GEELONG SUSTAINABILITY



Annual Report

2025-26

A just transition to Net-Zero



GEELONG SUSTAINABILITY

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GEELONG SUSTAINABILITY



Our Purpose

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

Our Vision

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

Who we are

Geelong Sustainability is a for-purpose community-led organisation and registered charity. For over 19 years, we have worked to create a climate safe and sustainable future for our region.

Our work has broadened from grassroots sustainability initiatives into a diverse portfolio of evidence-based projects, programs, campaigns and events spanning clean energy, climate resilience, sustainable homes, community education and advocacy.

Since our establishment in 2007, Geelong Sustainability has become one of the region's leading sustainability and climate action groups with extensive networks in community, government and business throughout Geelong and the broader Barwon region.

Acknowledgement of Country

This report was developed on the lands of the Wadawurrung people, whose sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Wadawurrung Elders, past and present.

We recognise First Nations stewardship and continuing connection to Country, Culture and Community. We learn from the wisdom and strength of First Nations people, while respecting the immense responsibilities they carry.

We walk alongside First Nations people in our community as they work towards self-determination, Truth and Treaty.

This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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Our People



Photo credit: Studio Collins

Our Board

David Spear	***Chair*** *throughout FY26*
Emma Connan	***Deputy Chair*** *to Oct '26*
Glenn Garnaut	***Treasurer***
Mariah Chang	***Secretary***
Neil Plummer	***Chair*** *from 1 Jul '26*
Fred Ritman	*to Nov '26*
Steph McDonald	*to Aug '26*
Evan Center	
Stuart Mkojera-Thomson	

Our Team

Emilie Flynn	
Karina Donkers	
Jane Spence	*to Mar '26*
Emma Chessell	*to Jun '26*
Behzad Falahati	
Lucy Allinson	*from May '26*
Paris Mules-Kopae	*to Feb '26*
Alex Sullivan	*to Aug '25*
Sonya Zwolinski	*to Feb '26*
Tania Bartlett	*to Aug '25*
Ruth Blackhirst	*to Nov '25*



Photo credit: Sarah Anderson Photography

Our Contractors and Volunteers

Tim Adams
Cal Forsyth
James Rourke-Dunkley
Merilyn Harris
Vivienne Burke
Julianne Jarrett
Vanessa Whittem
Michelle Augustinussen
Sharon Collins

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Supporters and Partners

- PMF Foundation
- Geelong Community Foundation
- Anthony Costa Foundation
- Ian Rollo Currie Foundation
- Sustainability Victoria
- City of Greater Geelong
- Colac Otway Shire
- Barwon Water
- Surf Coast Shire
- Borough of Queenscliffe
- Moyne Shire
- Golden Plains Shire
- Glenelg Shire
- Southern Grampians Shire
- Corangamite Shire
- City of Warrnambool
- City of Ballarat
- City of Bendigo
- Deakin University
- RACE for 2030
- Geelong College
- Geelong Media
- F2 Design
- Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West
- Studio Collins

Collaborators

- Renew Australia for All
- ACF Community Geelong
- Barwon Region Alliance for Community Energy (BRACE)
- Bellarine Catchment Network
- Environment Victoria
- Geelong Regional Library Corporation
- Geelong Chamber of Commerce
- Surf Coast Environment Group (SCEG)
- Coalition for Community Energy (C4CE)
- Committee for Geelong
- Real Deal Geelong
- Geelong Port
- Resilience Canopy
- Parents for Climate
- Women's Environmental Leadership Australia





Sponsors and Delivery Partners

- Winki Energy
- Too Hot To Handle
- Reclaim Energy
- Enviroflex
- Ephe
- Good Cycles
- Rex Gorrell
- Castleman Plumbing
- SO'R Construction
- Geelong Grammar
- Aphi Projects
- Keystone Construction
- Geelong Cemeteries Trust
- Powrhouse
- Shepherd Homes
- Belco Group
- Bios Design Build Sustain
- Solahart
- Nolan Consulting
- JET Electrical
- EcoHome
- Live Green Homes
- Beyond Bank
- Enfort

A message from our Chair and Co-CEOs

From the Chair

Geelong Sustainability is proud to present our 2025–26 Annual Report, reflecting another year of community-led action towards a safe climate, thriving community and a sustainable future for our region.

This year saw some exciting milestones, as well as some transition periods. We farewelled **Jane Spence** as CEO, thanking her for her leadership and contribution to the organisation, and welcomed a **Co-CEO leadership model**, with **Karina Donkers** and **Emilie Flynn** sharing the organisation's leadership. The model reflects the strong culture of collaboration that has always been at the heart of Geelong Sustainability, bringing together our different skills, experience and perspectives to strengthen our leadership, support our team and grow our impact.

From the Co-CEOs

We both have a deep connection to Geelong Sustainability and the important role it plays in our community. We have been part of the organisation's journey since its early stages of professionalisation in 2021, with Karina's involvement dating back to its foundation in 2007. Over the years, we have seen firsthand the strength of this organisation and the incredible community of people who make our work possible. **It is a privilege to now lead Geelong Sustainability together and build on this strong foundation.**

For **19 years**, Geelong Sustainability has been working alongside our community to create a safer climate and a more sustainable future. This year, we continued that journey by deepening our impact and expanding our reach, helping households electrify their homes, strengthening community resilience, supporting organisations to reduce energy costs, and bringing people together to learn and take action.

