

## EAGA ADVOCACY PRIORITIES 2020-21: SUMMARY

Priority Issue	Outcomes Sought	Government Policy / Opportunity	Activities	Partners	Budget Allocation
<b>Post COVID-recovery stimulus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure post COVID investment stimulus is directed towards low carbon sustainable solutions rather than emissions intensive initiatives</li> <li>• Secure funding for local governments to deliver climate programs that aid recovery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Government stimulus packages</li> <li>• State Government Stimulus packages</li> <li>• DELWP Metropolitan partnerships</li> <li>• COVID Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Direct engagement with the Minister for the Environment and local MPs</li> <li>• Promotion of Local Government's COVID stimulus 'Think Climate' prospectus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse Alliances</li> <li>• MAV, DELWP, SV</li> <li>• BZE, Renew, One Million Homes</li> <li>• DELWP Regional Partnerships</li> </ul>	
<b>Federal climate policy and programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the national emissions reduction target (post 2020) to be consistent with latest science</li> <li>• Strengthen existing policy frameworks and support the implementation of new complimentary policies to ensure interim and long terms targets can be met</li> <li>• Ongoing support and funding for mitigation and adaptation measures at the local government level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean Energy Innovation Fund</li> <li>• Emissions Reduction Fund and Safeguard Mechanism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Direct engagement with the Minister for the Environment and local MPs</li> <li>• EAGA representation on the Regional Adaptation plan for Greater Melbourne Stakeholder reference group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse Alliances</li> <li>• MAV, DELWP, SV</li> <li>• ERG</li> <li>• Energy consumers groups e.g. Renew, One Million Homes Alliances</li> </ul>	
<b>National energy market reform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the National Electricity Objective (NEO) to include environmental and social outcomes</li> <li>• Remove regulatory barriers to rapid integration of distributed generation and storage technologies</li> <li>• Provide support for new and emerging business models, such local electricity trading</li> <li>• Empower energy users to reduce consumption through greater transparency in billing and equitable tariffs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rule change proposals to Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC)</li> <li>• Essential Services Commission inquiries and price reviews</li> <li>• AER regulatory processes</li> <li>• Finkel Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Coordinated engagement and lobbying with other Alliances and Councils</li> <li>• Formal representation on Ausnet Service Customer Consultative Committee</li> <li>• Cross sector workshops with Victorian DNSPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse Alliances</li> <li>• Energy consumers groups e.g. Renew, One Million Homes Alliances</li> <li>• Energy Consumers Australia</li> <li>• DNSPs</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop models to facilitate integrated planning between energy network planners and council land use planners</li> <li>• Encourage energy security that includes incentives for renewable energy storage</li> <li>• Extend and strengthened the RET</li> </ul>				
<b>Energy efficiency incentives and regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory energy disclosure and efficiency standards for commercial and residential buildings</li> <li>• Mandatory emission standards for vehicles</li> <li>• Financial support and other assistance for businesses to undertake emission reduction actions</li> <li>• Stringent emission standards on coal fired generators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light vehicle emission standards regulation impact statement</li> <li>• Victorian Energy Efficiency Target</li> <li>• Victorian Energy Upgrades program consultations</li> <li>• National Construction Code</li> <li>• National Australian Built Environment Rating System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions to ESC and VEU</li> <li>• Participate in VEU consultation panel</li> <li>• EPA Brown coal-fired power stations licence reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAV</li> <li>• Alliances</li> <li>• Ironbark</li> <li>• DNSPs</li> <li>• VicRoads</li> <li>• EAHA</li> <li>• Better Building Finance</li> </ul>	
<b>Distribution Network Service Providers (DNSP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure local governments pay lowest costs on OMR charges in the 2021-26 regulatory period</li> <li>• Ensure DNSPs allocate sufficient resources to partner with councils on large scale emissions reduction programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricity Distribution price Review 2021-26 (EDPR)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions to the AER</li> <li>• Direct engagement with DNSPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse Alliances</li> <li>• MAV</li> <li>• Ironbark</li> <li>• DNSPs</li> </ul>	See annual plan
<b>State Government climate and energy policy and programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority initiatives are identified and the scale of investment is articulated in State Government budget</li> <li>• Clarity on roles and responsibilities and the liabilities of the two spheres of government</li> <li>• Influence the development of the plans to maximise opportunities for collaborative programs and funding support for their implementation</li> <li>• Financial support and other assistance for businesses to take actions on climate</li> <li>• Extend residential solar rebates to included businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victorian Climate Change Strategy 2020-25, sector based adaptation plans</li> <li>• Regulatory reviews in energy sector</li> <li>• Regional Adaptation Plan for Greater Melbourne</li> <li>• DELWPs legal review of adaptation roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal submissions</li> <li>• Coordinated engagement with DELWP + consultation process</li> <li>• Funding applications for partnership projects with Victorian Government. Example: Large scale solar</li> <li>• Engagement with Solar Victoria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse Alliances</li> <li>• DELWP</li> <li>• MAV</li> <li>• SV</li> <li>• RMIT</li> <li>• Better Building Finance</li> <li>• Ironbark</li> </ul>	

