



Commitment to urgent action on climate change

A city that has a sustainable future

Work with Council to deliver a city that is actively mitigating and adapting to climate change.

What is the ask?

Council is requesting the Victorian Government and Australian Government declare a climate emergency, recognising that climate change is a global challenge and poses a serious risk to the Australian population.

We request that the Victorian and Australian Governments commit to urgent action to reduce the impacts of climate change and in doing so to maintain a safe environment for current and future generations.

What is the issue that this initiative will address?

The next decade is a crucial window to take climate action and prevent catastrophic, irreversible damage to our planet. Council is requesting that all levels of government work together to urgently reduce emissions and to develop a strategic, funded response to adapting to a changing climate.

Climate change, including sea level rise and mass species extinction, poses serious risks to residents and communities across Port Phillip and Australia, and should be treated as an emergency.

We are already seeing the impacts of climate change and over time these impacts will result in significant financial, social and environmental impacts on our community, including:

- disruption to services
- threats to human health, such as increased rates of disease and premature deaths related to extreme weather events
- damage to property
- impacts on wildlife
- inability to access parks and foreshore
- increased costs to maintain assets and economic losses.

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What is Council proposing?

Council is advocating to all levels of Government to:

- Commit to science-based emissions reduction targets consistent with keeping warming to 1.5°C.
- Fund and deliver a plan that enables us to meet these targets.
- Provide funding, incentives and support to Victorian businesses and residents to reduce energy, water and waste.
- Phase out gas and develop an electricity network upgrade plan to transition to distributed renewable energy.
- Increase investment in active transport and zero emissions vehicles.
- Require zero emissions, climate resilient buildings through the planning scheme.
- Increase support to reduce utility bills and heat stress impacting vulnerable people, including investing in public housing and aged care facilities.
- Develop a strategic response to protect the coastline of Port Phillip Bay, by leading changes to land use planning and adaptation infrastructure.
- Invest in and facilitate projects that achieve integrated water management outcomes (flood mitigation, water quality and water harvesting).
- Create a circular economy, increase demand for recycled content and provide incentives to industry to drive innovation
- Increase funding for health and emergency services, habitat restoration and infrastructure to respond to heatwaves, droughts, bushfires and floods.

How does this initiative align with the Council Plan and Victorian/Australian Government priorities?

Council:

[Council Plan 2021-2031](#) - Sustainable Port Phillip - A City that has a sustainable future, where our environmentally aware and active community benefits from living in a bayside city that is greener, cooler, cleaner and climate resilient.

- We will advocate for increased Victorian and Australian Government support to drastically reduce carbon emissions and to deliver policies and projects to enable community members to reduce their emissions

Our request also aligns with Council's [Act & Adapt Sustainable Environment Strategy 2018-28](#) and [Climate Emergency Declaration](#), including the resolution that Council:

- Advocates to the Victorian and Australian Government to declare a climate emergency and take action to drastically reduce warming emissions in Australia and across the world.

Victorian Government:

This request aligns with the Guiding Principles of the Climate Change Act and supports the delivery of Victoria's *Climate Change Strategy, Building Victoria's Climate Resilience Plan, Sector Adaptation Action Plans* and Victorian Government target of zero net carbon emissions by 2050. It also supports the delivery of *Recycling Victoria, Water for Victoria* and *Biodiversity 2037*.

Australian Government:

This aligns with Australia's obligations under the Paris Agreement and supports the delivery of Australia's Long-Term Emissions Reduction Plan, National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy and commitment to the Paris Agreement.

How does the initiative assist the community to recover from COVID-19?

Climate change has a significant impact on physical and mental health of Australians. Young people and vulnerable members of our community are particularly impacted.

In recent years, extreme weather events and bushfires have put pressure on health systems across Australia.

While the mental health of young people has also been particularly impacted by COVID-19, research still consistently indicates that climate change is the most significant concern for young Australians.

Recovering from COVID-19 provides a unique opportunity to deliver a 'green recovery' that delivers social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Australian and Victorian Government commitment to, and investment in, innovative sustainable technology, infrastructure and practices will create jobs and stimulate local economies.

Australian and Victorian Government commitment to planning and investing in adaptation infrastructure provides surety in uncertain times, particularly for Victorians whose homes will be impacted by flooding and sea level rise.

Cost and current status?

Cost

The costs of not addressing climate change now far outweigh the cost of reacting to climate change in the

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future. Although costs of individual action is not known, if emissions continue to grow at the rate seen in recent decades and no adaptation action is taken, the estimated costs of damage from climate change in Victoria would be greater than \$150 billion by 2050¹.

Additionally, sea-level rise of 80 cm by 2100 could put at least an estimated \$18.3 billion worth of Victoria's coastal infrastructure at risk of inundation and erosion.²

Victorian and Australian Government investment in actions to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change should be assessed on a benefit versus investment hierarchy. Actions that have high emissions reduction potential, that reduce loss of life and that increase social cohesion should be given top priority.

Status

Port Phillip declared a climate emergency in 2019 and is one of 33 councils in Victoria and over 100 council in Australia to do so.

More Information

- <https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/council-services/sustainability-and-climate-change>
- <https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/about-the-council/news-and-media/call-for-urgent-action-on-climate-change-to-protect-communities>

¹ T Kompas, E Witte, and M Keegan, Australia's Clean Energy Future: Costs and Benefits, MSSl Issues Paper 12, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, The University of Melbourne, 2019, accessed 19 November 2021

² Victorian Auditor-General's Office, Protecting Victoria's Coastal Assets, VAGO website, 2018, accessed 20 October 2021.