Our **Electric Homes Program** has now supported more than 900 households to electrify their homes, improve comfort and reduce energy costs. Through our **Community Power Hub**, we continued helping local community organisations cut emissions and operating costs, while our **Climate Safe Rooms** and **Climate Cosy Rooms** initiatives are helping build resilience for households facing the impacts of a changing climate.

We also expanded our work across the South West. Through the **Community Electrification Engagement Program**, delivered on behalf of the Victorian Government, we reached thousands of people with trusted information about home electrification.

Our work this year has been about creating the conditions for larger-scale change. We strengthened our advocacy and campaigning, continuing our longstanding work with **Geelong Renewables Not Gas** against the VOPAK gas import terminal, while contributing to national advocacy through **Renew Australia for All** for a fairer clean energy transition.

We continued to bring people together through **Sustainable House Day** and **Climate Connect** events, creating opportunities for people to share knowledge, hear different perspectives and turn concern into action. We believe that strong, connected communities are essential to building resilience and driving lasting climate action.

Beyond the FY26 reporting period, in July we saw a change in our Board leadership, with **Neil Plummer** stepping into the role of Board Chair. We thank **David Spear** for his leadership, contribution and commitment to Geelong Sustainability during his time as Chair, and look forward to building on the strong foundations he helped establish.

At the heart of everything we achieve are our people: our dedicated team, Board, volunteers, partners, members, supporters, donors and many community members who continue to show up, speak up and take action. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has been part of this journey, and can't wait for its next phase.

Emilie Flynn, Co-CEO
Karina Donkers, Co-CEO
Neil Plummer, Board Chair



GEELONG SUSTAINABILITY

Our 2025-26 Impact

Proudly celebrated
19 Years
of making a difference

Reduced emissions by
1,515 tonnes
of carbon dioxide equivalent

Saved our community over
$356,800
in energy bills

Reached over
1.1 million
impressions via social media

Connected with over
21,000 Supporters
across the region



2030 Strategy into Action

Following the launch of our 2030 Strategy last year, we have continued to turn our vision into action, using the strategy to guide our priorities, programs and partnerships across the Greater Geelong and Barwon region.

At the heart of our work is a simple but ambitious vision:
"Build a thriving and resilient community taking urgent action on climate change together."

We know that creating the future we want cannot be done alone. It takes people coming together, sharing knowledge, building connections and turning collective ambition into action. We're grateful for the trust our community places in us and remain committed to delivering on that trust with purpose and renewed strength.

Our work is also rooted in climate justice, recognising that the impacts of climate change are not felt equally and making sure no one is left behind in the transition to a cleaner, safer and more resilient future.

This year, we have focused on strengthening the foundations needed to deliver our strategy. We continue to work alongside our members, volunteers, community partners and networks to build community capacity, accelerate the transition to clean energy, strengthen climate resilience and advocate for a zero-carbon future.

The strategy continues to provide a shared direction for our work, helping us connect individual programs and initiatives to our broader ambition for a climate-safe, resilient and sustainable region by 2030. Most importantly, it reminds us that meaningful change is possible when we work together and harness the strength of our community.



2025-26 Highlights

- **Supported more than 5,000 households** across Geelong and broader Barwon region in their electrification journey through our programs, such as the Electric Homes Program, which delivered 240 household upgrades this year.



Photo credit: Taylor Cribbes

- **25.52 kW of solar capacity and six hot water heat pump systems donated** by delivery partners as part of the "give back" feature of the Electric Homes Program.
- **Ballarat Electric Homes Program** successfully concluded on 31 July 2025, enabling 177 upgrades, with households creating more comfortable, energy-efficient homes and collectively saving an estimated $113,872 each year on their energy bills.
- **Introduced Climate Cosy Rooms** as a pilot off-shoot program of the **Climate Safe Rooms** program, enabling us to support more households with a smaller investment per home and broaden the program's community impact.
- **Supported 46 local community organisations** with their energy needs through our **Community Power Hub**, contributing to a combined $224,000+ savings since the program's inception.
- **Contributed $99,100 in interest-free loans** to community organisations to install renewable energy upgrades through our **Community Energy Revolving Fund**, which has provided a total of $380,000+ in loans to date.
- **Connected and engaged our community** through a series of Climate Connect events, including a powerful Gender & Climate Justice event, a conversation with internationally recognised wellbeing economist **Dr Katherine Trebeck**, and a **sold-out Climate Risk Forum** on the Bellarine.


Photo credit: Studio Collins

- **Established a Gender & Climate Community of Practice**, in partnership with Women's Health & Wellbeing Barwon South West and led by Wadawurrung woman and cultural leader, Corrina Eccles, creating an ongoing space to explore the intersection of gender and climate.



- **Strengthened regional climate resilience** through a new partnership with the Committee for Geelong leaders group to address the region's climate risk.

