



EAGA

EASTERN ALLIANCE  
FOR GREENHOUSE ACTION

# ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

21<sup>st</sup> May 2014

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Prepared by:

Scott McKenry  
Regional Coordinator  
Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action  
Maroondah City Council  
03 9298 4250  
0431 133 592  
[scott.mckenry@maroondah.vic.gov.au](mailto:scott.mckenry@maroondah.vic.gov.au)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is designed to build a shared understanding and commitment amongst members of the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) on the scope of advocacy issues and activities to be undertaken between May 2014 to May 2015. It also defines EAGA's external engagement agenda on policy and strategic issues and sets out aims, principles, mechanisms and authorization.

The Advocacy Priorities should be read in conjunction with the EAGA Strategic Plan 2013-6. This plan defines EAGA's three year advocacy objective is to "*Utilise EAGA's scale, reputation and member's commitment to advocate for initiatives that support sustainable, low carbon communities at the local, state and federal government levels*". The Plan also defines the actions the EAGA will undertake to deliver this objective:

- Proactively advocate to governments and other stakeholders
- Establish partnerships and engage with the community to support advocacy activities
- Promote advocacy activities through media and web channels

## 2. AIMS, PRINCIPLES AND PROCESS

### 2.1 Aims

- Build EAGA's role and profile as a regional group in the local government sector
- Promote and facilitate policy solutions and effective greenhouse action, including the delivery of EAGA's projects
- Promote information dissemination amongst members, stakeholders and more broadly
- Support and promote partnerships with EAGA network members

### 2.2 Principles

EAGA will advocate on issues for which there is consensus amongst EAGA members, rather than on issues of individual benefit/focus. In the instance where the Alliance adopts a position or makes a submission that does not accurately represent the views of all members, this distinction will be explicitly stated.

### 2.3 Process

The following authorisation process for EAGA submissions is defined to reflect nimbleness and streamlined decision making:

- Authorisation is delegated to EAGA Regional Coordinator and EAGA Executive Chair for all submissions that are consistent with EAGA advocacy priorities and EAGA Strategic Plan 2013-16
- For formal submissions, the authorisation process involves:
  - the EAGA Regional Coordinator drafts submissions based on EAGA's agreed priorities (with input from the Steering Committee or nominated Working Group if required)

- draft submissions to then circulated to EAGA Executive members.
- It will be assumed that Executive members approve unless explicitly stated to the contrary, with response required within 3 working days from receipt of draft;
- Executive representatives will facilitate support and authorisation by individual EAGA member organisations through active engagement and communications.

## 3 SCOPE

### 3.1 Key Issues

For the next twelve months, it is anticipated that the EAGA's advocacy activities will focus around (but not be restricted to) the following Federal and State Government policy and programs and issues:

- **Direct Action and the Emissions Reduction Fund** – whilst the Government has committed Australia to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 5 per cent compared with 2000 levels by 2020, there are a number of problematic policy and implementation issues around the Direct Action plan and its mechanisms, such as the Emission Reduction Fund. EAGA will continue to proactively engage the Department of the Environment to ensure equitable access the Fund to ensure support for LGA program delivery.
- **Review of the Renewable Energy Target (RET)** – the continuation of stringent renewable energy generation targets will be critical for transitioning the economy to cleaner energy sources. EAGA will strongly advocate for the continuation of the RET in its current form and not support the dilution of the target.
- **Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) abolition** – the CEFC is an innovative \$10B funding body which can deliver half the abatement targeted by the federal government, and do this with a positive return for the tax payer. It also provides a targeted financing products tailored specifically for the Local Government sector. EAGA opposes the CEFC abolition bill and supports the continuation of the CEFC in its current form.
- **Senate inquiry into streamlining environmental regulation 'green tape'** – the inquiry may present an opportunity for EAGA to asset that the Local Government Act be amended to enable EAU finance (see below).
- **Implementation of the Victoria Climate Change Adaption Plan** – the Victorian Government is currently charged with the responsibility of managing the risks of a changing climate to assets, essential infrastructure and services such as waterways, transport systems, and our healthcare and emergency response systems through the Plan. Consequently, EAGA may proactively engage with the Department of Environment and Industry (DEPI) and the other Victorian Greenhouse Alliances throughout the year in its implementation. This includes informing the development of DEPI's Adaptation Mentors program and the proposed roles and responsibilities to be included in the Adaptation Memorandum of Understanding between the two levels of Government.

