



2030 Strategy



**GEE LONG
SUSTAINABILITY**

Acknowledgement of Country

Geelong Sustainability acknowledges the Wadawurrung, Eastern Maar and Gunditjmara People as the Traditional Owners of the Land, Waterways and Skies where we live, work and play. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, and present. We recognise their stewardship and continuing connection to Country, Culture and Community.

We learn from the wisdom of First Nations people, while respecting the immense responsibilities their leaders currently carry.

We walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community as they work towards Truth and Treaty. Sovereignty was never ceded. Always Was and Always Will Be, Aboriginal land.

This Strategy was developed on the lands of the Wadawurrung people where our office is located. Geelong Sustainability regularly works across the lands of the Wadawurrung, Eastern Maar and Gunditjmara people as well as many other traditional lands across Victoria and Australia.

Bunjil Geoglyph, You Yangs Regional Park



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How we will use this Plan

We will use this Strategic Plan to sharpen our focus and guide our efforts over the next five years. The Strategy outlines the priority actions needed to achieve our goals, ensuring we concentrate on the areas that will drive the greatest impact. Each year, we will develop an annual business plan to operationalise the Strategy, providing clear direction for our day-to-day work. We will track and report on our progress against these strategic priorities annually, ensuring accountability and transparency as we work toward a more sustainable future for Geelong and beyond.

As we approach 2030 we will undergo a reflection and evaluation to help us understand the value of the Strategic Plan and how we can update, refresh or redevelop it. We will ask ourselves:

- How have we used the Strategic Plan over its lifetime?
- What did we like about the Plan as we operationalised it?
- What didn't work well?
- Were we successful in tracking each of the KPIs? Why or why not?
- Has anything significantly changed in our operating context?
- Are the Vision, Purpose and Goals still relevant?
- Does the Plan need a complete overhaul or just an update?

Welcome from the Chair

Kim-barrne (Welcome in Wadawurrung)

On behalf of the Board, staff, members and volunteers who make up Geelong Sustainability, I am thrilled to introduce our Strategic Plan that will guide our activity during this second half of the critical decade for climate action.

Since our establishment in 2007, we have grown into a community of over 20,000 supporters, members and volunteers across our region. Together we are driving stronger, faster, fairer action on climate. Our community has been front of mind as we have developed this Plan. Members, volunteers and key partners have worked with the Board to help us set our priorities and focus our work, because we know there is a lot to do.

The net zero revolution is speeding up, bringing both challenges and opportunities. We are experiencing more frequent and intense weather driven by climate change – and energy, insurance and other costs are rising. The demand for sustainability and energy related information, advice and services has never been greater. We must ensure everyone in our community can access what they need to thrive and be resilient.

Over the next five years we will build on our proud history of delivering real change for people in our community; in their homes, businesses, community organisations and groups. We will accelerate action. We'll stay focused on our region, while sharing our lessons to broaden our impact.

We are ready. We hope you'll join us.

David Spear, Chair



Our Vision

A thriving and resilient community taking urgent action on climate change together.

Climate change is our greatest threat, but it also presents a powerful opportunity. By coming together to address the causes and impacts of climate change, we can transition to a future that is both equitable and sustainable.

In a fair, resilient and thriving net zero community everyone will have access to clean, reliable energy. We will all have the resources we need to support healthy, meaningful and secure lives. Our community will be more connected and resilient, and we will all benefit from living in harmony with a flourishing natural environment. We can build a future where people and nature thrive together.

As our local community connects with our global communities, we are guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are recognised and applied globally by communities, businesses, and governments as a shared framework for integrating and coordinating sustainability initiatives.*

In this Strategy, we are focusing on four of the 17 SDGs, with climate action as our top priority:

SDG 13 – Climate Action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, while also supporting the workers and communities who are most impacted in the transition to net zero.

SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

**The SDGs are a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and will evolve in the lead up to 2030. This strategy aims to dynamically align with current and future SDG updates and progress.*

Our Purpose

We exist to build a powerful community movement for a just transition to a net zero future.

Australia and the world are experiencing the fastest economic transformation since the industrial revolution. Cutting emissions will not only help avoid the worst effects of climate change, but also create new jobs and industries.

Our response to climate change is driving a major economic and social shift. Locally, our community can lead this change to ensure no one is left behind.