- Organised **two Climate Resilience Facilitator trainings** delivered by the **Resilience Canopy**, building the knowledge, skills and capacity of 45 local leaders to design and deliver community-led climate resilience plans.

- Strengthened our **partnership with Deakin University** through co-location, supporting student development, placements and research opportunities while creating new pathways for collaboration and connecting academic expertise with real-world sustainability challenges.

- **Collaborated with a diverse network** of community houses, community organisations, local businesses and local councils to connect, engage and inspire climate action.

- **Advocated to local MPs** for ambitious electrification, strong climate policies and a just transition to net zero for everyone.





Most of our initiatives are delivered across the Greater Geelong and broader Barwon region, with some extending further - into Ballarat, the South West, Melbourne, and further.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Collaborating for an ambitious and just transition to net zero

Advocating for ambitious climate action

Over the past year, Geelong Sustainability has significantly increased its advocacy and climate campaigning, seeking ambitious electrification and bold climate commitments across all levels of government. We have advocated for and with our community and key partners on critical local climate issues and stronger climate action by all levels of government.

<u>Key activities included:</u>



- Active engagement with local MPs including meetings with:
  - Federal MPs Richard Marles (Deputy Prime Minister and member for Corio) and Libby Coker (member for Corangamite)
  - Victorian MPs Christine Couzens, Alison Marchant and Ella George.
- Continued to lead and deliver community campaigns for **No New Gas**, including new gas import terminals in the bay as well as policy advocacy.
- Made submissions to:
  - Vopak Gas Import Terminal Environmental Effects Statement
  - EPA Guidance for minimising pollution and waste risks in a changing climate
  - Waste to Energy Inquiry Submission 2026
  - Plan for Nature Submission
  - Inquiry into the 2026 summer fires across Victoria
  - The Select Committee on Information Integrity on Climate Change and Energy
- Supported the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) campaign and Save the Southern Seas campaign.
- Actively supported Renew Australia for All's **Climate Safety Plan** and **Repower Our Homes** campaigns, and participated in National Strategy Days to strengthen collective advocacy for a fair and clean energy transition. A major advocacy win was the Federal Government's **$5 billion expansion of the home battery rebate**, which is expected to support up to 2 million battery systems by 2030, helping households reduce energy bills and participate in the clean energy transition.

No New Gas

We have continued our longstanding involvement with **Geelong Renewables Not Gas** to campaign against the proposed **Vopak Gas Import Terminal in Port Phillip Bay**. The project would establish new fossil fuel infrastructure in Port Phillip Bay at a time when Victoria needs to be accelerating the transition to renewable energy and electrification. It also raises significant concerns around potential impacts on the Bay's marine environment, including marine biodiversity, water quality, marine life, fishing and aquaculture, and emissions.

Our advocacy has focused on ensuring these risks are properly scrutinised and the community has the information and opportunity to have its voice heard. We have mobilised the community to make submissions on the proposal, engaged experts to review the Environmental Effects Statement (EES), and worked to translate complex technical information into accessible concerns and actions. This equipped community members with the knowledge and confidence to participate meaningfully in the process and advocate for the protection of Port Phillip Bay.

Our sold-out "Australia's Gas Problem" event (pictured) brought together hundreds of locals to hear lessons from Gladstone, a major Australian gas hub where LNG development and dredging have had significant environmental and community impacts. The evening explored what this could mean for Geelong and Corio Bay, while helping lay the foundations for our volunteer group opposing Vopak.



Alongside this work, we have continued our strong community advocacy and pressure against **Viva Energy's proposed gas import terminal in Corio Bay**, maintaining our call for no new gas infrastructure and increased investment in clean energy alternatives.

This people-powered work was recognised when **Geelong Renewables Not Gas** received **Environment Victoria's Group Impact Award** for its contribution to protecting Victoria's environment and climate.

The recognition reflects what can be achieved when communities come together and stand up for a cleaner, fairer future. We remain committed to building community power, challenging new fossil fuel infrastructure and advocating for a safer climate future for our region.

Delivering Impactful Programs

Together, our flagship programs have strengthened regional capacity for climate action and climate justice, positioning Geelong Sustainability as a leader in community-driven energy transition.

Electric Homes Program

In 2025–26, we delivered the Electric Homes Program for its third year, with the generous support of City of Greater Geelong, connecting G21 households with trusted suppliers for home energy upgrades and building on our regional impact through the Ballarat program, which concluded in July 2025.

The **2025 Geelong program received over 716 enquiries from households** looking to make the switch to all-electric, energy-efficient homes.



Photo credit Studio Collins

Key program outcomes

240 energy savings upgrades
completed

Energy bill savings
$153,902
Annually

Emission Reduction
380 CO_2-e tonnes
annually

Stimulated
$1,784,766 of regional investment
in renewable energy upgrades

Energy bill savings
$3.84M
over 25 years

Emission Reduction
9,510 CO_2-e tonnes
over 25 years

25.52 kW of solar capacity and six hot water heat pump systems were donated by delivery partners as part of the "give back" feature of the Electric Homes Program.

Ballarat Electric Homes Program successfully concluded on 31 July, supporting **177 households** to create more comfortable, energy-efficient homes and collectively save an estimated **$113,872 each year** on their energy bills.

