

# EAGA

EASTERN ALLIANCE  
FOR GREENHOUSE ACTION

# Annual Report 2023-24



# Impact

Since its inception in 2012, the net financial benefits of EAGA's work in the region has amounted to ~8 times the amount invested by its member councils in the form of membership fees and project costs.

The impact of EAGA's initiatives often extend beyond the region. Councils outside of EAGA have saved over \$9M and reduced emissions by 216,000 tonnes the past 12 months.

## This year

## 2021–25 MOU Period

## Forecast for 2025–29

Three years so far...

Savings locked in from existing initiatives

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**\$6M**  
savings to councils  
and communities

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**\$14.5M**  
savings

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**\$12M**  
savings

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**63,000 tonnes+**  
emission reductions

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**183,000 tonnes+**  
emissions reductions

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**217,000 tonnes+**  
emissions reductions

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**13**  
advocacy submissions

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**25**  
advocacy submissions

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**1,300+**  
businesses engaged

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**1.1MW+**  
community solar  
delivered

# Chairperson's Statement

Over the past 12 months, there have been significant signs of progress in Australia's commitment to climate action. At COP28 in the UAE, the Australian government made a crucial decision to join the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP). This commitment paves the way for enhanced cooperation on climate action between national, state, and local governments. More recently, the Federal Government recently announced a substantial investment of \$22.7 billion in the Future Made in Australia package, specifically aimed at fostering the development of green manufacturing within our country. EAGA was one of many stakeholders who helped advocate for this significant commitment to transform our economy.



**Cr Suzy Stojanovic**  
Maroondah City Council,  
EAGA Executive Chair

EAGA's projects continue to deliver state-wide impacts. The second round of the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO) will expand to encompass 60 councils, including seven EAGA member councils. The initiative is the largest emissions reduction project ever undertaken within the sector and is already delivering substantial cost savings for councils across Victoria.

EAGA spearheaded the sector's assessment of battery storage opportunities through the ground-breaking Greenhouse Alliance Neighbourhood Battery Investigation Metropolitan (GANBIM) project, conducted in collaboration with the Yarra Energy Foundation. This pioneering initiative delivered detailed business cases for neighbourhood batteries in 22 council-selected locations, all provided to the participating councils at no cost.

EAGA's Solar Savers and Business Energy Savers programs continued to help households and businesses save money, while reducing emissions by facilitating access to subsidised solar and energy efficiency products. Notably, this year saw a significant milestone with the expansion of Solar Savers to introduce heat pumps and split system air conditioners and support the growing electrification ambitions of councils. Another outstanding achievement was the Energy Savers team securing \$310,000 in federal funding for energy efficiency upgrades for 13 of the businesses they engaged with.

Throughout the year, EAGA and the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances (VGAs) have been highly proactive in the advocacy space. The VGAs have coordinated a dozen submissions, responses, and letters, demonstrating a strong commitment to driving sustainability and climate resilience for local governments and communities. Our advocacy has called for better collaboration on climate action across all levels of government.

Our past advocacy efforts have yielded tangible results over the last 12 months. The recent amendments to Victoria's Planning and Environment Act (March 2024) were a direct result of our 'planning for a safe climate' advocacy campaign. As a result, planning authorities will need to explicitly consider greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and climate resilience in day-to-day planning processes. Additionally, our advocacy on embedded network policy has delivered significant annual reduction of 1,706 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions across the state.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my fellow representatives on the Executive Committee, the council officers on the Steering Committee, and our dedicated staff for their hard work in achieving these important outcomes. Their commitment and efforts have been invaluable. Together, we have made significant progress in addressing the challenges we face, and I am confident that our continued collaboration will lead to further achievements in the future.