<b>Low income and vulnerable households</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure support from Solar Victoria to assist in the delivery of Solar Savers</li> <li>Ensure State Government incentives are available and accessible to low income and vulnerable segments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solar Homes package</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct engagement with DELWP and Solar Vic staff and Ministers office</li> <li>Establish cross Alliance community of practice supported by DELWP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenhouse Alliances</li> <li>Energy consumers groups e.g. Renew, One Million Homes Alliances</li> <li>EAHA</li> </ul>	
<b>Major road lighting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An equitable co-investment model for lights that are cost shared with Vic Roads</li> <li>Fast track approval of replacement options by distributors</li> <li>Savings from smart lighting trials/projects are realised and captured through changes to metering arrangements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victorian Energy Efficiency Target</li> <li>Australian Lighting Code review</li> <li>AEMC rule changes</li> <li>AER regulatory processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct engagement with DELWP, VicRoads and Minister for Roads</li> <li>Directly engage with DNSPs, AEMC and AER</li> <li>Trial project with Ironbark and AEMO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEWLP, SV</li> <li>Ironbark</li> </ul>	See annual plan
<b>ESD in the Victorian Planning Scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions include stronger protection for vegetation on private land and a sustainable built environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Government Election</li> <li>Plan Melbourne</li> <li>Review of Victorian Planning Provisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct engagement with DELWP</li> <li>Coordinated engagement and lobbying with CASBE other Alliances and Councils</li> <li>Joint letters to Minister for Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resilient Melbourne</li> <li>Greenhouse Alliances</li> <li>CASBE</li> <li>EAHA</li> </ul>	
<b>Rates based finance mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure changes to the Local Government Act streamline administrative requirements on councils (providing support to the Solar Savers program) through revised special charges scheme or residential EUAs</li> <li>Facilitate access to EUAs for businesses through State wide programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeals to the Local Government Act 1989, and implementation of the LG Act 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal submissions to LGV</li> <li>Direct engagement with LGV legislative team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenhouse Alliances</li> <li>DTF</li> </ul>	
<b>Emissions from waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable councils to develop a shared long term goal for landfill waste, thus providing investment certainty for the waste services sector to provide appropriate processing facilities</li> <li>Fast track uptake of Food Organics in Garden Organics (FOGO) programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MWRRG contracts</li> <li>Victorian Waste to Energy Policy</li> <li>Emission Reduction Fund (ERF) funding opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emissions from waste discussion paper</li> <li>SV/RMIT waste calculator</li> <li>MRWWG FOGO guide working group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MWRRG</li> <li>SV</li> <li>Greenhouse Alliances</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Biodiversity and water adaptation planning and response</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Biodiversity 2037 is delivered in partnership with local governments</li> <li>• Ensure local governments views on WSUD are captured within State based adaptation plans and programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water for Victoria</li> <li>• Biodiversity 2037</li> <li>• Native vegetation clearing regulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting information exchange between council networks</li> <li>• Assist (but not lead development of) formal submissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPWCMA</li> <li>• Biodiversity planners network</li> <li>• MAV</li> <li>• Greenhouse Alliances</li> </ul>	
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## 1. BACKGROUND