Community Power Hub Program

The Community Power Hub delivered its third year in 2025-26, providing expert energy advice to 46 local not-for-profit organisations, helping them to electrify and reduce operating costs.

Since its inception in 2023 and with generous support from Geelong Community Foundation, the program has supported 88 community organisations across 132 sites, **saving them over $224,000 annually**. The program has also **facilitated 30 solar projects totalling 757 kW of rooftop solar**, expected to reduce emissions by an estimated **786 tonnes of CO_2-e each year.**

The Hub provides tailored guidance on energy tariffs, rooftop solar, batteries, electrification and electric vehicles, as well as support with solar system sizing, grant applications, feasibility assessments, supplier engagement and long-term sustainability planning.

One example is **Stribling Reserve**, where our advice helped identify a network tariff change expected to save the community sporting facility **more than $15,000 each year - almost half of its annual electricity costs**. These savings will help strengthen its financial sustainability while freeing up resources for the organisation's core activities.



Photo credit Studio Collins

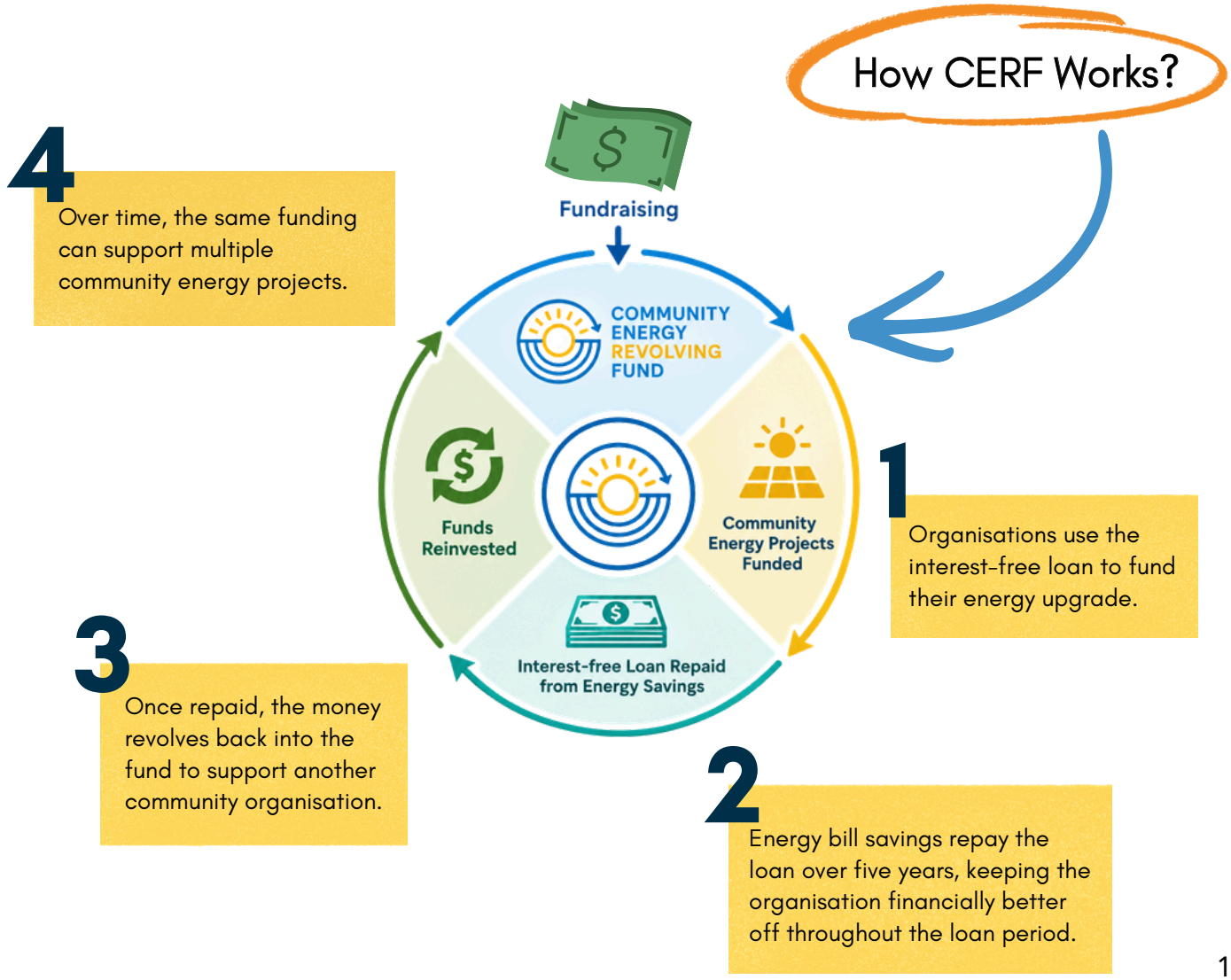
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Community Energy Revolving Fund

A key support to the Community Power Hub is the Community Energy Revolving Fund (CERF), which provides interest-free loans to community organisations so they can undertake energy savings upgrades. The fund supports community organisations to confidently invest in projects that deliver long-term financial and environmental benefits.