Our strength lies in our community and our local connections. By fostering collaboration and engagement with and within our community, we are creating a supportive environment where everyone can contribute to, participate in and benefit from the transition.

We are a trusted educator, advisor and service provider. We connect people with the information, products and services they need to take action.

We share what we learn alongside our community with others, helping them to follow in our footsteps.

Everyone has a role to play

Getting to an equitable, net zero, climate-resilient future will require everyone to play a role: government, business, industry and community.

All levels of government need to use regulation, legislation, investment, and incentives to drive change at a systems level. Communities have an important role to play, but they need to be supported and connected to:

- Participate in climate related advocacy: ensuring governments hear the voices of our community
- Retrofit their homes and businesses: transitioning to all-electric, energy efficient, sustainable, and thermally comfortable buildings through things like good design, draft proofing, insulating, and smart materials selection
- Access renewable energy: making renewable energy solutions, like on-site solar or community energy initiatives, simple and more accessible
- Build a movement: creating opportunities for our members to invite their friends, neighbours, colleagues, and family to join in and benefit from local climate action.

That's where Geelong Sustainability comes in.

Our Goals

We have three strategic goals that lead us towards our vision.

1. Collaborating for an ambitious and just transition to net zero

We do this by:

- Advocating for and with our community and key partners on critical local climate issues and stronger climate action by all levels of government, consistent with a target of net zero by 2035
- Collaborating with a range of partners to maximise our impact and support all members of our community
- Delivering impactful programs and services to households, businesses and communities
- Supporting Traditional Owner groups and First Nations peoples to achieve their dream and direction for the future of their people and Country
- Embedding climate justice across our programs and services – ensuring we identify gaps and deliver in areas of greatest need
- Advocating for government and private investment into programs and services for people and communities experiencing disadvantage.

2. A mobilised community acting urgently on climate change

We do this by:

- Inspiring, educating and activating our community
- Designing, delivering and evaluating communications and marketing campaigns to connect with all corners of our community
- Transitioning program participants into ongoing supporters and volunteers
- Growing community connectivity through our face-to-face events, digital platforms and partnerships.

3. A healthy, high performing organisation

We do this by:

- Leading by example, understanding and reducing our own emissions and demonstrating our values
- Demonstrating strong governance practices and leadership in the region
- Ensuring that the health and wellbeing of our staff, volunteers and members is our highest priority
- Maintaining and growing strong and diverse partnerships
- Reporting transparently on our progress through our Annual Report
- Proactively managing key business risks such as occupational health and safety, cyber security, our reputation and funding uncertainty.

Our Values

- **Objectivity:** We ensure that contemporary data and evidence-based research informs our work and drives our goals and priorities.
- **Passion and Positivity:** We are passionate about promoting positive and vibrant action that builds resilient and healthy communities.
- **Democracy and Empowerment:** We seek to engage and empower households, communities and businesses with democratic processes, real life experiences, up-to-date knowledge and practical tools that enable effective action.
- **Respect and Trust:** We always act in a manner that respects people, builds collaboration and sustains public trust in our organisation.
- **Innovation:** We are highly adaptive and responsive to change, building on our strong foundations to experiment with new ways of doing things that are different and better.
- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** We are proactively getting people involved, demonstrating diversity, equity and inclusion to make our community richer and stronger.

What do we mean by 'net zero'?

Net zero means balancing the emissions we produce with what we remove, which requires phasing out fossil fuels and switching to renewable energy across all sectors.

To avoid a climate catastrophe – in line with the Paris Agreement – greenhouse gas emissions must limit warming well below 2 degrees Celsius (2°C), and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius (1.5°C). This transition to net zero also requires a) place-based support for the people and communities that are most impacted in the move to net zero and b) with an aim for zero emissions with offsets used only when absolutely necessary, in line with Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

What do we mean by 'climate resilience'?

Climate resilience is our capacity to adapt, survive and thrive in the face of weather and climate hazards. It is about being prepared for the unexpected and having robust, flexible systems with spare capacity for disruption. It's also about building the social capital and community networks that support our communities in time of need.

What do we mean by 'climate justice' and a 'just transition'?

People facing disadvantage are more exposed to climate impacts, are less likely to have contributed significantly to climate change, and less likely to benefit directly from the transition to net zero emissions. Climate justice acknowledges that, while everyone must act on climate change, those who have historically contributed more bear a greater responsibility for addressing it. Climate justice aims to tackle the root causes of climate change while addressing a broad range of social, racial, and environmental injustices

Ultimately, in the words of the University of California Center for Climate Justice, "a just transition represents the transition of fossil fuel-based economies to equitable, regenerative, renewable energy-based systems. It emphasises employment in renewable energy and related sectors, sustainable land use practices, and broader political economic transformations."

