



EASTERN ALLIANCE
FOR GREENHOUSE ACTION

2019–2020 ANNUAL REPORT



MEMBERS

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



www.eaga.com.au



ABOUT EAGA

The Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) is a formal collaboration of eight Councils in Melbourne’s east, working together on regional programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and facilitate regional adaptation. The Alliance implements joint initiatives that provide economies of scale and enable projects typically beyond the reach of individual Councils. EAGA’s project work is complemented by advocacy, capacity building and regional partnerships.

CHAIR PERSON’S STATEMENT



Cr Josh Fergeus
City of Monash,
EAGA Executive Chair

Despite the challenges of the global pandemic, EAGA has continued to deliver clear financial and greenhouse savings for its council members and the communities in Melbourne’s East. Importantly, the Alliance has enabled councils to navigate the budget implications of COVID and deliver programs in an increasingly financially constrained operating environment.

The emergence of the pandemic has come against a back drop of the Climate Emergency movement, which has seen four EAGA members join 96 councils across Australia in making their own declarations. Councils are uniquely placed to respond to both issues, and I am pleased to note the key advocacy role of EAGA and the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances in leading the sector’s vision for climate positive pandemic recovery.

The impact of EAGA’s previous advocacy campaigns have continued to deliver outcomes in the 2019-20 period, particularly with the increase in uptake of Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUA) where councils have facilitated significant investment in the region’s businesses. Other noteworthy advocacy successes for businesses include important changes to the National Electricity Rules (NER) that will allow large energy users to trade reductions in electricity use in the electricity market for the first time, in one of the biggest energy market reforms in decades.

EAGA’s flagship programs have continued to accrue significant emissions reductions. Solar Savers has successfully installed ~1MW of renewable energy across the region’s households, saving ~1,400 tonnes of emissions per year. The joint Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) program is now delivering savings of ~\$200K per year for each five participating councils and generating combined emission reductions of ~7,500 tonnes. It is difficult to overstate the impact of these sector leading initiatives.

I am particularly proud of EAGA’s ongoing leadership role in the Local Government Power Purchasing Agreement project, which will assist 47 councils across Victoria transition to 100% renewable energy. This transformational initiative will be the largest ever emissions reduction project in the Australian Local Government sector and allow councils to align their money with their values.

Our achievements have been underpinned by the dedication and hard work of our committees and growing team. In particular, I would like to thank our Executive Officer Scott McKenry. Congratulations to all those involved on another excellent year. I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.


Cr Josh Fergeus
City of Monash, EAGA Executive Chair

SUMMARY OF 2019/20 OUTCOMES AGAINST STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Direction	Initiative	Outcomes
Mitigation and adaptation projects	Solar Savers	Under the stewardship of Program Leader Anna Imberger, Solar Savers has successfully established a sustainable business model in its first operating year independent of grant funding. Over 190 solar systems have been installed over the ten participating councils (including five EAGA members) leveraging an investment over \$1.3M in clean energy for households. The Solar Savers team has also led the sector's engagement with the State Government to ensure solar rebates are accessible to vulnerable households, whilst working with a number of partners to explore new opportunities for residential EUAs and rental households.
	Energy Performance Contract (EPC)	A range of complex energy conservation measures have been undertaken at the second tranche of councils (Knox and Whitehorse) participating in the joint EPC program. These measures have been delivered during the COVID period meaning significant rescheduling and changes to the intended implementation approach. Despite these challenges, these measures are now delivering substantial financial savings and a range of other co-benefits in the target facilities, such as thermal comfort and safety. The initiative is led by EAGA's Energy Projects Officer, Russell Boehm.
Capacity building and information exchange	Evaluation of ESD in council buildings & Infrastructure	An independent consultant was engaged to evaluate the extent to which Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) policies and practices are being implemented in council building projects and infrastructure delivery. Outputs of the project included council-specific recommendations to achieve best practice in the way council buildings and infrastructure are planned, designed, built, used and maintained. It also included the development of an ESD policy template to assist and support councils adopt a new policy, or improve an existing policy. Many EAGA members are now progressing new or updated policies as a result of the project.
	Local Government Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA)	In collaboration with the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances and the City of Darebin, EAGA has continued its key role in the establishment of the LG PPA - a landmark initiative that will enable 47 Victorian councils to procure low cost renewable energy from mid 2021 at the conclusion of existing retail contracts. Six EAGA members have committed between 40-100% of their annual electricity load towards the sector transforming program.
Advocacy	Submissions	Five formal advocacy submissions were developed over the course of the year covering key federal and state issues including energy market reform and climate change policy. EAGA enjoyed a critical advocacy success, with the regulator supporting new processes to allow large energy users to generate an income from reducing their energy consumption during critical peak demand periods. This helps the grid be more resilient and sustainable, particularly in the context of ageing thermal plants and the rapid uptake of renewables which have an impact on system security.
	Engagement	EAGA and the Greenhouse Alliances have enabled councils to have a coordinated conversation with the State Government regarding a number of key climate and energy issues. This includes the establishment of a partnership with Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning (DELWP) to oversee the Regional Adaptation Strategy for Greater Melbourne, and secured grant funding to deliver two key initiatives under the plan in the coming year. EAGA has also continued representing councils on a number of key stakeholder groups, including AusNet Services Customer Consultative Committee.