Since its inception in 2021, the CERF has **contributed $381,000 in loans** to community organisations. It has **supported 14 solar, battery or hot water heat pump projects, totalling 521 kW of solar/batteries** which will **cut emissions by 509 tonnes of CO_2-e per year.**

In 2025–26, the CERF provided three loans totalling $99,100 to new community organisations, alongside two new loans to organisations with existing loans, enabling energy-saving upgrades including rooftop solar, batteries and hot water heat pumps. One of these organisations is **Phoenix Housing Co-operative**, supporting households experiencing vulnerability. The installations are helping families reduce energy costs, with one household reporting around **40% lower electricity bills**.



Climate Safe Rooms

With support from PMF Foundation, we expanded our Climate Safe Rooms program to a **further 10 households**, helping vulnerable community members with chronic health conditions to have safer, more comfortable spaces to withstand extreme heat and cold.



The program upgrades one room in the home to be more comfortable and energy efficient, delivering tangible benefits such as health risk reduction, improving home comfort, lowering energy costs and strengthening resilience to climate extremes. We are strongly advocating at a State and Federal level for this program to be **scaled to 1,000 Climate Safe Rooms**, ensuring more at-risk community members can access practical protection from the impacts of a changing climate. This program is a key part of our climate justice approach, ensuring no one is left behind.

> *"I can't explain how wonderful it is, and I just hope that this is going to go to more people who can't afford to have these things done to their own home."*
>
> **Deborah Mcdonald, Program Participant**



With support from the Anthony Costa Foundation, City of Greater Geelong and Colac Otway Shire, we have developed a pilot sister program - **Climate Cosy Rooms**. This model enables us to support more households with a smaller investment per home, extending the reach and impact of our climate resilience work.

The program is in delivery, with **25 households set to benefit** from practical home improvements that will help create safer, more comfortable spaces and build resilience to extreme heat and cold.

Goal 2: A mobilised community acting urgently on climate change

Inspiring and activating community

We've continued to play a vital role in inspiring, activating, and connecting our community around climate action and resilience. By creating inclusive spaces for learning, dialogue, and celebration, we help strengthen the social fabric needed to face the climate crisis together.

This year, we proudly hosted a diverse range of events, including:

- The **"Energy and Housing" section of the One Planet Festival**, organised by Parents for Climate, reaching more than 2,000 people and bringing together delivery partners and experts to share practical information and inspiration on home electrification, energy efficiency, sustainable housing and climate action.

- **Gender & Climate Justice**, in partnership with Women's Health & Wellbeing Barwon South West and Women's Environmental Leadership Australia, bringing diverse voices together to explore the intersection of gender and climate. The event led to the establishment of a Gender & Climate Community of Practice, in partnership with Women's Health & Wellbeing Barwon South West and led by Wadawurrung woman and cultural leader, Corrina Eccles.

- The **sold-out Climate Risk Forum** on the Bellarine in partnership with Clifton Springs Curlewis Coastcare and local community leaders, bringing together experts and residents to explore the National Climate Risk Assessment, coastal adaptation and preparedness for more extreme weather. This further led us to partner with the Committee for Geelong leaders group to address the region's climate risk.

- **Youth Voices for Climate Justice**, a panel discussion featuring young people sharing their personal stories of challenge and hope, what inspired them to become involved in climate action, and their vision for a more just and sustainable future.



- **A Thriving Future: A Wellbeing Economy Conversation** with **Dr Katherine Trebeck**, internationally recognised wellbeing economist, alongside a diverse local panel and community partners. The event brought global thinking into a local context, sparking conversations about how we can build an economy that prioritises the wellbeing of people, planet and future generations.

Sustainable House Day

Sustainable House Day 2025, supported by the City of Greater Geelong, brought together more than **900 community members** throughout October for a month of inspiration, practical learning and conversations about sustainable living.

The **Open House Day attracted 642 visitors,** who explored seven sustainable homes across Greater Geelong and the Surf Coast, including a certified Passivhaus, hempcrete and recycled-timber homes, passive design, sustainable community living and wildlife-friendly gardens. Homeowners generously shared their experiences, giving visitors practical inspiration and the opportunity to ask questions about sustainable design, retrofitting and everyday living.

We were thrilled to host **Dr Saul Griffith,** one of the world's leading voices on home electrification and energy transition, as part of his **Faster & Fairer Tour**. With over 160 attendees, this event highlighted the growing local enthusiasm for electrifying homes, cutting energy bills and building a more affordable future.

Our *"From Garden to Kitchen"* seminar attracted 98 attendees, exploring sustainable food systems, gardening, food waste and community-led approaches to building local food resilience. **Mandy Hall**, former Campaign Director of *The Great Unwaste*, shared practical ways households can reduce food waste and create thriving garden-to-kitchen systems, while **James McLennan**, founder of *Farm My School*, explored how under-used spaces can be transformed into productive community food gardens.

Sustainable House Day continued to inspire beyond the homes themselves, reaching **more than 87,000 people across social media platforms**, highlighting strong visibility and impact.

Participant feedback highlighted the program's ability to inspire action, with 81.9% of respondents reporting that they had already taken sustainable action or planned to incorporate more sustainable features into their homes.

