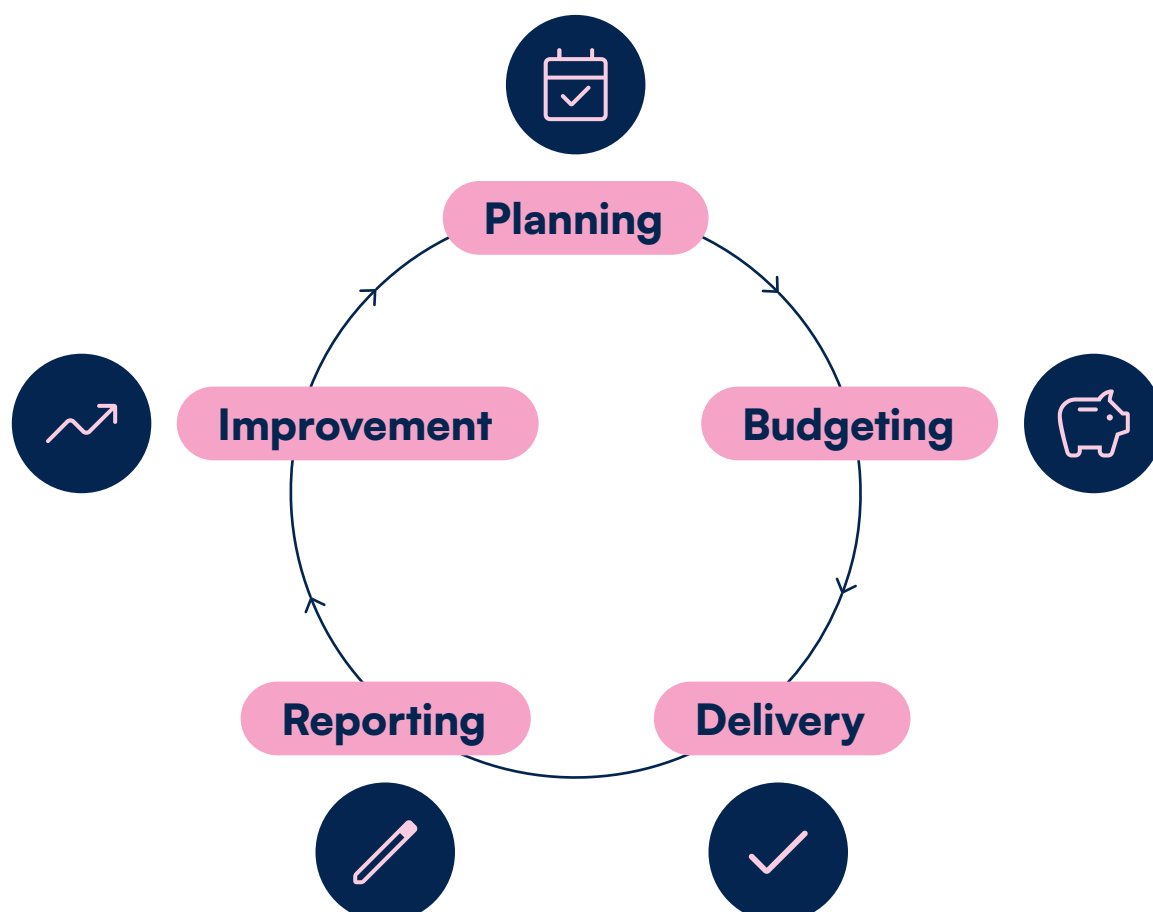
Procurement should consider emissions, durability, reuse, repair, recycled content, climate resilience and supplier practices where relevant.

Community facilities should be planned so they can support community resilience during heat, smoke, storms or disruption.

Libraries and community centres may have a role as trusted information points, cool places, cleaner-air refuges, connection hubs and support locations during climate stress.

Service planning should consider staff safety, service continuity, vulnerable communities, health impacts, caring responsibilities and demand for support.

And urban greening should prioritise canopy, shade and biodiversity where heat exposure, community need and public benefit are greatest.



Climate considerations in everyday council decisions

Responding through everyday decisions

The climate risks explored throughout this Strategy influence many of the decisions Council already makes. Infrastructure planning, procurement, asset management, service delivery, emergency management and long-term investment decisions all contribute to how resilient, equitable and climate-ready the municipality becomes.

“Climate change is not a separate issue that sits alongside Council business. It increasingly affects the decisions we make about assets, services, infrastructure, risks and community wellbeing.”

Synthesised from internal workshop discussions about organisational resilience and climate risk.

The Climate Response Strategy helps ensure climate risks and opportunities are considered as part of good decision-making, strengthening accountability and helping climate action become part of everyday Council business.

What this demonstrates



Climate action is not only about what Council does. It is also about how Council makes decisions.

How we will measure our success

This Strategy is about action, accountability and learning. With our Adaptation Framework, developed as part of the previous Climate Emergency Strategy, Council will develop a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework to track progress, support decision-making and improve delivery over time.

The Adaptation Framework and MERI Framework will work together as a practical planning and learning cycle. The Adaptation Framework will guide teams to identify climate risks, understand who and what is most vulnerable, prioritise actions, prepare implementation plans and build adaptation into Council decision-making.

