

EAGA

EASTERN ALLIANCE
FOR GREENHOUSE ACTION

Annual Report 2022-23



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

~60,000
Tonnes of
emissions saved

~1,300kW
Residential
solar installed

8
Formal advocacy
submissions

\$5.3M
Savings from
EAGA projects

1,200+
Businesses
engaged

Impact

Since its inception in 2012, the net benefits of EAGA's work in the region has amounted to ~7 times the amount invested by its member councils in the form of membership fees and project costs.

Members



Chair Person's Statement

Against the backdrop of developments in climate policy at the federal and state levels, EAGA continues to provide leadership in climate action at the local level in Melbourne's east. This year, EAGA's eight-member councils have sustained their collaboration on several projects that address the causes and effects of climate change.

EAGA projects continue to deliver clear financial and environmental outcomes for our member councils. The twelve-month evaluation of the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO) shows councils have saved 25% on delivered energy costs and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 172,000 tonnes. The Business Renewable Buying Group (BRBG), another initiative supported by EAGA's member councils, completed its pilot in June. The businesses engaged in the pilot finalised contracts for a 100% renewable energy supply over the next five years. These contracts will result in the mitigation of over 16,000 tonnes of emissions. EAGA will continue to support the next phase of the project, which looks to expand Victoria-wide and target larger group purchases.

Efforts are increasingly focusing on driving down emissions within the community. EAGA coordinated a technical analysis that showed the most cost-effective opportunities for emissions reduction across Melbourne's eastern municipalities. The analysis reveals the potential for the region to achieve savings of \$3–\$5 billion by transitioning to net-zero emissions by 2030. The report also underscores that councils can unlock 7%–15% of this potential through various interventions, such as urban planning, landfill waste diversion and supporting the transition to EVs. Nonetheless, the analysis underlined that all sectors of the economy and community have a role to play in decarbonisation – affirming the need for tackling emissions in a coordinated manner.

Phase II of the Adaptive Community Assets project continued EAGA's commitment to supporting climate change adaptation. The project's development of financial estimates of climate change costs to council assets is crucial to helping councils understand their risk exposure. EAGA's members will support future project phases to capture the cost of climate effects as this evolves.

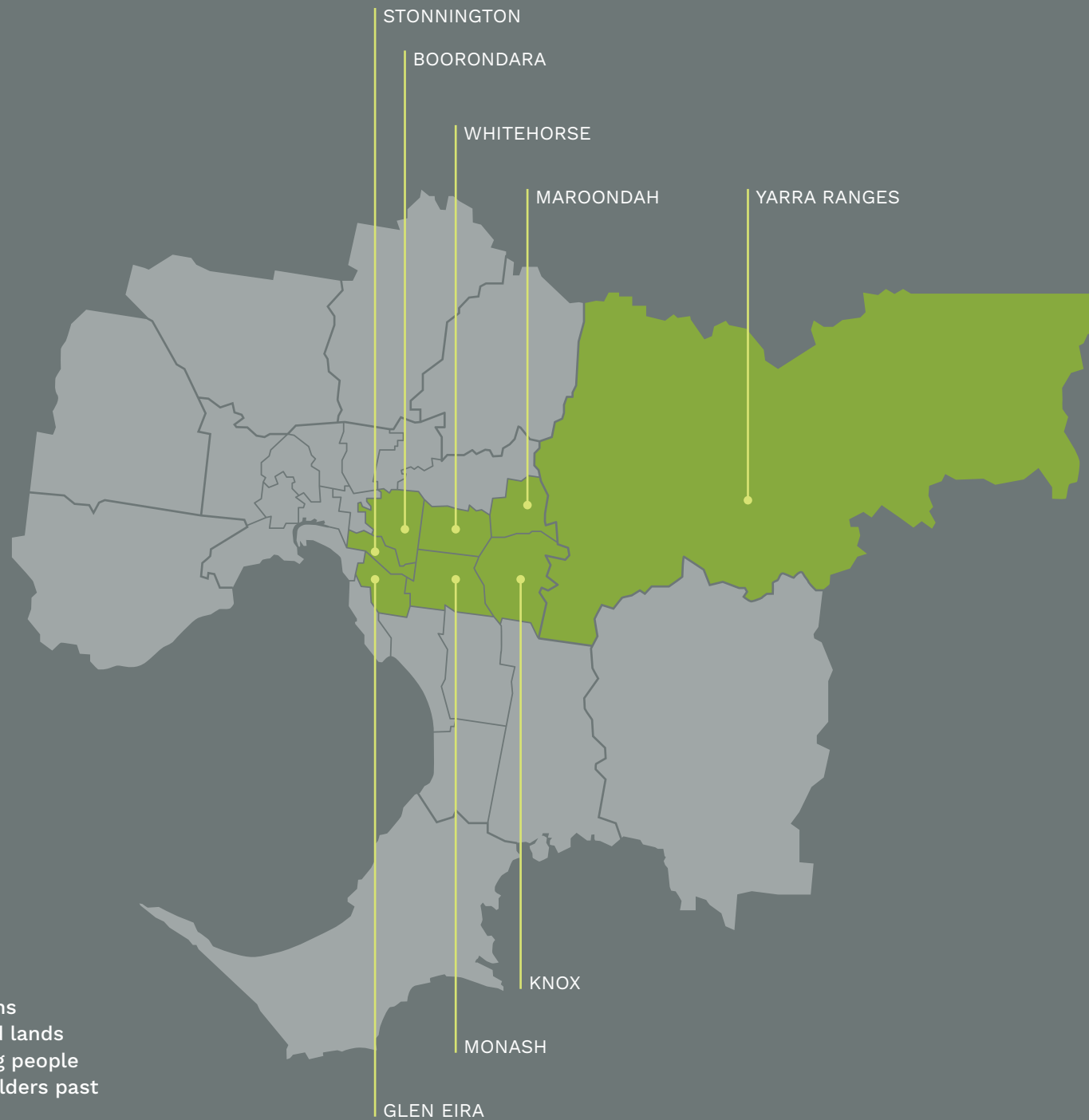
Finally, once again this year, EAGA's advocacy endeavours, united with the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances, have yielded substantial impact through coordinated efforts aimed at state and federal governments. This included leading a state-wide campaign, along with the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE), to embed climate change into all planning decisions. 65 of Victoria's 79 councils participated in the Planning for a Safe Climate campaign – one of the largest local government campaigns in recent times. It involved engaging with MPs in the lead up to the 2022 Victorian state election, resulting in crossbench MPs raising the campaign in parliament.