What's in Our Name?

Geelong – our region and beyond

Geelong Sustainability started in Geelong, on Wadawurrung Country. The Greater Geelong region is still the core of our work. It's where most of our members live and work, and where we invest in new ideas and projects to support those most in need.

We also work across the broader G21 region, which includes Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Queenscliff, and Surf Coast on Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Country, extending to the lands of the Gulidjan and Gadubanud people. This helps us build stronger partnerships, increase our impact, and make better use of resources.

During this climate crisis, it's important to share and expand successful ideas and initiatives across Victoria and Australia. Where possible, Geelong Sustainability will partner with local governments and other organisations to deliver these initiatives in other cities and regions.

Sustainability – our reason for being

The United Nations defines sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without harming the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” We still have a lot of work to do before we can call our lives, communities, economy, and environment truly sustainable.

We know our members care about many sustainability issues, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, social inequality, waste, water shortages, the energy transition, food security, resource depletion, and urbanisation. However, Geelong Sustainability doesn't want to dilute its impact by spreading resources too thin. With this in mind we will focus our attention where we can make the most impact and drive enduring change.

For issues where we aren't best positioned to lead, like biodiversity loss, food security, and waste management, we partner with and support other local groups who are already doing this important work.

Each time we update our Strategic Plan, we review our focus areas by considering:

- The needs of our community
- The urgency of different sustainability issues
- Our ability to deliver programs that make a real difference
- Avoiding duplication and building on partnerships
- The financial health and sustainability of the organisation.

For this Strategic Plan, our focus is on climate change—our members' top concern and the most urgent issue—and prioritising social equity.

Our Current State

At Geelong Sustainability, we're proud of our ability to deliver meaningful initiatives and connect with our community. As a values-based organisation, our reputation as trusted, reliable, and accessible remains a core strength. Our team of motivated, positive people has built strong, productive partnerships and networks, supported by a stable and growing base of volunteers and members. Our formal board structure is providing clear governance, and we are in a strong financial position.

Our members join not just to take action on climate change but to connect locally and be part of something bigger. They're particularly proud of our regional work, such as the Electric Homes Program and our efforts to work with vulnerable community members through initiatives like Climate Safe Rooms.

Despite these strengths, we face several risks. Our remit is broad, and at times, this leads to over-commitment and a loss of focus. As we transition and grow rapidly, managing staff transitions and safeguarding against the impact of losing key team members is crucial. Additionally, our income is often dependent on short-term grants and funding, creating financial uncertainty that demands careful, ongoing management. We are committed to improving work health and safety, particularly staff wellbeing, while also enhancing our cyber security and IT maturity.

Some perceive us as a niche environmental organisation, which can limit our broader influence. However, we continue to lead in critical areas, including household electrification and renewable energy installations. Our community education programs remain our most impactful activity, driving engagement and knowledge-sharing on a local level.

Our Impact

- 17 years of operation
- \$1.7m grant funding received
- \$9.4m investment in renewable energy/electrification
- 129,000 tonnes CO2 emissions avoided
- Over 20,000 supporters across multiple platforms
- Supported to reduce energy use, save money and cut carbon emissions
 - 000s of homes
 - 88 local charities
 - 772 local businesses
- Over 30,000 attendees at Geelong Sustainability events



Climate Change in Australia

Globally, climate change is an escalating crisis, and while we know what must be done, current actions fall short of what's necessary. Australia's commitments under the Paris Agreement and its net zero target by 2050 are at risk if action doesn't accelerate.

[Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024 \(VCSR24\)](#) summarises scientific evidence on Victoria's climate.

- Victoria's climate has warmed by about 1.2°C since national records began in 1910, and by around 1.4 °C since the pre-industrial era.
- Hot days and heatwaves have become hotter and more frequent.
- Since the 1950s, heatwaves (prolonged periods of excessive heat that generally last for at least 3 or more successive days) have become more intense, frequent and longer, and the heatwave season starts earlier.
- In 2024, the number of very hot days per decade has more than doubled since 1986–2005, with some areas experiencing up to five times as many very hot days.

