

A Climate Positive Stimulus for Victorian Local Governments

DEVELOPED BY

**Victorian
Greenhouse
Alliances**



Local Governments can drive economic recovery through tested climate change solutions.

This prospectus outlines how to align stimulus projects with climate solutions and offers five priority statewide projects that local governments could deliver/facilitate to boost the economy, create jobs and tackle climate change.

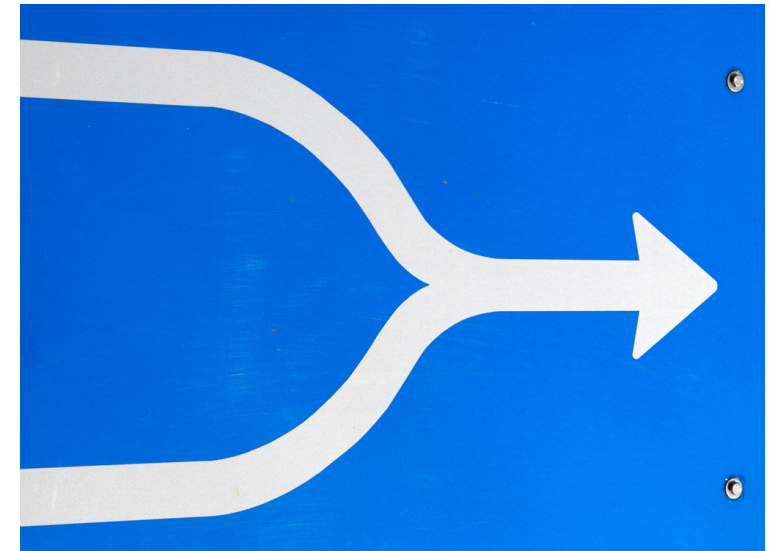


Addressing Two Challenges Together

Local governments are on the frontline of two monumental challenges; the Corona Virus pandemic and Climate Change. Tackling both challenges at the same time is as important as ever. Luckily, implementing local climate solutions can significantly boost pandemic recovery efforts.

The risks climate change poses to local government have not gone away. Climate change impacts nearly every aspect of council core business and across multiple service areas.

Councils have been leading the way for decades on climate change and sustainability and have a unique opportunity to ramp up ambitions. Corporate and community initiatives that can deliver direct financial savings to councils, boost local economies, create jobs, improve health and wellbeing and the health of the local environment.



Think Stimulus Think Climate

Many local governments have already received funding through State and Federal Governments with more expected to come to support economic recovery. These packages offer an important opportunity to maximise climate change and sustainability outcomes for councils and their communities.

Any project could seek to improve climate outcomes by asking *'how could this project be delivered so that it reduces emissions'*, and *'how could this project help to increase resilience and reduce exposure to climate risks?'*. Here are some examples;

- **Streetscape revitalisation projects** could improve resilience through enhancing urban forests, reducing urban heat and improving water sensitive urban design.
- **Social distancing measures** can promote active transport measures such as walking and cycling infrastructure, reduce emissions, improve local air quality and improve health & wellbeing.
- **Councils are fast tracking capital expenditure, with a focus on creating local jobs.** As such procurement is weighted towards local supply chains, but this should also extend to stronger weightings for sustainability outcomes.
- **New and existing buildings could strive for zero carbon and highest sustainability star ratings,** and built for 2050 climate projections
- **Prepare for future disruption** by integrating renewable energy and communications security into recovery projects.



Principles

Victorian Councils have a demonstrated track record of delivering regional and state wide initiatives, via their Greenhouse Alliances. This experience informs the following principles that have been applied in prioritising the proposed stimulus options:

01



Reduces emissions/
Increases resilience

02



Ready to implement

03



Job creation
& economic benefits

04



Solid business case

05



Addresses multiple strategic objectives

06



Statewide potential



Upgrading streetlights

Switching all major road lights to energy efficient smart technology. Over recent years councils have progressively upgraded tens of thousands of inefficient residential streetlights. Many councils are now ready to proceed with upgrading inefficient lights for major roads. A large portion of these lights are cost shared between councils and the State Government. A co-investment model between councils and the State Government could deliver:

Upgrade 200,000 inefficient streetlights across the state

\$24M in energy savings per year for councils and Victorian Government

86K tonnes of emissions avoided per year

100 jobs over 3 years

Improved traffic safety and smart city capabilities

**Stimulus needed:
\$10M/year for 4 years**



Charging the Regions

A comprehensive Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network across Victoria.

In 2019/20, 55 Victorian Councils partnered with the Victorian Government on the Charging the Regions project. This project identified the need for a roll out of Electric Vehicle fast charging infrastructure to enable greater regional connectivity and accelerate EV uptake. The project identified that:

At least one fast charger (25–50kW DC) per municipality would create a dense network of fast chargers less than 100km apart.

Create tourism and economic benefits of \$260M by 2030

Improve air quality and reduce emissions

Support local supply chains such as installers and equipment manufacturers

**Stimulus needed:
\$5–7M**



Green infrastructure

Accelerating investment in street trees, parks and gardens, water sensitive urban design, stormwater capture and reuse.

Most councils in Victoria have plans or strategies to improve greening within their towns and cities. Stimulus funding could help overcome many of the barriers often faced by councils and help to:

Reach canopy cover targets of 30–40%

Reduce heat vulnerability & improve liveability

Improve air quality, biodiversity, amenity, stormwater capture

Create local carbon sinks

Consistent planning and implementation will need 2 funded green infrastructure officers per shire/city/3 years

\$5-10B in statewide tree assets enhanced

**Stimulus needed:
\$50M**



Statewide food & organics program

Diverting food organics from landfill represents a significant opportunity for councils to support communities to reduce emissions from waste.

Infrastructure Victoria* recently made a number of recommendations to improve Victoria's circular economy and support recovery of organics. Currently only of small number of councils offer Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) programs. The roll out of a state-wide FOGO program could:

Divert 432K tonnes of food waste going to landfill each year

Support 280 new jobs in related industries

\$25M needed to support bin infrastructure

\$14M per year over 4 years to establish consistent, robust engagement and communication programs

Stimulus needed:
\$81M

*www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/report/5-recommendations/



Landfill solar

Transforming closed landfills for clean energy generation for local communities.

There are currently 588 closed landfill sites in Victoria, many of which represent an ongoing management liability for Victorian councils, and considerable ongoing costs for rate payers. Increasingly, councils are seeking to transform these sites into assets by creating local solar farms. A number of metro and regional councils have undertaken several detailed feasibility studies demonstrating:

50MW of new generation capacity could be unlocked, with an upfront investment of \$65M

Together the projects could save 36K tonnes in emissions each year

Support 188 construction jobs and 20 ongoing jobs

Stimulus needed:
\$10–25M



Get in touch

The Victorian Greenhouse Alliances are formal partnerships of local governments driving climate change action across 70 of Victoria's 79 municipalities. The Alliances work across their networks, communities and partners to deliver regional mitigation and adaptation programs. For more information contact one of the following Alliance Executive Officers:

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