

8 September 2020

Robin Whyte  
Chair  
Eastern Metropolitan Partnership

By email: metropolitanpartnerships@ecodev.vic.gov.au



EASTERN ALLIANCE  
FOR GREENHOUSE ACTION

C/O - MAROONDAH CITY COUNCIL  
BRAESIDE AVE  
RINGWOOD VIC 3134

WWW.EAGA.COM.AU  
03 9298 4250

Dear Ms Whyte,

**Re: Stimulus measures for pandemic recovery**

The Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) would like to raise a number of important issues and opportunities relating to the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EAGA is a formal Alliance of eight councils in Melbourne's East, committed to delivering mitigation and adaptation projects and advocating for initiatives that support sustainable, low carbon communities. Our members include:

- City of Boroondara
- Glen Eira City Council
- Knox City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- City of Monash
- City of Stonnington
- City of Whitehorse
- Yarra Ranges Council

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. These opportunities are clearly aligned with the priorities of the Eastern Metropolitan Partnership. In formulating your recommendations to Government regarding the stimulus opportunities for the Eastern region, we urge you to consider the unique capabilities and capacity of councils to support local economies, create jobs and tackle climate change.

For decades, Victorian councils have led climate change initiatives that deliver direct financial savings to communities, boost local economies, create jobs, improve health and wellbeing and enhance the natural environment. This experience 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 needs.

Victorian councils have identified a number of key initiatives that can deliver these outcomes (see Attachment) including:

- Upgrading 200,000 major road lights to energy efficient smart technology. A stimulus of \$40M over four years could bring forward a co-investment of a further ~\$150M from councils. Replacing all inefficient major road lights with energy efficient LEDs in the EAGA region could save \$61.6M in electricity costs and cut emissions by 236,682 tonnes over the next 20 years
- Rolling-out a comprehensive Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network across Victoria. A stimulus of \$6M could support at least one fast charger (25–50kW DC) per municipality and create tourism and economic benefits of ~\$260M by 2030.
- Accelerating investment in street trees, parks and gardens, water sensitive urban design, stormwater capture and reuse. Stimulus funding of \$50M could reduce heat vulnerability, improve liveability and urban biodiversity and enhance \$5-\$10B in street tree assets.
- Transforming a number of closed landfill sites into community solar farms. Based on feasibility work already undertaken by councils, 50MW of new generation capacity could be unlocked with a stimulus of \$25M, via a coordinated co-investment approach. This would kick-start three solar farms within the eastern region and build resilience in this part of the network.
- Acceleration of state-wide food organics and garden organics (FOGO) programs could divert over 32,000 tonnes of food waste from landfill each year. Whilst councils welcome the recent funding announcement to assist in the transition to a four bin system, a further stimulus of \$80M could support 280 new jobs in related industries and support communities to reduce emissions from waste.

Addressing climate change remains the defining challenge of our times. According to the World Economic Forum Global Risk Report 2020, infectious disease was tenth on the list behind five climate related risks.<sup>1</sup> Australia's economic recovery from this devastating pandemic must embed zero carbon and climate resilience as core to Australia's economy and community wellbeing. Melbourne's eastern region, and its councils are uniquely placed to lead this recovery.

If you have any questions or queries relating to this letter, please contact Scott McKenry, EAGA Executive Officer, on [scott.mckenry@maroondah.vic.gov.au](mailto:scott.mckenry@maroondah.vic.gov.au) or 03 9298 4250.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Josh Fergeus  
Executive Committee Chair  
Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action  
Councillor, City of Monash



*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.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-risks-report-2020>