I want to thank my fellow representatives on the Executive Committee, the Steering Committee and our staff for their hard work in achieving these important outcomes at a time when such partnerships across many sectors are vital.



Cr Jude Dwight
Knox City Council,
EAGA Executive Chair

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 2022–23 Outcomes Against Strategic Plan

Strategy Direction	Initiatives	Outcomes
Mitigation and adaptation projects	Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO)	A 12-month evaluation of VECO demonstrated that the transformational initiative provided 51 councils with 25% cheaper electricity through 100% renewable energy. Councils saved approximately 172,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in the period, which is equivalent to powering up to 35,000 homes or taking 66,000 cars off the road each year. Six EAGA members are participating in the project, which was initiated by EAGA and the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances and was led by Glen Eira City Council for two years.
	Energy Savers	Energy Savers is a program assisting businesses undertake energy efficiency upgrades with subsidised appliances and equipment. In 2022–23, the program engaged with 1,218 businesses to help cut their emissions. Moreover, the program successfully assisted 26 businesses across the region to receive over \$0.5M in federal funding to undertake energy efficiency upgrades. Energy Savers is being administered by Monash City Council on behalf of the eight participating councils.
	Solar Savers	Solar Savers has continued to deliver substantial financial savings and emissions reductions for households across the region. The program delivered ~1,300kW of rooftop solar in the last 12 months which will cut emissions by over 1,500 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. Maroondah Council has continued its leadership role by administering the program and hosting the Solar Savers team.
Capacity building and information exchange	Adaptive Community Assets	The second phase of this DEECA-funded project developed financial estimates of the costs of climate change impacts on each asset class for all participating councils. It found damages to council assets will increase about 150% by 2050 and 350% by 2100. This ‘baseline’ or ‘base case’ is a critical first step in a cost-benefit analysis framework for assets and assists councils to understand their risk exposure to these assets without climate change adaptation. The project was delivered in partnership with four metropolitan Greenhouse Alliances.
	Community Net Zero Technical Analysis	EAGA undertook a technical analysis project to quantify the lowest cost emissions reduction opportunities across the municipalities in Melbourne’s east. The report examined the various interventions that councils can undertake to unlock these opportunities. The analysis demonstrates that the region can save \$3–\$5 billion by transitioning to net zero emissions by 2030. The report identifies that councils can unlock up to 15% of this potential through a range of different interventions, but all sectors of the community have a role in decarbonisation.
	Victorian Greenhouse Alliances Conference	EAGA officers played a key organisational role in the conference, held on 4 August 2023. The event attracted over 400 attendees – the majority from local government – for a day of learning and networking. Session topics included the role of councils in facilitating emissions reductions in the transport sector, the key lessons from the Neighbourhood Battery Initiative, and improving community resilience in the face of climate change impacts.
Advocacy	Low income and vulnerable households	AusNet approved EAGA’s proposal to fund an electrification pilot for vulnerable households. The pilot seeks to better understand the impact of electrification on households, both from a network perspective and a vulnerable customer perspective. The energy provider will allocate \$1.5M to the initiative over the next couple of years. AusNet will partner with councils to facilitate engagement with households and leverage existing on-ground programs and campaigns focusing on electrification, such as Solar Savers.
	Submissions and Engagement	EAGA and the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances have generated further impact through coordinated advocacy to state and federal government. EAGA’s submissions included providing eight key recommendations to the review of the Australian Carbon Credit Units, three recommendations for amendments to the Safeguard Mechanism, and a response to the state parliamentary inquiry into the 2022 flood event in Victoria.