The 2025 program reaffirms that when people see what's achievable in their own neighbourhoods, they are inspired to take action for a more sustainable future.

> *"Whatever the brief was for hosts, worked a treat. Loved the diversity of offerings too. It was really hard to choose which house to visit."*

> *"Event organisers do a wonderful job and it's very generous of house owners to open their houses to us. Thankyou.*



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Community Electrification Engagement Program

We delivered the Community Electrification Engagement Program on behalf of the Victorian Government, concluding the program in June 2026. As **one of 6 lead organisations** delivering the program statewide, we worked alongside local partners to build understanding, confidence and momentum around electrification.

Over the past year, we helped community members explore practical **pathways to cleaner, more affordable and resilient homes**, while strengthening partnerships with local councils, community organisations and sustainability networks. This work was particularly important across regional and rural communities, where access to independent information about electrification can be limited.

Program Impact

38
Community Events

15 people
Supporting Delivery

2,488
Community Members Directly Engaged

11,705
Stakeholders Reached

$625,108
Social & Monetary Value Generated

5.7 : 1
Leverage on Victorian Government funding

Community Feedback

The program demonstrated a measurable increase in community understanding and interest in electrification. **86.7% of survey respondents** reported that the **program improved their understanding** of the benefits of switching from gas to electric appliances, while **66.7% reported increased interest in electrifying their homes.**



Photo credit Studio Collins

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Growing Community Power

Our partnership with **Geelong College** continued to grow, with our team supporting their **Futures Week**, an immersive program that engaged Year 9 students in exploring climate change, sustainability and the role they can play in shaping a better future.

We partnered with **Environment Victoria** to deliver **Talking Energy** training for our volunteers and community members, building confidence and skills to have conversations about gas and electrification. The training brought passionate people together to share stories, connect through common values and build their confidence to create meaningful change.



We also continued to build collective power through our membership with the **Real Deal Geelong alliance**, proudly working alongside local organisations and community groups to advocate for a fair and sustainable future for our region.

Expanding our reach

21,511 supporters across all platforms



Facebook

- 271 new followers in 2025-26
- 811,566 views
- 19,880 engagement
- 4,109 likes, saves, comments and shares

Instagram

- 496 new followers
- 241,677 views
- 43,958 reach
- 3,704 likes, saves, comments and shares



LinkedIn

- 269 new followers
- 49,562 reach/impressions
- 1,303 reactions, comments and reposts

9 articles in the media - across newspapers, radio and local community newsletter

Goal 3: A healthy, high performing organisation

Strong leadership

For the majority of Financial Year 2025-26, the organisation was led by former CEO Jane Spence. We would like to take a moment to thank Jane for her incredible effort and contribution to the organisation's ongoing success.

After Jane's departure in March, Geelong Sustainability's first Co-CEO model was established, with Karina Donkers and Emilie Flynn appointed to the leadership roles. This model has proven strong and successful, with both Co-CEOs bringing a deep knowledge of the organisation, having been employed since its professionalisation in 2021. The duo provide not only knowledge, but also passion for what they do, and a stable resilience for the organisation as a whole.



Photo credit Studio Collins

The Board is a highly effective and skilled group, supporting the team with sound counsel and robust governance. Looking ahead to Financial Year 2026-27, the Board welcomes fresh ideas and is keen to further strengthen its diversity of skills and experience as new members join.

Together, the Board and staff have been working towards the goals outlined in our 2030 Strategy, to guide our community towards a shared vision.

Values-led

Guided by equity, inclusion and respect for people and Country, we continued to strengthen our commitment to First Nations justice and self-determination, focusing on listening, learning and building meaningful relationships.

We deepened our connection with the local community by participating in significant cultural events such as *Pilk Purriyn*, a gathering celebrating culture and connection on 26 January, as well as the *Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative's flag-raising event* for NAIDOC Week, recognising and celebrating the strength, culture and contributions of First Nations communities in our region.

We have continued developing our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to formalise our commitment to acknowledging First Nations sovereignty, embedding cultural awareness across our organisation, and supporting reconciliation through action.

Volunteer Celebration Stories

We're incredibly grateful for the amazing contribution of our volunteers, who generously share their time, skills and passion to support our work. From bringing incredible energy and enthusiasm to everything they do, to supporting us with sustainable design, bookkeeping, copywriting, event management and community engagement, our volunteers bring a diverse range of knowledge and expertise to Geelong Sustainability.

Their contributions strengthen our work both behind the scenes and out in the community, helping us deliver programs, connect with more people and turn our vision for a sustainable future into action.

To all our volunteers, thank you. We couldn't do what we do without you!

Julie Jarrett

Julie moved to Geelong from Canberra in 2025 to study Accounting at Deakin University. In June 2025, Julie signed up through our online Volunteer Form and included a message:

"I'm passionate about sustainability, and I'm currently studying Bachelor of Commerce at Deakin University - majoring in Accounting with a minor in Sustainability and Development. I'd love to volunteer."



