



About

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 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.

Year at glance

57,000

Tonnes emissions reduced

700KW

Residential solar installed

5

Formal advocacy submissions

\$4.8M

Savings to councils from EAGA projects

1,560

Businesses engaged

Members



Chair Person's Statement

This year saw EAGA's eight member councils renew their commitment to working regionally to address climate change via a new four-year Strategic Plan with a new mission to facilitate the region's transition to net zero emissions by 2030. I was proud to see this step-change in the level of ambition, particularly in response to the emergence of the latest IPCC science demonstrating the urgency of halving global emissions within the next decade and the increase in severe weather events in our region. The local and ongoing impacts of the June 2021 storm events continued throughout the 2021–22 period and have had profound consequences for council across Melbourne's east.



Cr Jude Dwight
Knox City Council,
EAGA Executive Chair

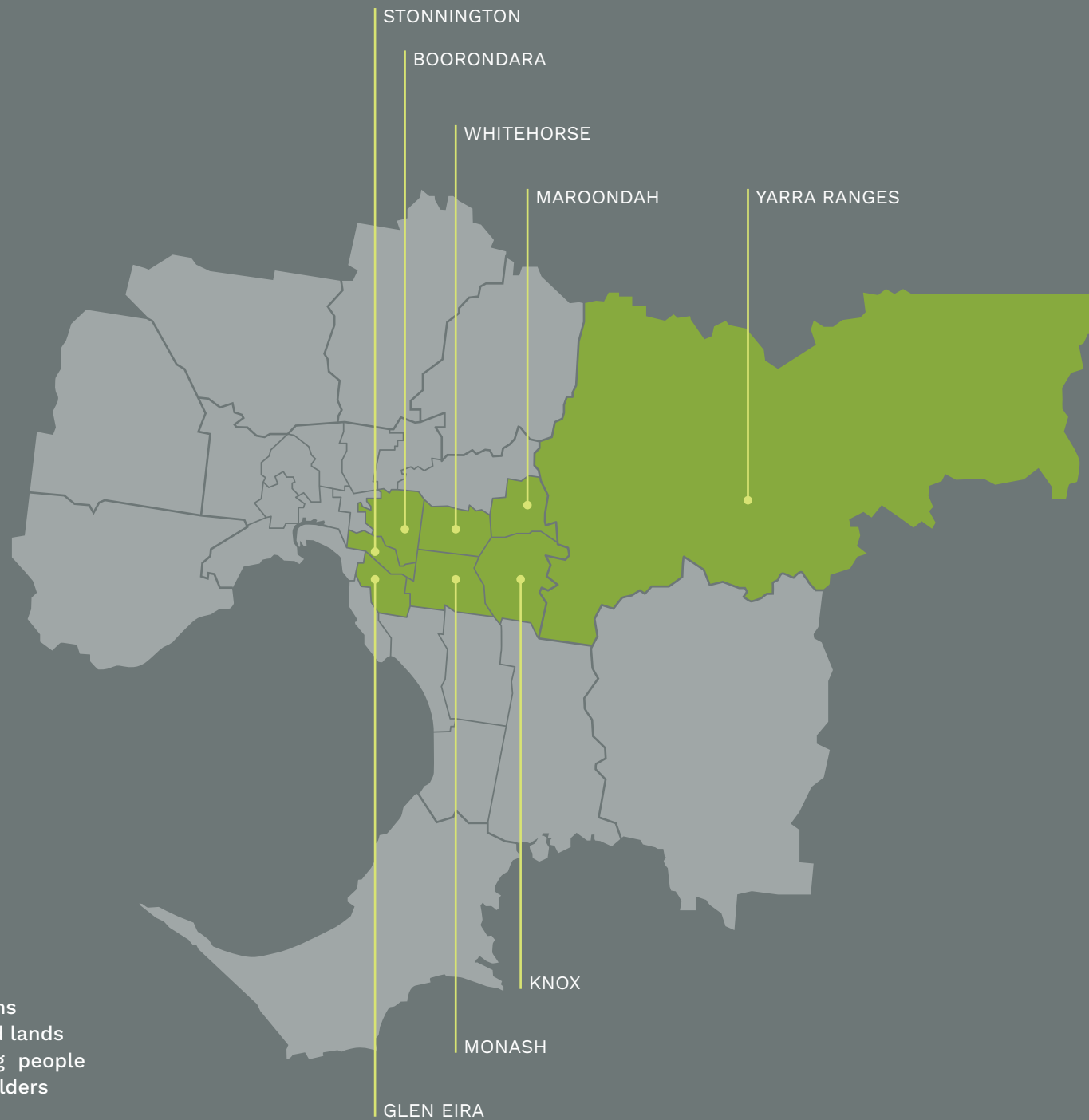
Importantly, EAGA has continued to lead the sector's work into understanding the costs of climate impacts on community assets and infrastructure. The Adaptive Community Assets project will provide critical information on the financial risks to road, buildings, drainage and natural assets for each council in Greater Melbourne. This information will be critical for assisting local governments to incorporate climate change into their long term financial planning and ensure they are meeting their obligations to manage risks under the Local Government Act 2020.