We can expect:

- A warmer future climate with further increases to average temperatures and more frequent and intense hot days.
- Likely continue to become drier, especially in winter and throughout the cool season (April – October).
- Increasing intensity of short duration extreme rainfall events.

While Victoria is leading the charge with some of the most ambitious emissions reduction targets in the world, our climate is changing and it is impacting our people and our planet.

Climate Change in Our Region

Barwon Climate Projections 2024

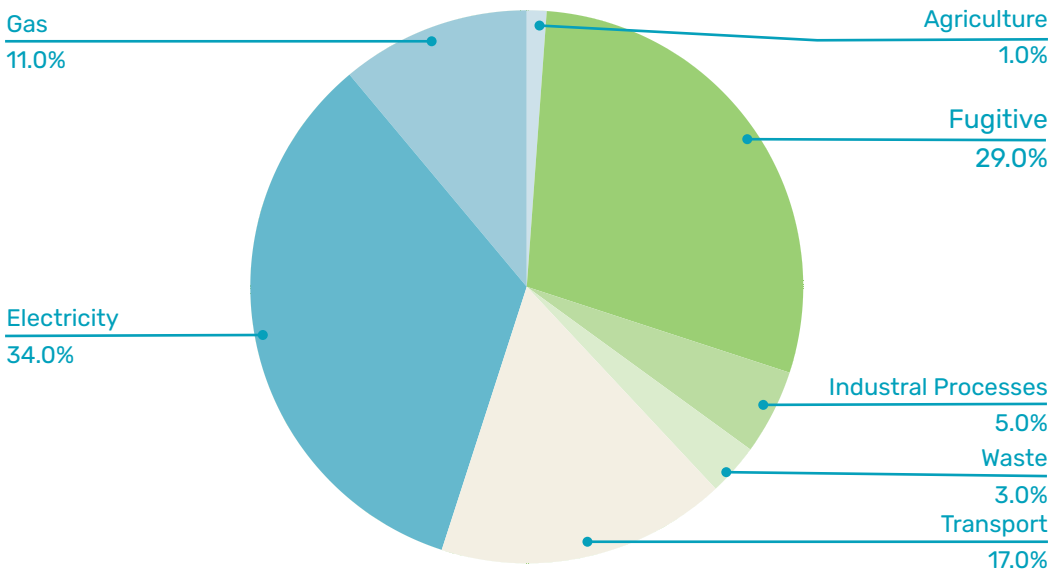
- Minimum and maximum daily temperatures will continue to increase until at least 2050. Warming is projected to continue in the second half of the century if significant cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions are not made immediately (very high confidence).
- Rainfall will continue to be variable over time, but over the long term is expected to continue declining in the cool season (medium to high confidence). Long-term changes to summer rainfall are uncertain.
- Extreme rainfall events are expected to become more intense on average through the century (high confidence) but remain very variable in space and time.
- Hot days and nights will become hotter and more frequent, with longer, more intense heatwaves (very high confidence).
- High-impact climate hazards that affect Victoria including floods, heatwaves, drought and bushfires are also changing.
- In Victoria the sea levels will continue to rise in the next 100 years under all emissions scenarios. However, following a lower emissions pathway will help to slow the rate of sea level rise but will not stop or reverse the rising trend.

Reference: [Victoria's Changing Climate](#)

Greater Geelong

☀️ 26.9% of dwellings have solar installed (30 Sept 2024)