Testimonials From Our Members

“Last year, Boroondara City Council both declared a Climate Emergency and voted in ambitious Climate Action and Implementation Plans. Assisted by these documents, Council has achieved net zero across its corporate activities but progress towards our community targets, which represent 98%–99% of the municipality’s greenhouse gas emissions, was very disappointing. This year, however, working with motivated local groups and many individuals from our community, we established the Electrify Boroondara Alliance. This community-led organisation is actively supported by all three levels of government, Rotary, schools, local sporting clubs and religious organisations. Its activities culminated in an Electrification Expo in October, with nearly 50 stalls, technical talks and Q+A sessions and displays of a wide range of electric-powered vehicles. As we focused on making a meaningful impact on emissions through local efforts, it was great to have EAGA working tirelessly on our behalf on issues that required both regional and state-wide focus. Great work EAGA, thanks.”

**Cr Wes Gault,
City of Boroondara**

“Glen Eira’s membership of EAGA has provided tremendous support as we work to achieve the goals laid out in Our Climate Emergency Response Strategy 2021–25 | Dhumbali Wurrungi-biik Parbin-ata, particularly for achieving net zero Council emissions by 2025 and supporting our community to do the same by 2030, and to protect our community from the worst impacts of climate change. Examples of how EAGA has supported these efforts include the Adaptive Community Assets project, which has highlighted the impacts of climate change and how these will increase in coming decades; Solar Savers and Energy Savers, which assist our residents to reduce their carbon impact; and an assessment of opportunities to support communities to reach net zero emissions, which demonstrates that such a goal is achievable and provides guidance on how we can support our community to reach the ambitious 2030 target.”

**Cr Simone Zmood,
Glen Eira City Council**

“Maroondah’s participation with EAGA has played an essential role in achieving the outcomes of our Sustainability Strategy and the development of the new Climate Change Plan. Supplying Council facilities with 100% renewable energy as the result of the VECO agreement was one of the greatest achievements of working with EAGA to reduce Council’s emissions in the last financial year. EAGA provides an excellent platform to work collaboratively with other councils on projects such as Adaptive Community Assets and Community Net Zero Technical Analysis. Solar Savers and Energy Savers programs will continue to assist Maroondah’s community to reduce their emissions. We look forward to being involved in future projects and advocacy to provide a sustainable future for councils and our community. Thank you EAGA staff for your hard work!”

Cr Suzy Stojanovic, Maroondah City Council

“The work of the Alliance continues to deliver strong returns for our local community. Our membership has been instrumental in delivering our Net Zero Carbon commitment. To date, we have achieved a 78% reduction in GHG emissions as well as realising significant annual savings which have been reinvested in other community projects. We’re also well underway with our Energy Performance Contract which is delivering significant improvements in the energy efficiency of our major buildings and over 500MW of new solar on council properties. With EAGA’s support, Monash has been able to deliver a second successful year of the Business Energy Saver program to over 1,200 local businesses. Finally, EAGA’s targeted and highly effective advocacy continues to drive policy change at the state and federal level.”

Cr Josh Fergeus, City of Monash

Testimonials From Our Members

CONTINUED

“Whitehorse has actively participated and further developed an understanding of how we can develop and improve our next Climate Response Strategy.”

**Cr Blair Barker,
Whitehorse City Council**

“Working together for change’ is a key pillar of Stonnington’s Climate Emergency Action Plan. In 2022–23, EAGA membership has continued to enable us to achieve more ambitious climate change outcomes. EAGA’s value was particularly demonstrated this year through the numerous advocacy opportunities, ranging from the Planning for a Safe Climate campaign, Fuel Efficiency Standards, GreenPower review and updates to the National Construction Code. Recognising the increasing impacts of climate change on Council and our community, it is more important than ever for us to lead local action. The Adaptive Community Assets project assisted Council to develop our understanding of asset performance in a changing climate, and to take a first step in quantifying the future costs of adaption and climate resilience.”

**Cr Kate Hely,
City of Stonnington**

“EAGA employs a ‘stronger together’ approach to drive positive change – being part of the Alliance ensures a sustained and coordinated effort. In 2022–23, Yarra Ranges Council provided Fleet Transition recommendations to others, saving them money and offering direction. We, in turn, benefited from various projects led by fellow councils. EAGA projects continue to yield cost savings for communities and governments, with immediate and long-term social benefits from emissions reduction. For example, I’m hopeful that the Adaptive Community Assets project will continue to provide councils valuable guidance on resource allocation and infrastructure changes to address increasing climate challenges. It has been a privilege to be part of EAGA’s Executive Committee and be heartened by the positive stories in the climate context.”

**Cr Johanna Skelton,
Yarra Ranges Council**



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