We had a coffee with Julie and identified that her skills and passion would go a long way to supporting the work we do. In fact, we hadn't even consciously considered that our team could use bookkeeping help specifically; but ever since Julie took the first step in reaching out and offering support, she has played a crucial role in the organisation, keeping our accounts and bookkeeping up-to-date for a few hours each week.

There are so many skilled and passionate people in our community. If you have ways you would like to support the work we do, please don't hesitate to get in touch - we are always ready to welcome new volunteers with open arms.

Thank you Julie, and all our other amazing volunteers, for the incredible work you do!

Treasurer's Report

The financial year 2025-26 has seen Geelong Sustainability continue to deliver impressive community impact while developing a stronger path to financial sustainability. I'm pleased to report that we have finished the year again with strong cash reserves, with sufficient cash earmarked to meet the full year cost of general operations along with significant funding dedicated to the organisation's key projects.



Glenn Garnaut
Treasurer

Financial Position

For the year ended 30 June 2026, Geelong Sustainability reported a deficit of $167,141, slightly higher than the Plan deficit of $158,000. This Plan was intended to responsibly draw on reserves to support the delivery of more strategic and targeted initiatives, which was successfully achieved in FY26.

Cash ended the year at $541,000, down $17,000 over prior year, but $115,000 ahead of the Plan. This reflects the great success in developing new sources of funding which in particular support the non-project costs of running the organisation.

The Board took the decision during FY26 to improve Geelong Sustainability's financial stability by developing new sources of unrestricted funding, while also restructuring operations to lower the ongoing operational cost. FY27 will see a continuation of the effort to diversify the organisation's funding pathways and obtain multi-year funding which supports both projects and operations. This will be foundational to allow the organisation to increase its impact through growth in existing and new projects.

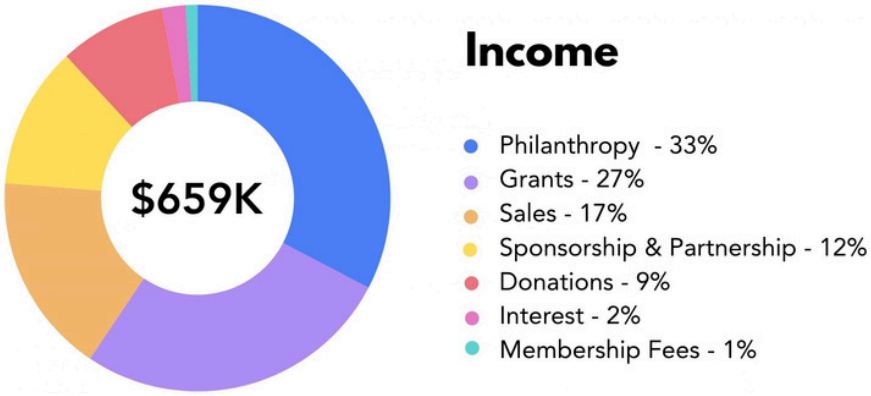
The CERF program continued to deliver ongoing benefits in FY26, funding new renewable energy and electrification projects for four community organisations valued at $99,100.

Assets and Liabilities

Total assets increased 3% year-over-year. Net assets remained healthy at $319,465, but are down 34% year over year driven primarily by the increase in Grants and Revenues received in advance.

Income

Revenues were down $215,000 (25%) from the high water mark of FY25, mainly due to a change in accounting processes for both revenues and grants received in advance. Most of this $215,000 change can be attributed to this new accounting process, with a majority of the difference shifting to the "Grants in Advance" and "Revenues in Advance" liability lines, to be recognised on 1 July 2027 for operations and projects. There was a $100k increase in revenues from State and Local Government bodies, but the primary source of funding remains non-government sources.



Expenses

Employee expenses were down 9% over prior year, but remain 69% of our total expenses. Other administrative costs were also reduced by 9%; the lease of a dedicated office space was not renewed, with the current office space being kindly provided by Deakin University through a newly-established partnership.