Our members have made significant progress on reducing their corporate emissions, particularly through initiatives such as the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO) which has also delivered substantial cost savings in a time of unprecedented energy market volatility. Whilst this is a great achievement, it's important to keep in mind that the emissions from council operations only represent ~1% of community emissions. Consequently, EAGA has commenced an important body of work to identify the lowest cost emissions reduction opportunities across the region, and then quantify the 'best bang for buck' council led interventions. This work will clearly identify the role of councils and be used to inform our annual planning process and advocacy towards other sectors and levels of government regarding their own roles in the transition to net zero.

The ongoing persistence of EAGA's advocacy work is continuing to deliver key outcomes, particularly in the area of energy market reform, where the incoming Federal government has announced some of the changes to the National Electricity Rules that EAGA has called for in seven formal submissions in the last seven years. This change will finally enable the market's legal framework and its various institutions to expedite the decarbonisation of the grid, rather than hinder it. EAGA was also successful in advocating for other key reforms on embedded networks that will help ensure tenants are protected and the integration of renewables is actively supported.

Our achievements have been underpinned by the dedication and hard work of our committees and growing team. I would like to thank my fellow representatives on the Executive Committee, the Steering Committee and our staff for another excellent year.

Our region



EAGA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land that we work from – the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nations. We pay our respect to elders past and present.

Summary of 2021–22 outcomes against strategic plan

Strategy Direction	Initiatives	Outcomes
Mitigation and adaptation projects	Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO)	Six EAGA members are part of a buying group of 51 councils who have switched to 100% renewable energy via a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Dundonnell and Murra Warra windfarms. The sector changing initiative has slashed electricity bills for the participating councils, delivering energy ~25% cheaper in the first 12 months. EAGA councils have saved 41,000 tonnes of emissions since VECO launched in 2021.
	Energy Savers	Energy Savers is a program assisting businesses undertake energy efficiency upgrades with subsidised appliances and equipment. EAGA secured over \$240,000 in state funding to scale-up the program which engaged with over 1,560 businesses over the year. Over 600 upgrades will save businesses in the region ~\$370,000 annually and cut emissions by 1,300 tonnes. Energy Savers is being administered by Monash City Council on behalf of the eight participating councils.
	Solar Savers	EAGA's longstanding solar program was extended to businesses from 1 July 2021. Solar Savers delivered 0.7MW of rooftop solar in the last 12 months which will cut emissions by over 900 tonnes per year. This included two rates programs involving councils investing their own funds to pay the up-front costs of solar systems on vulnerable households and recouping the funds via rates charges.
Capacity building and information exchange	Electric Vehicle Transition and business case	The project involved a holistic assessment of the financial, social and environmental costs and benefits for fast-tracking the electrification of council vehicle fleets. The analysis showed that the cost of transition was on average only 17% more expensive than business as usual (based on current pricing) but this cost gap is expected close each year, reaching price parity by 2030.
	Adaptive Community Assets	The first phase of this DELWP-funded project delivered a cost benefit analysis framework for councils to undertake business case assessments of the best adaptation options for community assets and infrastructure. The project was delivered in partnership with four metropolitan Greenhouse Alliances.
	Community Net Zero Technical Analysis	This project seeks to identify opportunities councils can take to reduce emissions from the community sector, which accounts for around 99% of the region's emissions. The technical analysis quantifies the emissions profile of each municipality and identifies the lowest cost opportunities for the region to transition to net zero by 2030. The analysis demonstrates that the region can capture significant financial savings in the process and that councils have a key role to play in unlocking these opportunities, particularly in planning, waste and transport.
Advocacy	Energy market reform	After seven years of advocacy by EAGA other energy advocates, the Federal Government will finally revise the National Electricity Objective (NEO) to include emissions reductions. EAGA also successfully advocated for changes to regulation on embedded networks requiring all networks to be powered by 100% renewable energy, as well as strengthening tenants' rights Advocacy outcomes from previous years continue to deliver financial savings to councils in the 2021–22 period.
	Planning for a Safe Climate	EAGA partnered with the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances and the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) to deliver a state-wide campaign to reform Victoria's planning system. The first stage of the campaign involved building the case for reform through an independent assessment of planning policy, legislation, regulation and practices. 64 of the state's 79 councils are involved in this campaign, representing one of the largest, most coordinated advocacy campaigns led by the local government sector.

Testimonials from our members

“Last year Boroondara Council approved the adoption of a very ambitious Climate Action Plan and declared a Climate Emergency. Both of these steps have been immensely important in creating a corporate culture centred on climate change mitigation and adaptation. This year we have progressed implementing key aspects of our plans achieving net carbon neutrality across Council’s operations and delivering key community projects to drive down emissions from this emissions-intensive sector. These community activities include the creation of a leadership training course for our ‘Climate Champions’ and the establishment of a community of interest group. Boroondara receives invaluable benefit from its EAGA membership. Sharing knowledge allows us to share challenges, thinking and solutions in collaboration with other member Councils. A highlight for me was the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances Conference in April 2022 where hundreds of practitioners and decision-makers came together to broaden our networking base and discuss complex issues with top experts in many fields.”