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 July 2020 and June 2021. It also defines EAGA's external engagement agenda on policy and strategic issues and sets out aims, principles, mechanisms and authorisation.

The Annual Advocacy Priorities should be read in conjunction with the EAGA Strategic Plan 2017-21 and EAGA's 2020-21 Annual Implementation plan. EAGA's ongoing advocacy strategic 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, and leverage the advocacy activities of their associated networks (such as biodiversity planners)

### 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 Executive Officer and EAGA Executive Chair for all submissions that are consistent with EAGA's agreed advocacy priorities
- For formal submissions, the authorisation process involves:
  - the EAGA Executive Officer drafts submissions based on EAGA's agreed priorities with input from the Steering Committee
  - draft submissions to then circulated to EAGA Executive Committee members for comment

- 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
- EAGA may formally support submissions made by other advocacy groups (through inclusion of the EAGA logo) via the above authorisation process, acknowledging in some instances it may not be practical for EAGA members to contribute to the drafting of the content
- Executive Committee representatives will facilitate support and authorisation by individual EAGA member organisations through active engagement and communications
- The following caveat is to be included within all written submissions to formal consultation processes: *"This submission has been approved through EAGA's formal governance structure as described in the EAGA Memorandum of Understanding 2017-21. The submission may not have been formally considered by individual member councils."*

### 3. SCOPE

#### 3.1 Key Issues

For the next twelve months, it is anticipated that EAGA's advocacy activities will focus around (but not be restricted to) the following issues, acknowledging that intent is to establish a consensus on the scope of issues, rather than agreeing to a prescriptive list of submissions and activities to be undertaken:

- **COVID response** - There is a clear opportunity to link the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic with the need to develop the local skills and supply chains to transition to zero carbon emissions. The experience of councils should be leveraged to prioritise cross-government stimulus measures that synchronise the objectives of councils with the country's long-term recovery plans and the future skills and jobs Australia's needs.
- **Federal Climate Policy and Programs** – to achieve sustained emissions reductions consistent with the national interest, Australia needs its climate policies to be based on a sound foundation of evidence rather than a political agenda or particular business interests. EAGA has previously advocated for the adoption of a target of 40% below 2000 by 2030 and zero net emission by 2050. These recommendations are in line with avoiding a 2°C warming, however this is significantly higher than the 28% target Australia committed to at Paris in December 2015. Securing cross party support will be critical for strengthening existing policies and developing new and complementary measures, such as national vehicle emission standards.
- **National Energy Market Reform** – a lack of energy policy at the federal level is constraining investment and locking Australia into an emissions trajectory that is at odds with its Paris commitments. Australia has abundant renewable energy resources and technical expertise and is well placed to become a world leader in the renewable sector. However, a lack of supporting policy will mean the opportunity to return cheap energy to Australia's economy will be lost. The diversification of transmission and distribution infrastructure requires rapid acceleration to accommodate generation moving from a few major sources to distributed smaller sources. Distributed storage technologies need intensive research and development to fast-track incorporation into networks. Rule-making and regulation require immediate reform to keep up with technology advancements. This must provide support for existing technologies (like large capacity batteries and solar

thermal storage) that are more cheaply and easily deployable than less distributed options, such as pumped hydro which is only suited to certain geographic areas and subject to significant distribution losses over larger distances.