- **Continuation of the Victorian Adaptation Sustainability Partnership (VASP)** – the coming State election means there is considerable uncertainty around the programs future. The VASP grants program currently support two EAGA projects and could support other projects in future years - it is therefore vital that EAGA engages DEPI and other stakeholders to ensure the program is continued.
- **Street lighting** – in this critical area for Councils, activities may include coordinated activities with other Alliances/Councils:
  - for the inclusion of street lights in the VEET program and that eligibility be extended to allow local governments to participate.
  - responding to the regulatory impact statement (RIS) process on the VEET program
- **The Electricity Distribution Price Review** - under the National Electricity Rules, the AER conducts a pricing review for electricity distribution every five years. Through the EDPR, the regulator determines the prices the network businesses can charge for safe, reliable electricity supply to their customers. The current pricing period expires on 31st December 2015. Even a minor change in OMR charges (or similar) can have significant cost implications for LGAs. Other rule changes might have implications for LGA distributed energy or demand management projects. EAGA has already begun working with the other Alliances to clearly indentify the key issues and proposed solutions for a consolidated response from the LGA sector.
- **Facilitating the rapid deployment of Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs)** – Improving building performance through retrofitting is widely regarded as one of the most cost effective opportunities to deliver greenhouse gas reductions. Often there are barriers that restrict such upgrades from occurring, include difficulty in obtaining finance and split incentives. EUAs are widely accepted as the most effective mechanism to address these barriers. EAGA will seek to assists the region’s businesses capturing energy efficiency benefits by:
  - by advocating for the necessary amendment the Local Government Act in collaboration with the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances
  - working collaboratively with the State Government to support the establishment of a consistent administration model and assist Councils to access the services of the program administrator
- **Energy market reform** – current utility contracts and retailer billing requirements result in perverse incentives in the energy market. Reform is required to ensure that structure of electricity contracts incentive energy efficiency (rather than bulk supply) and improve transparency in billing information provided to consumers to empower them to act on their electricity consumption.

### 3.2 Activities

EAGA’s priority advocacy issues and activities are identified below. High priority issues are those most closely related to EAGA’s Strategic Plan and the implementation of EAGA’s projects. Partnerships with like-minded stakeholders are important for EAGA to maximise its advocacy efforts and reach. The following list of issues and activities is designed to be flexible and allow the Alliance to be opportunistic over the year.

<b>Priority Issue</b>	<b>Outcomes Sought</b>	<b>Government Policy / Opportunity</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Direct Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deeper cuts in national emission by 2020</li> <li>• Transition to a low carbon economy, through well-designed scheme and well targeted complimentary measures.</li> <li>• Financial assistance for LGA project delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emissions Reduction Fund White Paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Coordinated engagement with other Alliance Councils</li> <li>• Direct engagement with the Minister for the Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Alliances</li> <li>• Local MPs</li> </ul>
<b>Review of RET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of the RET</li> <li>• Strong and consistent policy support for renewable energy generation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewable Energy Target via Department of Primate Minister and Cabinet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Alliances</li> <li>• Clean Energy Council</li> </ul>
<b>CEFC Abolition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of the CEFC</li> <li>• Financial assistance for LGA (and private sector) project delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEFC Abolition Bill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Direct engagement with the Minister for the Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEFC</li> <li>• Regional Alliances</li> </ul>
<b>Senate inquiry into streamlining environmental regulation 'green tape'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of a range of environmental programs and initiatives</li> <li>• Amendment to the local Government Act to unlock EUA finance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senate inquiry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Alliances</li> </ul>
<b>Victorian Adaptation Plan &amp; VASP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing financial assistance for LGA project delivery from the State</li> <li>• Inform the establishment of the Climate Adaptation Mentors program and MoU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEPI consultation process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Direct engagement with DEPI and MAV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Alliances</li> <li>• DEPI</li> <li>• MAV</li> </ul>

<b>Street Lighting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid retrofit of more efficient street lights</li> <li>• Financial assistance to facilitate larger scale retrofitting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (inclusion of Streetlights and an eligible activity)</li> <li>• Regulatory impact statement consultation process for VEET</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Coordinated engagement with other Alliance Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAV</li> <li>• Regional Alliances</li> <li>• Ironbark Sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>Electricity Distribution Price Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced costs for Local Government in managing public lighting</li> <li>• Decrease barriers to energy management for LGAs</li> <li>• Enhanced dialog with Distribution Network Service Providers (DNSPs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Energy Regulators (AER) five year price determination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Coordinated engagement with other Alliance / Councils on a sector wide response</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Research / analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAV</li> <li>• Regional Alliances</li> <li>• Ironbark Sustainability</li> <li>• DNSPs</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Upgrade Agreements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make EUA finance available to regions beyond the City of Melbourne through a change to the Local Government Act</li> <li>• Unlock investment in building energy efficiency retrofits and deliver low cost emission reductions</li> <li>• Secure State Government support for Councils to access third party administrator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government Act amendment</li> <li>• Red tape reduction Bill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Utilise volunteer to conduct assessment of indirect economic implications of EUAs (energy and carbon savings) and preferred administration model</li> <li>• Direct engagement with DTPLI regarding the proposed legislative amendment</li> <li>• Direct engagement with (DSDBI regarding the needs of Councils in establishing the administration model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Alliances</li> <li>• Sustainable Melbourne Fund</li> <li>• CEFC</li> </ul>
<b>Energy Market Reform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove perverse incentives with energy supply industries</li> <li>• Empower energy users to reduce consumption through greater transparency in billing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rule change proposal to Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Coordinated engagement and lobbying with other Alliance Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Alliances</li> <li>• Community groups</li> </ul>

## **4 Process For Review**

The Executive Committee will be responsible for reviewing this document each year in consultation with the Steering Committee / working group.