**Cr Wes Gault,
City of Boroondara**

“In 2021, Glen Eira City Council adopted Our Climate Emergency Response Strategy 2021–25 (Dhumbali Wurrungi-biik Parbin-ata). Thanks to our membership of EAGA, we have made significant inroads to achieving the key goals of this plan – to achieve net zero emissions for council by 2025 and for our community by 2030. EAGA membership allows our community to reduce their emissions through key programs like Solar Savers and Energy Savers. In addition, the strategic direction provided by EAGA allows Council to deliver key emissions reduction projects like the Electric Vehicle Fleet Transition, which is accelerating Council’s shift away from fossil fuel to electric vehicles. EAGA drives collaboration, knowledge -sharing and joint initiatives across Councils through its strong community of practice and we look forward to continuing this successful partnership in 2023.”

**Cr David Zyngier,
Glen Eira City Council**

“In 2022, Maroondah City Council adopted its new Sustainability Strategy 2022–31. The Strategy recognises the importance of maintaining Council’s carbon neutrality, ongoing climate action across Council operations, and the need to work with the community to deliver sustainability outcomes. Work has now begun on our new Climate Change Plan. Our ongoing participation in EAGA plays a central role in supporting Council’s ongoing sustainability and advocacy objectives, and provides valuable opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing across the eastern region. The projects undertaken by EAGA over the last 12 months, including the Electric Vehicle Transition Business Case, Adaptation Roadmap, and the Community Net Zero Technical Analysis, provide valuable direction and technical information that can be incorporated into Council’s future climate change planning.”

**Cr Marijke Graham,
Maroondah City Council**

“Monash continues to benefit from our membership of the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action. We are taking part in the Victorian Energy Collaboration which has been instrumental to achieving the goals set by Council’s Net Zero Action Plan by allowing Council to transition to 100% renewable energy. Monash residents directly benefit from access to the Solar Savers program, another key project facilitated by EAGA. EAGA’s relentless advocacy on a range of matters, including the climate impact of our built environment, continue to support and amplify our voice to state and federal governments.”

**Cr Josh Fergeus,
City of Monash**

Testimonials from our members CONTINUED

“Our EAGA membership provides a platform for Whitehorse City Council to advocate with other municipalities and Victorian Greenhouse Alliances to state and federal government on climate change and energy issues that are important to our community. EAGA and key partners like the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment, continues to advocate to the Victorian State Government on the Elevating Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Targets project and Planning for a Safe Climate campaign in an effort to cut greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment. The Council-endorsed Whitehorse ESD Policy for Council Buildings and Infrastructure was developed with the support of EAGA. This policy demonstrates how EAGA membership has assisted Council in achieving its ongoing commitment to sustainable assets and infrastructure. As Council develops its next Sustainability Strategy 2030 – Taking Climate Action, Council looks forward to working with EAGA to reduce community emissions, which account for the vast majority of the municipality’s emissions. Whitehorse is excited to be a part of this collective and collaborative effort into 2022/23.”

**Cr Trudy Skilbeck,
Whitehorse City Council**

“By working collaboratively, EAGA membership allows councils to deliver ambitious, climate change projects and outcomes. This year EAGA has demonstrated value to Stonnington through three key projects:

1. The Electric Vehicle Fleet Transition Business Case, which will help us to understand how we can reduce our emissions following VECO;
2. Recycled Content in Council Buildings and Infrastructure, which has helped us to identify future opportunities to embed circular economy approaches into council infrastructure projects; and
3. Community New Zero Emissions Analysis, which will help us decide which community interventions will deliver the strongest impact.

We have a responsibility to act on climate change and to lead local action. Around the world, local governments have been leaders in driving action. We can do this more impactfully and effectively by collaborating with other councils to share knowledge, resources, advocacy and passion. This is the role of EAGA and why it is an important partnership to Stonnington for meeting our community’s expectations on Climate Action.”

**Cr Kate Hely,
Stonnington City Council**

“Yarra Ranges Council’s 2020–30 Liveable Climate Plan has set ambitious targets and actions aimed to protect the health and wellbeing of our community from the risks and impacts of climate change. A fundamental means of achieving these is through regional collaborative opportunities, such as those delivered by EAGA. The scale of advocacy work and research into adaptation opportunities that EAGA has delivered this year is far beyond the reach of what a single Council could achieve.

Working together with other Councils in our region means we can save Council officer time and consultant fees to get to accurate information and best value results for our community. Community want a safe climate future and they want to move toward that in a coordinated and efficient way. EAGA gives us this opportunity. I’ve seen excellent outcomes through our involvement.”

**Cr Johanna Skelton,
Yarra Ranges Council**



Contact

Scott McKenry

EAGA Executive Officer

M. 0431 133 592

E. scott.mckenry@maroondah.vic.gov.au

www.eaga.com.au