- **Energy Efficiency Incentives and Regulation** – there is a wealth of evidence demonstrating that increasing efficiency of the building stock through improved regulation is cost effective, both for commercial and residential sectors. Strengthening the requirements of the National Building Code and mandatory disclosure of building performance are much needed first steps for progress in this area. For councils, access to capital is a key barrier in implementing building retrofit programs. Inclusion of EPC into the VEET (now VEU) program will provide financial assistance for councils seeking to invest in more energy efficient buildings. EAGA's participation on the VEET stakeholder panel will provide a key opportunity to influence the implementation of this critical regulation.
- **Distribution Network Service Providers** - Under the National Electricity Rules, the AER conducts a pricing review for electricity distribution every five years. This includes setting the operation, maintenance and replacement (OMR) charges for street lights where even minor changes can have significant cost implications for councils. In 2016, EAGA worked with the Greenhouse Alliances to develop a sector wide response to the pricing proposals submitted to the AER by the five Victorian distribution businesses. The submission was successful in saving all councils \$22M over the current regulatory period.
- **State Government Climate and Energy Policy and programs** – the Victorian government has recently embarked upon an ambitious platform of legislative reform and policy/program development including:
  - Victoria's Climate Change Framework (released Feb 2017)
  - Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan (released Feb 2017)
  - Victoria's emission reduction and renewable energy targets (announced late 2016)
  - Revisions to Victoria's Climate Change Act
  - Victoria's Energy Efficiency Strategy (for release mid 2017)
  - Victoria's Renewable Energy Roadmap and Action Plan (for release mid 2017)

These plans and strategies intersect with a range of EAGA initiatives and identify local government as a key partner in a number of areas. Whilst the Department has been very consultative in the preparation of these plans, the allocation of funds to support their implementation and roles and responsibilities remains unclear. EAGA will need to keep a 'watching brief' on the progress of these commitments and the appropriateness of funding allocated to their implementation.

- **Major Road Lighting** – Overcoming the split incentive with VicRoads for co-investing in new lights remains another key barrier to action. The approval process for new products (via the distributor) is protracted and suffers from a lack of transparency. EAGA's advocacy activities on this issue is informed by its regional business case (completed in March 2018). Advocacy will also include addressing the data management barriers preventing councils from capturing financial and greenhouse savings from smart metering trials.
- **ESD in the planning scheme** - a growing number of councils are providing detailed guidance on sustainability in buildings through the introduction of Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) policies in their planning scheme. The expiry dates for the local ESD policies has been extended until June 2019, when a new Victorian Policy Planning framework will be enacted. There is concern these new provisions will not fully realise the potential for adaptive and resilient buildings and cities, and may lack the

specific guidance for planners, particularly on urban greening. A number of projects are currently being undertaken by Resilient Melbourne, City of Melbourne and DELWP that should inform the State's new policy framework. EAGA will collaborate with these parties and CASBE to advocate robust planning framework that leverages the learning from these projects and meets the future needs of the LG sector.

- **Rate based finance** – EAGA's previous advocacy work on Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs) and project work on the Solar Rates initiative (using the Special Charges mechanism) demonstrates that councils can play a key role in facilitating access to finance for emission reduction initiatives. However, there are a number of barriers that still prevent councils from actively utilising rates base mechanisms. Securing sufficient financial support and/or assistance will be necessary for councils to administer an Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUA) scheme. Similarly, streamlining administrative requirements on the Special Charges mechanism (via a Local Government Act amendment) and removing balance sheet debt will critical for securing buy in from councils.
- **Emission from waste** – EAGA is working with other Alliances to document a shared commitment from councils to develop a long term vision for the management of landfill waste, and a commitment to move towards FOGO programs to provide a clear signal and investment confidence to the waste processing sector.
- **Biodiversity and water adaptation planning and response** – EAGA's work in biodiversity adaptation has been driven through a network of biodiversity planners in member and non-member councils. Similar networks support officers leading council water projects. EAGA can play an important role in ensuring that the advocacy work of these networks is harmonized to ensure the collective voice of the sector is leveraged into formal consultation process.

## 4. PROCESS FOR REVIEW

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