Since its inception in 2012, the region's councils and communities have captured \$2.25 in financial savings for every dollar invested in EAGA's membership fees and projects.


Year at a glance



**13,552
Tonnes
emissions
reduced**



**\$60,000
Grant funding
secured**



**+1MW
Residential
solar installed**



**5 Advocacy
Submissions**



**\$2.2M
savings
from
projects**

TESTIMONIALS FROM OUR MEMBERS

“EAGA provides a valuable platform for Boroondara and fellow members to work collaboratively and achieve outcomes well beyond what can be achieved alone. The knowledge and expertise gained from the Local Government Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA) project was essential for Boroondara to make an informed decision to enter into a PPA for renewable electricity. This has allowed Boroondara to make deep cuts in our corporate emissions and easily meet the targets set in Council's Our Low Carbon Future Strategy. We look forward to another year of rewarding collaboration and future opportunities.”

Daniel Freer, Director Environment and Infrastructure, City of Boroondara

“As Knox works on our next Climate Response Plan, our participation in EAGA will continue to be a crucial alliance that will help achieve many of the outcomes in the plan. These include advocacy on important topics such as energy market reforms as well as stronger policies and programs for our communities to transition towards a low carbon future. At a practical level, the alliance also allows the sharing of resources with other member councils – such as the implementation of the Energy Performance Contract which will see \$1.8m of works delivered with the assistance of a shared project manager with Whitehorse City Council”

Cr John Mortimore, Knox City Council

“Our EAGA membership provides a platform for Glen Eira to advocate with other municipalities to State and Federal Governments on climate change and energy issues that are important to our community. EAGA has also supported the growth of our organisation's capability and provided thought leadership. With EAGA's help we will have an Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Policy for the first time, which establishes a consistent approach to best practice ESD in Council owned and managed buildings and infrastructure. This work has been fundamental in guiding the low carbon approach in new capital works projects within Glen Eira this year.”

Cr Tony Athanasopoulos, Glen Eira City Council

“Through EAGA our internal ESD policies and practices were independently evaluated. Outcomes from this evaluation varied and staff across our councils are already working on how resources can be shared for improved ESD outcomes across the region. At Maroondah we discovered we are doing well but there is some room for improvement so we are already reviewing our policy based on the recommendations. The continued impacts of climate change mean that investing in energy-efficient buildings and infrastructure as part of Covid-19 recovery, and finding and implementing all the savings we can, is going to be even more important than ever.”

Cr Marijke Graham, Maroondah City Council

“Whitehorse City Council appreciates its continued involvement in EAGA through 2019/20 to deliver and participate in impactful projects such as its Energy Performance Contract and the Victoria-wide Local Government Power Purchase Agreement project. Together with the regional ESD Policy for Council Buildings and Infrastructure project, collectively these projects will significantly reduce Whitehorse's emissions into the future. In addition, Whitehorse particularly values the advocacy support for action on climate change, energy efficiency, grant funding applications, and the sharing of knowledge and resources between member Councils.”

Cr Tina Liu, Whitehorse City Council

“The City of Stonnington declared a climate emergency on 17 February 2020, recognising the need for immediate and urgent action on climate change. The collaborative forum provided through EAGA is a key way for us to progress Council's climate emergency commitments and response. The latest annual report highlights a range of important climate response initiatives achieved by the EAGA partnership over the past year including working with the Victorian Government to inform the Regional Adaptation Strategy for Greater Melbourne and gaining funding support for the Resilient Emergency Relief Centres project.”

Simon Holloway, Stonnington City Council

“Yarra Ranges Council unanimously adopted a 10 year Liveable Climate Plan in August this year. This Plan sets out an ambitious yet achievable 10 year 100% renewable energy target and net zero emissions by 2040 along with zero operational spend by 2040. The response to this Plan was unprecedented with a third of our residents exposed to the document. An online engagement strategy during COVID lockdown was critical to the success of the engagement approach. Through support from EAGA we have continued to implement solar on our buildings, explore emergency relief options to support our community with solar and batteries on our major regional facilities and finalise our program of street light conversions to LED. Yarra Ranges continues to have a strong uptake of Environmental Upgrade Agreements with businesses and programs such as Solar Savers are widely accessed across our community. Our commitment to the LG PPA has been secured through the resilience and dedication of the EAGA Team. The collegiate partnership approach fostered through EAGA enables Yarra Ranges to continue to be a community leader and inspire responsible programs that reduce emissions and costs.”

David Harper, Yarra Ranges Council

OUR REGION



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