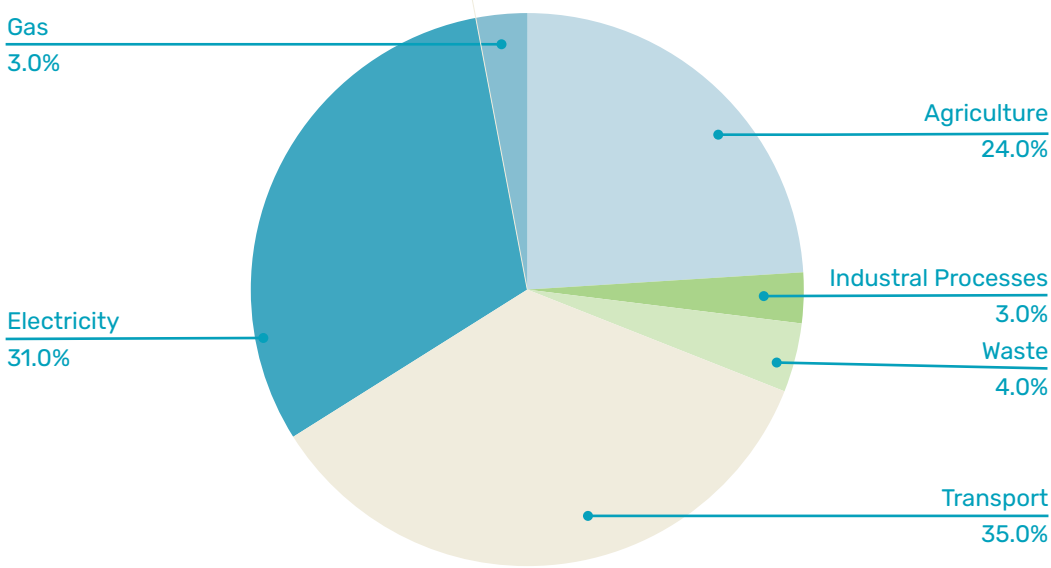
Greater Geelong 2022/23 municipal emissions



Surf Coast

☀️ 29% of dwellings have solar installed (30 Sept 2024)

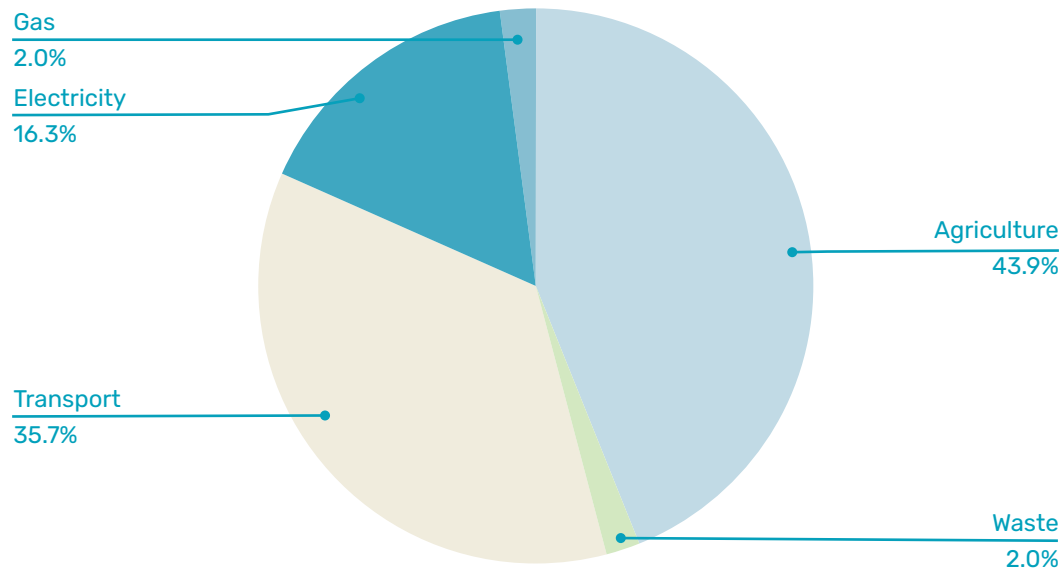
Surf Coast 2022/23 municipal emissions



Golden Plains

☀️ 41.1% of dwellings have solar installed (30 Sept 2024)

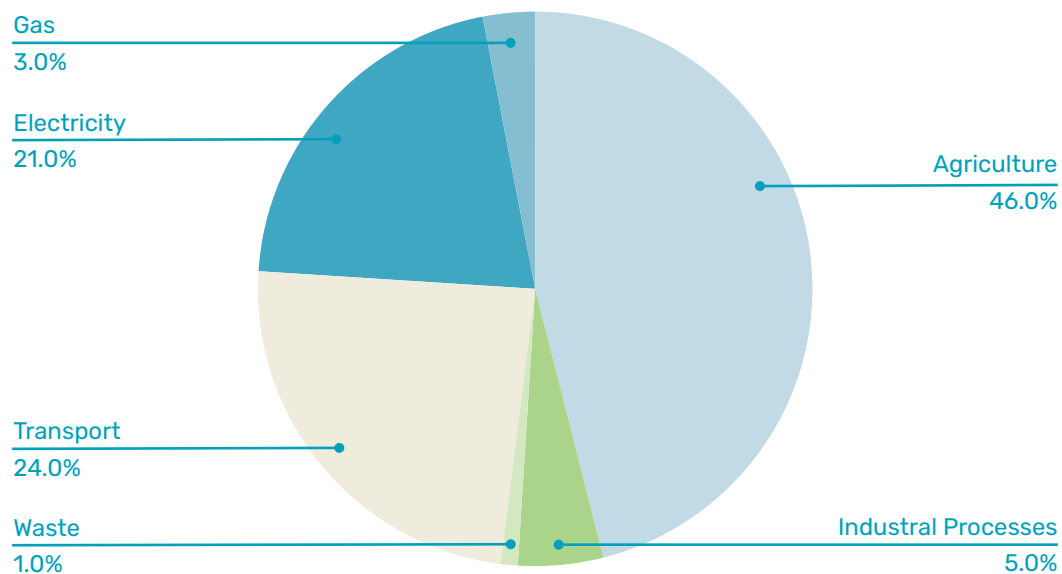
Golden Plains 2022/23 municipal emissions