The MERI Framework will then help Council track whether those actions are being delivered, whether they are reducing risk and vulnerability, and what needs to be adjusted as evidence, climate conditions and community needs change.

In practice, this means adaptation planning will not be a one-off exercise. Each action plan will generate information for MERI reporting, including what was implemented, what outcomes were achieved, where barriers remain and where further investment, escalation or advocacy is needed.

MERI findings will feed back into future adaptation planning, budgeting, risk management, service planning and public reporting, so Council can keep improving its response over time rather than simply reporting on completed actions.

The MERI Framework will measure both delivery and impact. It will help Council and community understand what has been done, what difference it is making, what needs to change and where further investment, escalation or advocacy may be needed.

The framework will focus on six areas.



Outcomes

Are emissions reducing, resilience improving, and climate risks decreasing?



Delivery

What actions, projects, programs and upgrades have been completed?



Equity and health

Benefit from action reaching the people and communities most affected by climate change, including those experiencing greater heat vulnerability, health inequities, gendered impacts or barriers to support.



Governance

Is climate action being embedded into Council planning, budgets and decision-making?



Transparency and accountability

Is progress being reported publicly in a way that is clear, meaningful and useful for Council, community, ELT and councillors?



Learning and Improvement

Are we using evidence, feedback and experience to improve over time?

The MERI Framework will be practical and proportionate. It will use available data wherever possible, avoid unnecessary reporting burden and prioritise information that helps improve decisions. Public reporting will explain progress, constraints, lessons and next steps.

The background of the page is a photograph of a park. On the left, a large, mature tree with a thick, textured trunk stands prominently. In the foreground and middle ground, several people are engaged in planting small green seedlings into the soil. The ground is dry and brown, suggesting a warm climate. In the background, more trees and a residential building with a tiled roof are visible under a clear sky. A large, light green, angular graphic element is overlaid on the right side of the image, framing the text.

Conclusion

This Strategy is about making Maribyrnong more climate ready, climate fair and climate accountable. It will guide how Council plans, invests, delivers, partners, advocates and reports over time. It brings together the work Council already does to reduce emissions, prepare for climate impacts, protect people and places most at risk, and make climate action part of everyday decisions. It is an evolution of our continued response to the Climate Emergency, first acknowledged by Maribyrnong City Council in 2019.



Appendix A

Climate-related Council strategies, plans and policies

This appendix should function as an integration map, not only a list of related documents. Its purpose is to show how climate commitments across Council plans, policies and strategies connect back to this Strategy, who owns them, and how progress will be reported.

Strategy / Plan	Relationship to the Climate Strategy
Council Plan 2025—2029	Provides the overarching Council vision and strategic direction.
Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025—2029	Supports health, wellbeing, active living, climate resilience, green spaces, social connection, inclusion and equitable access to support services.
Maribyrnong Social Justice Framework 2023—2033	Supports climate justice by embedding equity, inclusion, human rights and resilience into climate planning, especially for people most affected by climate impacts.
Maribyrnong 2040: Community Plan	Provides the long-term community vision and supports active citizenship, living well, shaping natural and built environments, working and learning, and linking people and places.
Asset Plan 2022	Supports climate-ready asset planning, renewal, risk management and long-term investment in resilient infrastructure and services.
Nature Plan	Supports biodiversity conservation, ecological resilience and stronger connection with nature.
Urban Forest Strategy and Tree Management Policy	Support urban cooling, canopy cover, shade, biodiversity and climate adaptation.
Open Space Strategy	Supports the planning, provision, design and management of open space to improve cooling, liveability, biodiversity, recreation and community resilience.
Nature Strip Planting Policy and Guidelines	Support greener streetscapes, local biodiversity, community participation, urban cooling and neighbourhood-scale climate action.
Integrated Water Management Plan	Supports water security, water-sensitive urban design, flood resilience and healthier waterways.
Towards Zero Waste Strategy and Waste Management Policy	Support circular economy, waste avoidance, resource recovery and emissions reduction outcomes.

Strategy / Plan	Relationship to the Climate Strategy
Air Quality Improvement Plan	Supports environmental health, cleaner air and actions that reduce exposure to pollution, smoke and other air-quality risks.
Integrated Transport Strategy and Bicycle Strategy	Support emissions reduction, active transport, healthier communities, more resilient neighbourhoods and sustainable movement across the municipality.
Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Policy 2024	Supports transport electrification, equitable charging access and reduced transport emissions.
Road Management Plan and Road Safety Strategy	Support safe, accessible and resilient streets, active transport outcomes, maintenance planning and adaptation of road assets to climate impacts.
Stony Creek Future Directions Plan 2020	Supports waterway health, biodiversity, habitat, urban cooling, vegetation, tree canopy and public open space outcomes.
Sustainable Design Assessment in the Planning Process	Supports planning decisions that consider greenhouse emissions, water, urban heat, energy, waste and stormwater impacts.
Social Impact Assessment Policy and Guidelines	Support consideration of social impacts from development and help embed equity, wellbeing and resilience considerations into planning decisions.
Reconciliation Action Plan	Supports stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and can guide culturally informed climate planning, adaptation and caring for Country partnerships.
Putting Customers First Strategy 2026—2029	Supports accessible, responsive and inclusive communication and service delivery, including how climate information and support reaches the community.



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