

ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2024 - 2034

Climate Change

Proactively addressing the current and potential effects of climate change is a central tenet of Council's strategy. We will work to mitigate and ultimately reduce our municipality's environmental impact, and ensure the community is prepared for the emergencies a changing climate may bring. We will cultivate adaptation and resilience across Council operations, infrastructure development, and by working collaboratively with businesses and residents.

Natural Landscapes and Biodiversity

Council is committed to environmental stewardship exceeding legislative requirements. We will actively monitor and manage our local environment, prioritising the health of native species, waterways, and our unique landscapes. We will encourage and maintain a thriving ecosystem through sustainable and environmentally conscious land-use practices.

Sustainable Living

A sustainable future for everyone in our community is of core priority for Council. We will promote energy efficiency, renewable resources, water conservation and responsible waste management. Through minimising waste generation and maximizing reuse, we will close the economy loop and bring management of our resource needs back to a local level.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land where we live, and pays its respects to their Elders, past and present. We recognise the Eastern Maar, Wadawurrung, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples' continuing, deep, spiritual connection to the land and their rights to their Country.



Ararat Rural City

ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2024 - 2034

1. Climate Change

Climate change poses many risks to our community, including damage to infrastructure, disruption to operational services and processes, reduced or prevented access to vital products and services, and threatening the health and safety of people, domestic animals and wildlife. Vulnerable people are the most impacted by these risks, including people with a disability, who represented 24% of the municipality's population in 2018, and elderly people (75+), whose percentage is expected to increase from 10% to 16% of the municipality by 2036.

We will inform the community of the local risks of climate change, and we will grow resilience by implementing and supporting adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Objectives:

- 1.1 We will contribute to climate change mitigation.
- 1.2 We are prepared for the impacts of climate change.
- 1.3 Council infrastructure, businesses and the community are adaptive and resilient to a changing climate.



2. Natural Landscapes and Biodiversity

Ararat municipality boasts several unique and diverse natural landscapes that are home to a number of iconic and rare Australian species. Important species include endangered plants and animals such as the Yarra gum, brolga, golden sun-moth and fat-tailed dunnart. Important landscapes include rare and endangered ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) including sandy forest, freshwater lake wetlands, and the western basalt plains grasslands. The municipality also hosts wetlands classed as significant due to use for breeding and habitat by threatened species, high biodiversity value, or their role as a link between other crucial habitat patches. These sites include Lake Buninjon, the Nerrin Nerrin wetland system, and the Woorndoo-Hopkins wetlands.

We will value, protect, and enhance our natural environment through effective monitoring, community engagement, and the implementation and incentivisation of protection measures.

Objectives:

- 2.1. The environment is well monitored and understood, and conditions are maintained above legislatively required standards.
- 2.2. Threats to our environment are identified and controlled.
- 2.3. Native species, populations, and communities are enhanced.

3. Sustainable Living

The consumption of resources must be managed to ensure that the health of the environment is protected, and that those resources are safeguarded for future generations. Ineffective use of products, water and electricity can also prevent economic growth, and is costly for Council, individuals, and businesses. The Federal and Victorian governments are encouraging transition to a 'circular economy' framework of waste management and resource use, which is underpinned by the key principles of avoiding waste; designing to last, repair, recycle and reuse; using products to create more value; recycling more resources; and reducing harm from waste. Council aims to continue progressing towards effective circular economy and sustainable resource use with four key objectives.

We will reduce consumption of our limited resources, and we will develop infrastructure and processes to increase the sustainable and circular use of resources.

Objectives:

- 3.1. The municipality is energy efficient, supported largely by renewable sources.
- 3.2. Water is used and reused effectively.
- 3.3. Waste generation is avoided. Reusable, recyclable and compostable products are diverted from landfill.
- 3.4. Our waste and energy needs are managed locally.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Municipality at net zero emissions.
- 50-54% reduction in emissions produced (from 2005 level).
- Canopy cover of at least 30% within all townships.
- 50% of municipality's electricity needs collected from renewable sources.
- Increase in native vegetation cover on public and private land, with consideration for bushfire risk.
- Majority of primary production properties maintain 70% of groundcover in paddocks all year, and native vegetation permitted to be removed is offset locally.

NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY

- Plant diversity at <5% single species, <10% single genera, <20% single family of Recommended Species list) for new plantations and revegetation efforts.
- Increased vegetation, biodiversity and connectivity between habitat patches; more protection measures along riparian areas, waterways, and wetlands.
- Maintenance or increase in significant roadside vegetation, extent and condition of protected grassland EVCs, and populations of threatened species.
- All priority pest animal and weed populations contained or eradicated.
- Landfill sites and quality of stormwater to meet EPA requirements.
- Decrease in number and severity of environmental hazard incidents.
- All new homes to have minimum 7-star building standard under National Construction Code.
- 50% of organic waste from agriculture diverted to biofuel plant.
- 72% of waste diverted from landfill by 2025 and 80% by 2030 (from 2020).
- Waste generation per capita cut to 15%.
- 20% reduction in volume of organic material to landfill by 2025, and halved by 2030 (from 2020).
- All glass and organic material collected, aggregated, sorted and processed within the region/municipality.
- Contaminated recyclable or compostable waste sent to landfill is halved, and litter collected reduced by 40% (from 2020).
- Amount of wastewater recycled for reuse is doubled, with no net increase in potable water consumption (from 2020).
- 10% of all open space irrigation requirements met with non-potable water sources.
- Decrease in potable water consumption in all Council buildings.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING



Documents referenced for the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2024-34

Legislation & Commitments:

Document	Date	Authority
Local Government Act	2020	State Government (Victoria)
Catchment and Land Protection Act	1994	
Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	1988	
Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act	2021	
Conservation, Forests and Lands Act	1987	
Planning and Environment Act	2018	
Environment Protection Act	2017	
Water Act	1989	
Climate Change Act	2017	
Public Health and Wellbeing Act	2008	
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* *(Currently under review, see: <u>EPBC Act reform - DCCEEW</u>)	1999	
Recycling and Waste Reduction Act	2020	
Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act	2000	
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act	1989	
Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards Act	2012	
Building Energy Efficiency Disclosure Act	2010	
Nature Repair Act	2023	
Climate Change Act	2022	
Paris Agreement	2016	International Agreements
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	1992	
Kyoto Protocol	2005	
Convention on Biological Diversity	1993	

Strategies and Plans:

Document	Date	Provided by
Local		
Beyond Bolac Catchment Action Group Strategic Plan	2016-2021	BBCAG
Ararat Landcare Group Strategic Plan	2020-2025	ALG
Ararat Urban Forest Management Plan	2022	ALG
Regional		
Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy (North Eastern Volcanic Plains)	2021-2027	GHCMA
All containing action plans		
Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy (Upper Catchment Local Area)	2021-2027	WCMA
All containing action plans		
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance Strategic Plan	2022-2027	CVGA

Cool-it Tree Selection: Evaluation of street trees for future climate in the Mallee, Loddon-Campaspe and Central Highlands regions	2021	CVGA
Retrofitting for resilience: exploring how to enable home, garden and neighbourhood upgrades for extreme weather in Mount Alexander Shire	2023	CVGA
Climate Ready Councils in the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance: A new journey begins	2021	CVGA
Loddon Malle Region Renewable Energy Roadmap	2020	CVGA
Developing Energy Literacies for Meaningful Community Engagement	2023	CVGA
Rural Councils Victoria Climate Change Toolkit	2022	RCV
Central Highlands Regional Economic Development Strategy	2022	DJSIR
Grampians Central West Circular Economy Plan	2022	DEECA
Grampians Regional Adaptation Strategy	2021-2025	GRCAG
State		
Victoria: State of the Environment Report & Recommendations	2023	Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Vic
Recycling Victoria: A New Economy Policy and Plan	2020	RV
Recycling Victoria: Strategic Plan	2023-2026	RV
Sustainability Victoria: SV2030 Strategy	2022-2030	SV
Statewide Resource and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan	2018-2048	SV
Victoria in Future	2023	DTP
Central Highlands Climate Projections	2019	DEECA
Victoria's Climate Change Strategy	2021	DEECA
Strong, Innovative, Sustainable: A new strategy for agriculture in Victoria	2020	AV
Native Vegetation Removal Regulations (and associated guidelines)	2017	DEECA
Planning for Biodiversity- Guidance	2017	DEECA
Biodiversity 2037	2017-2037	DEECA
Invasive plant and Animals Policy Framework	2010	AV
Module 1. Weeds and Vertebrate Pests	2010	AV
Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy	2011	DEECA
Regional Growth Plans (Central Highlands)	2014	DTP
Environmental Reference Standard	2021	EPA
Local Government- Guide to preventing harm to people and the environment	2021	EPA
Local Government Roles and Responsibilities for Adaptation under Victorian Legislation	2020	DEECA
Water for Victoria	2016	DEECA
Victoria's Waterway Management Strategy	2025	DEECA
Victoria's Bushfire Management Strategy	2025	DEECA
Federal		
Australia: State of the Environment Report	2021	DCCEEW

National Waste Policy	2018	DCCEEW
National Waste Policy Action Plan	2019	DCCEEW
Australian Weeds Strategy	2017-2027	DAFF
Australian Pest Animal Strategy	2017-2027	DAFF
Australia's Strategy for Nature	2019-2030	DCCEEW
National Soil Strategy	2021	DCCEEW
Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan	2022-2032	DCCEEW
Environmental Economic Accounting: A common national approach	2018	DCCEEW
Net Zero Plan- 6 sectoral decarbonisation plans	2025	DCCEEW

Data Sources:

Document/ Site	Date	Provided by
Ararat Region Summary	2021/22	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Victorian Biodiversity Atlas- Species list for Ararat LGA	2024	DEECA
Australian Agricultural Census visualisations – LGA	2020-2021	Australian Bureau of Statistics
NatureKit- bioregions, habitat importance maps	-	DEECA
Wind Map of Australia	2023	Ecogeneration for the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner
Emission snapshot	2021/2022	Snapshot
Victorian local government waste data	2022	Recycling Victoria
Township water use	2018-2023	GWM Water
EPBC Protected matters search tool	2024	DEECA
Victoria in Future	2024	DTP

Council Documents:

Document
Ararat Planning Scheme
Municipal Strategic Statement 2021
Community Vision 2021- 2031
Council Plan 2021-2025
Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2020
Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021
Ararat residential land use strategy 2005-2035
Ararat Roadside Management Strategy 2005
Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
Revenue and rating strategy 2021-2025
Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2020-2023

Risk Management Policy 2021

Revenue and rating strategy 2021-2025

Disposal and Sale of Items at Transfer Stations Policy 2022-2026
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Electrification Policy 2023-2025

New Settlement Program (Workforce Pilot) August 2023
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