Colac Otway

☀️ 23.4% of dwellings have solar installed (30 Sept 2024)

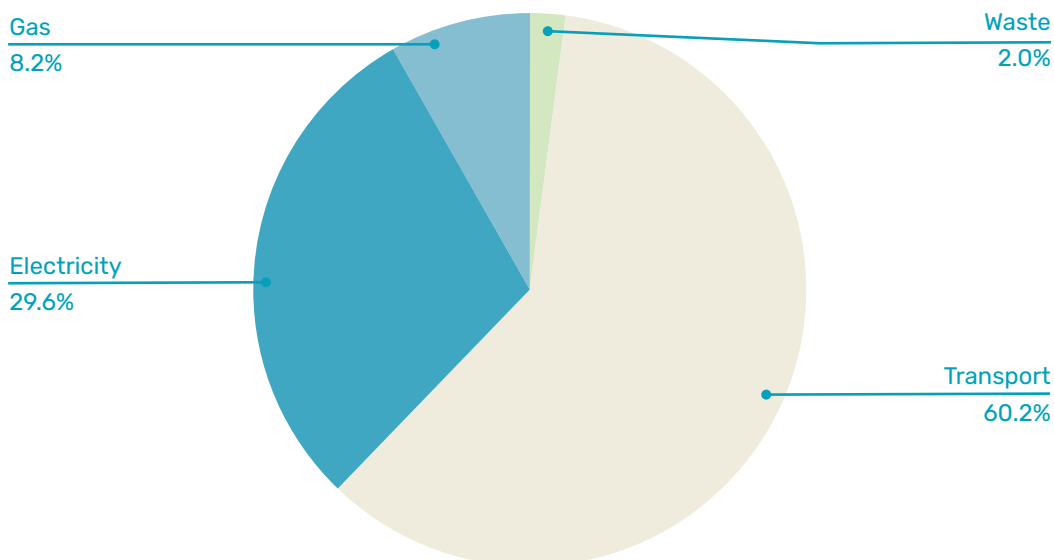
Colac Otway 2022/23 municipal emissions



Queenscliffe

☀️ 28.1% of dwellings have solar installed (30 Sept 2024)

Queenscliffe 2022/23 municipal emissions



[Sustainability Victoria's 2024 State of Sustainability report](#) highlights that climate concern in Victoria is high and locally, our community is already experiencing the impacts of a changing climate:

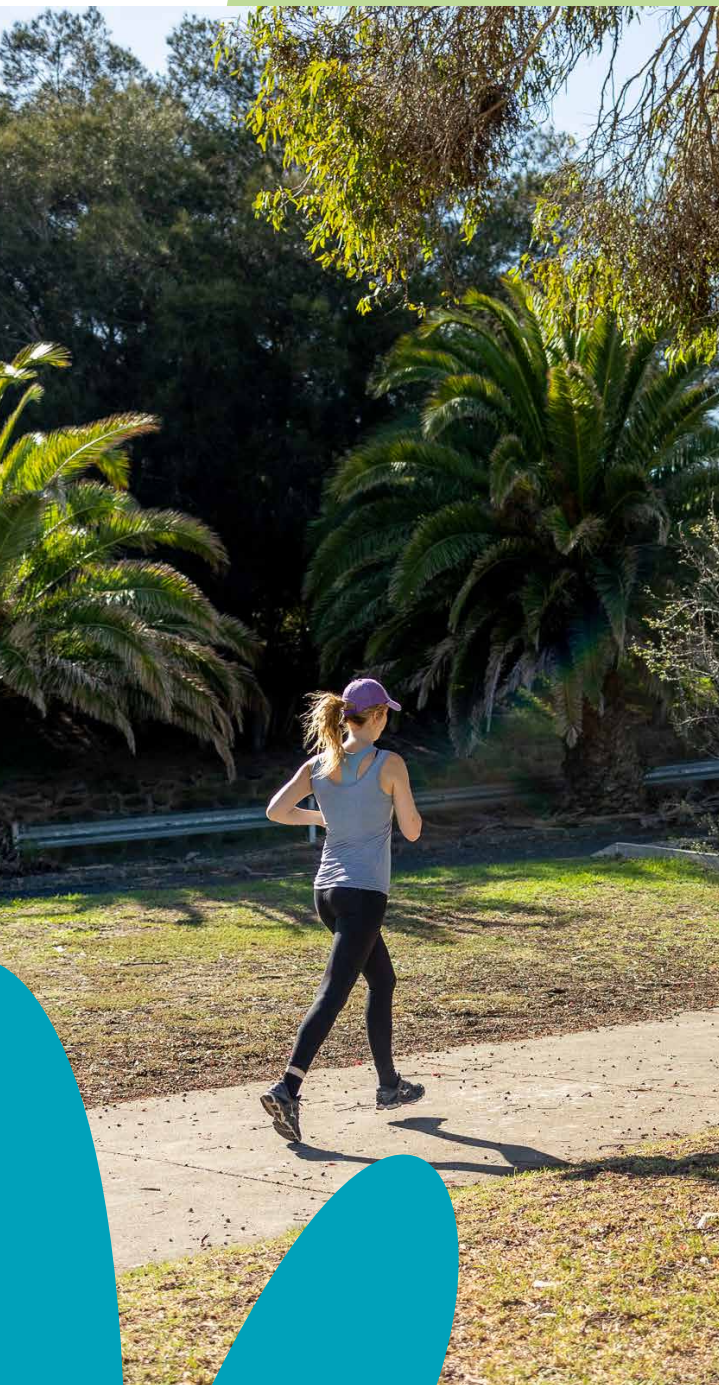
- Most Victorians (67%) are concerned about climate change, (24% 'very' concerned and 42% 'fairly concerned')

In the Barwon region:

- 63% of respondents have experienced heatwaves and 46% have experienced storms and damaging winds
- 67% of respondents believe it's important to live sustainably
- 71% would like support/advice on how to be more energy efficient
- 35% of homes have all or mostly gas appliances.

Locally, we are stepping up. All councils in the region have climate action plans and Geelong Sustainability is playing a key role in driving regional climate action.

Our members are particularly proud of the regional impact we've had and are committed to ensuring we continue to lead in areas like renewable energy, strengthening climate resilience, and sustainable homes.



Our Future State

At Geelong Sustainability, our future is driven by a deep commitment to collaborating with our partners to reduce emissions and foster a more sustainable, resilient community. We will grow by reaching more diverse people and deepening community engagement, expanding our impact locally and beyond.

Expanding depth, reach and community engagement

We aim to significantly grow our community reach to a broader and more diverse audience. Our community engagement will extend into every facet of local life, influencing more residents, businesses, and organisations to join the movement for a sustainable future. Through innovative programs, events, and digital platforms, Geelong Sustainability will reach thousands more people to support and engage them in climate action, education, and advocacy – as well as connect our community so they grow stronger, together. This growth will deepen the organisation's impact at both grassroots and policy levels.

Strengthening trust and reputation

Trust is at the heart of what we do. By being transparent and delivering results, we will deepen the trust of our stakeholders, ensuring that Geelong Sustainability strengthens our reputation as a reliable and respected voice and agent of change in the sustainability movement, both locally and nationally.



Commitment to diversity and inclusion

We will place a stronger emphasis on diversity and inclusion, welcoming more young people, emerging leaders, and First Nations communities into our work. By fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion, we will ensure that everyone's voice is heard and that our programs reflect the full richness of our community. The diverse perspectives and talents of these individuals and communities will be instrumental in shaping the future direction of the organisation and ensuring that its work reflects the full richness of Geelong's population.