Next Financial Year

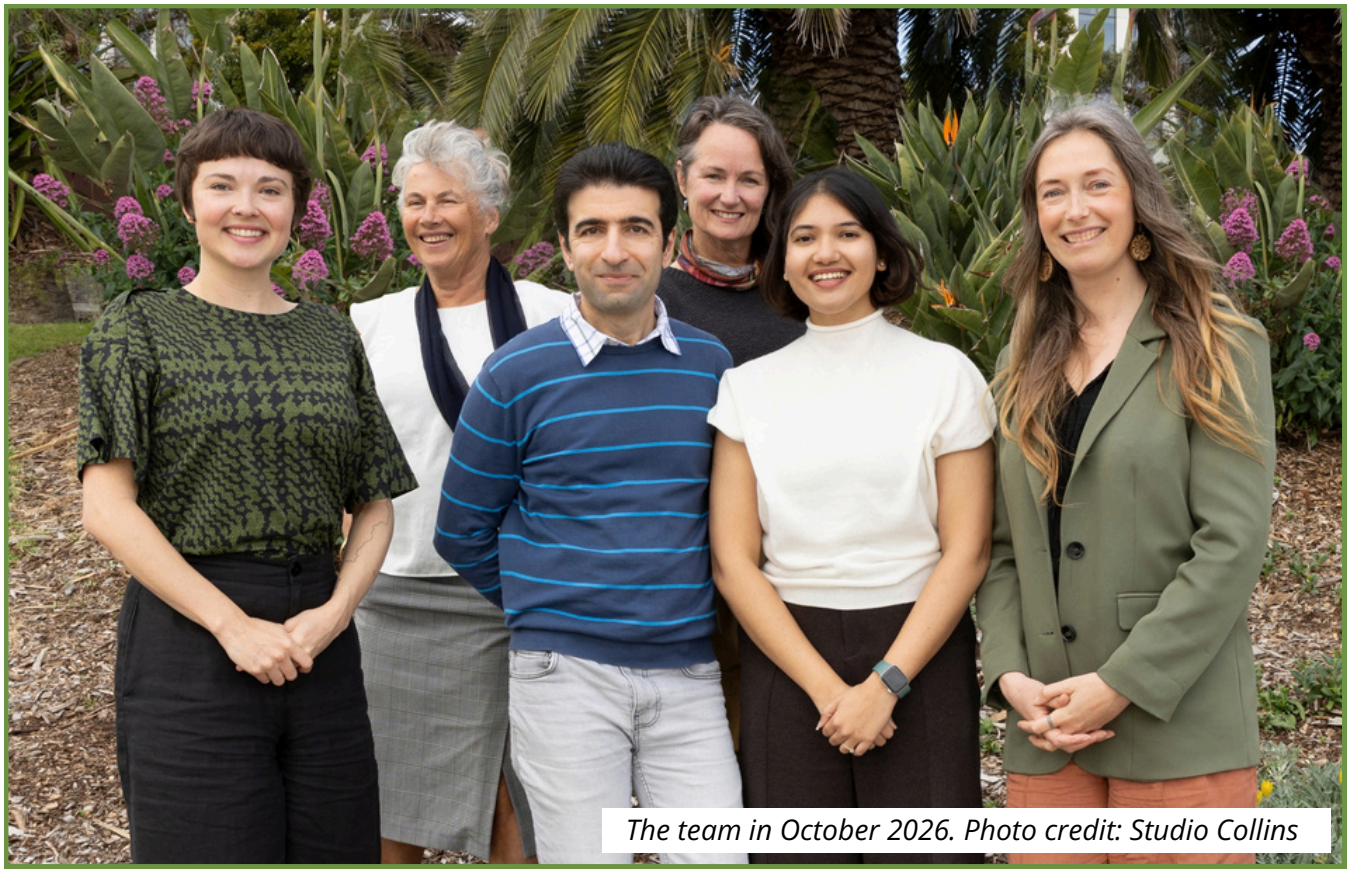
The FY27 Plan delivers a surplus budget, with unrestricted funding to meet core operational expenses largely locked in. This is a significant funding achievement which allows the organisation to continue to deliver impactful programs and position itself for growth in project delivery if additional funding is obtained. However, to advance climate action and the increasing associated costs, it's integral that we grow our capacity to respond to the community needs. The focus for the year will be to further develop sustainable funding for ongoing core operations, while seeking to maintain or increase funding for existing high-impact projects.

Looking Ahead

We're entering the 2026-27 financial year with a strong outlook for Geelong Sustainability and a projected surplus budget that provides a solid foundation for the year ahead. This puts us in a strong position to continue delivering the programs and projects that are already making a difference across our community, while also creating space to grow our impact and respond to emerging opportunities.

Over the coming year, we'll continue building on the momentum of initiatives such as the Electric Homes Program, Community Power Hub, Climate Safe Rooms and our broader climate resilience and climate risk work. At the same time, we're excited to explore new projects and opportunities that align with our 2030 Strategy and respond to the changing needs of our community and region. We'll also continue to deepen our partnerships, strengthen our community connections and continue to advocate for a cleaner, fairer and more resilient future.

We're excited about what lies ahead and, most importantly, about what we can achieve together. Thank you to our community for being part of our journey and helping turn climate concern into meaningful action.



The team in October 2026. Photo credit: Studio Collins

How You Can Help

Become a member

Support us by becoming a Geelong Sustainability Member and get VIP access to attend our Annual General Meeting as well as special offers and updates. Visit our website to find out more: *geelongsustainability.org.au/join*

Volunteer your time

Join us today and contribute towards the campaigns, events and activities that will help achieve meaningful outcomes for our region and move us towards a zero emission, climate-ready future. To register your interest, visit: *geelongsustainability.org.au/volunteer*

Make a donation

Your support helps us continue to deliver events, projects, campaigns and services which helps us achieve our vision of a thriving and resilient community taking urgent action on climate change together. Visit our website to donate: *geelongsustainability.org.au/donate*

Leave a bequest

Your generous gift supports community electrification, community climate resilience and climate action projects, creating a lasting legacy that benefits both the community and the planet for future generations. Find out more: *info@geelongsustainability.org.au*

Become a Business Supporter

Geelong Sustainability has been connecting and collaborating with like-minded organisations since 2007. We partner with local businesses that demonstrate alignment to our purpose and work together to build lasting relationships for ongoing impact. Find out more: *geelongsustainability.org.au/partner-with-us*







GEELONG SUSTAINABILITY













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