Embedding climate justice

As we grow, we will continue to embed climate justice in all our activities. We will ensure that we don't inadvertently widen the socio-economic gap in the region. Through equitable access to resources, programs, and education, the organisation will work to empower the most vulnerable, ensuring that the benefits of sustainability are shared across all communities. This commitment to justice will be a guiding principle, shaping partnerships, program design, and advocacy efforts. As part of this work we will expand our flagship Climate Safe Rooms initiative, with the potential for a national rollout in partnership with like-minded organisations and government agencies. By addressing the urgent need for safe, climate-resilient spaces, this initiative will continue to support vulnerable households, especially those most at risk from the impacts of extreme weather. The program will serve as a blueprint for other communities seeking to safeguard their residents while promoting energy efficiency and emissions reduction.

Stronger partnerships

We will leverage stronger partnerships rooted in the strengths and unique contributions of each partner. These collaborations will be formed with local businesses, government agencies, educational institutions, and community organisations, all united by the shared goal of creating a more sustainable and equitable future. By pooling resources, expertise, and influence, these partnerships will enable Geelong Sustainability to amplify its impact and reach and ensure we're integrated and interdisciplinary.

A robust and healthy organisation

Finally, we will ensure that our organisational structure, governance, and financial health remain strong and adaptable. The health and wellbeing of our staff, volunteers and members will always be our highest priority. Through sustainable and longer-term funding models, innovative revenue streams, and sound governance practices, we will maintain our capacity to deliver on our mission well into the future. Our internal culture will continue to reflect the organisation's values of sustainability, inclusivity, and collaboration, creating a skilled, resilient and vibrant team equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades.

In 2030, the future of Geelong Sustainability will be one of ambitious growth, deepened community engagement, and meaningful partnerships. By embedding climate action, justice, and inclusivity, the organisation will not only inspire emissions reduction but also empower the entire Geelong community to thrive and be resilient in the face of a changing climate.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Our Key Performance Indicators

| Strategic Goal: A just transition to net zero as fast as possible | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| KPI: Progress towards a just transition to net zero | <p>Metric 1: Reduction in municipal greenhouse gas emissions across the G21 region (see Snapshot Climate)</p> <p>Metric 2: Number of households, businesses, and communities supported by our programs and services.</p> <p>Metric 3: Number of successful advocacy efforts that lead to policy changes, funding allocation, or new programs related to climate action.</p> <p>Metric 4: Total amount of government and private sector funding secured for climate justice programs and services.</p> |
| Strategic goal: A mobilised community acting urgently on climate change | |
| KPI: A mobilised community acting on climate change | <p>Metric 5: Number of people reached through community education and activation initiatives (e.g., webinars, events, workshops, informational campaigns).</p> <p>Metric 6: Change in community attitudes, behaviours and actions associated with sustainability through Sustainability Victoria's State of Sustainability reporting.</p> <p>Metric 7: Total number of people interacting with our communications, including social media engagement, email open rates, and participation in online campaigns.</p> <p>Metric 8: Number of program participants that transition into long-term supporters, volunteers, or ongoing participants.</p> <p>Metric 9: Number of partnerships or collaborations with community groups, local organisations, businesses and government to drive collective climate action.</p> |
| Strategic goal: A healthy, high performing organisation | |
| KPI: A healthy, high performing organisation | <p>Metric 10: Reduction in Geelong Sustainability's own carbon emissions.</p> <p>Metric 11: Adherence to governance best practices, including compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and internal policies.</p> <p>Metric 12: Staff, member and volunteer satisfaction and engagement, measured through surveys and feedback.</p> <p>Metric 13: Sound financial sustainability and health, including liquidity, solvency and profitability.</p> <p>Metric 14: Adoption and implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan.</p> |



Tracking Our Progress

We know that monitoring, evaluation and reporting is important for trust, accountability, continued improvement, scaling, and so we know we're having impact. Internally, we will track our progress quarterly and externally we will report against the KPIs through our Annual Report.

In addition, we will evaluate our priority initiatives through regular reviews, using data and customer/community feedback to inform our decisions. We will assess our priorities each year to ensure they continue to align with our goals.

Wherever possible, our evaluation will focus on measurable outcomes, ensuring we stay responsive to the needs of our community.



Our Vision

A thriving and resilient community taking urgent action on climate change together.

Our Purpose

We exist to build a powerful community movement for a just transition to a net zero future.

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**GEELONG
SUSTAINABILITY**