# 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.

## 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 2023–24 Outcomes Against Strategic Plan

Strategy Direction	Initiatives	Outcomes
<b>Mitigation and adaptation projects</b>	<b>Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO)</b>	VECO is the largest emissions reduction project ever undertaken within the local government sector. Since commencing in 2021, councils across Victoria have saved ~600,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and ~\$10M in cost savings. In the past 12 months VECO has expanded to encompass 60 councils, including one additional EAGA member. EAGA councils have cut their emissions by 41,000 tonnes and reduced costs by \$1M over the 2023/24 period.
	<b>Energy Savers</b>	Energy Savers is a program assisting businesses undertake energy efficiency upgrades with subsidised appliances and equipment. In 2023/24, the program engaged with 1371 businesses across the region. Moreover, the program successfully assisted 13 businesses to receive \$310,000 in federal funding to undertake energy efficiency upgrades. The Energy Savers team have transitioned to Knox City Council after being hosted by the City of Monash since 2021.
	<b>Solar Savers</b>	EAGA's Solar Savers program has expanded its membership and grown its program scope to introduce heat pumps and split system air conditioners as new offerings. During the 2023/24 financial year, Solar Savers successfully facilitated the installation of nearly 200 solar PV systems with a combined capacity of ~1,130kW of clean power generation. Maroondah City Council continues to play a leadership role in hosting the Solar Savers team.
<b>Capacity building and information exchange</b>	<b>Reporting FOGO Impacts</b>	EAGA carried out a review and analysis of councils' approach to quantifying and communicating the greenhouse impacts of their FOGO programs. The project identified a number of opportunities for improving the approach to data analysis and emissions calculation methodologies, laying the foundation for second phase, which will provide tools and guidance for councils to publicly report the emissions reduction impact of their FOGO programs.
	<b>GANBIM</b>	EAGA lead coordination of the Greenhouse Alliance Neighbourhood Battery Investigation (GANBIM) project, which delivered detailed business cases for neighbourhood batteries in council-selected locations. The project was funded by the Victorian Government's Neighbourhood Battery Initiative (NBI) and involves no cost for the participating councils. Participating councils now have the opportunity to progress to the implementation stage by applying for a 100 Neighbourhood Batteries grant.
	<b>Victorian Greenhouse Alliances Conference</b>	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. The 2024 conference on 30 August will be a similar size with session topics included the role of sub-national governments in COP, enhancing community resilience to climate change effects, and using nature-based solutions to meet climate mitigation and adaptation goals.
<b>Advocacy</b>	<b>Low income and vulnerable households</b>	AusNet approved EAGA's proposal to allocate \$1.5M to 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. AusNet will partner with councils and other community groups to facilitate engagement with households and leverage existing on-ground programs and campaigns focusing on electrification, such as Solar Savers.
	<b>Planning reform</b>	The Victorian Greenhouse Alliances' <i>Planning for a Safe Climate</i> advocacy campaign has led to the recent amendments to Victoria's Planning and Environment Act 1987. As a result, the amendments "require consideration of climate change when making planning decisions about the use and development of land under the act and for other purposes, which includes greenhouse gas emissions, reductions targets and increased climate resilience" – a key ask of the campaign.
	<b>Submissions and Engagement</b>	In 2023/24, EAGA collaborated with various Victorian Greenhouse Alliances on 13 advocacy initiatives. These efforts encompassed submissions to consultations and inquiries, as well as letters addressed to state and federal ministers. EAGA took the lead in drafting four of these endeavours, which included responses to the Climate Change Authority's Consultation on 2024 Issues Paper and the Federal Inquiry into Residential Electrification, and letters advocating for a strategic partnership between state, local and federal government to address the challenges of climate change.

# Testimonials From Our Members

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“Boroondara adopted our Climate Action Plan in 2021 and our second Implementation Plan in late 2023. EAGA projects such as the Solar Savers program are crucial for Boroondara to achieve our Climate Action Plan target of 60% community emissions reduction by 2030. We recognise that the tireless efforts of EAGA in advocating for policy change, community initiatives and programs provide immense value to our region. With EAGA’s support, Boroondara strives to continue our work with the community to achieve our climate action goals and drive emissions reductions, climate change adaptation and resilience.”

**Cr Wes Gault,  
City of Boroondara**

“In 2020, Glen Eira City Council declared a climate emergency, recognising the scale and urgency of the climate crisis and the need for all levels of government to work with our community to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Our membership of EAGA has been instrumental in our efforts to act on these commitments. Examples of the critical contributions that EAGA has made to our successful delivery of Our Climate Emergency Response Strategy 2021–25 | Dhumbali Wurrungi-biik Parbin-ata include – but are not limited to – enabling Glen Eira to source 100% of our electricity from renewable sources via the VECO partnership; the Adaptive Community Assets project, which is guiding our work to adapt to the ongoing impacts of climate change; facilitating Glen Eira residents and businesses to reduce their emissions through the Business Renewables Buying Group, Solar Savers and Energy Savers; and giving councils and our communities a voice through the Alliance’s ongoing engagement with state and federal government. We look forward to another year of successful partnership and achievements in 2024-25!”

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

“Knox City Council benefits greatly from participating as a part of EAGA. Through EAGA, each council is able to amplify our efforts and achieve things that would otherwise be difficult as a single council working in isolation, especially through effective advocacy and large-scale regional projects. The sharing of expertise and experience among members also helps improve efficiencies and assists with our effectiveness in implementing Knox’s Climate Response Plan. This year EAGA played a significant part in supporting Knox to sign up to 100% renewable energy with the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO), which will result in council emissions being reduced by 35% (2,800 tonnes per year) from July 2025. Energy Savers and Solar Savers also continue to support the business and residential communities to electrify, and through the support of EAGA, Knox has agreed to host the business-focused Energy Savers program from July this year. We look forward to continuing this significant strategic and project work with the alliance, at a time when collaborative efforts to meet net zero with our communities are more important than ever.”

**Cr Sorina Grasso, Knox City Council**

“Our membership of EAGA continues to deliver both environmental and financial dividends for residents and ratepayers in Monash. Above and beyond the practical benefits of programs like Solar Savers, the Alliance’s advocacy efforts continue to amplify our voice on behalf of local people, highlighting the impact of global heating on the way we live and our prospects for the future. Put simply, being a member of the Alliance has been critical to our strategic objectives to proactively address climate change, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations, and to take action to reduce emissions across the Monash community.”

**Cr Josh Fergeus, City of Monash**

# Testimonials From Our Members CONTINUED

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“In the past year, our collaboration with EAGA has driven numerous successful projects. EAGA’s Community Net Zero Emissions Analysis has guided the development of climate mitigation initiatives within Whitehorse City Council’s newly adopted Climate Response Strategy 2023-30. This follows council’s Climate Emergency declaration in September 2022. These efforts reinforce our determination to achieve net zero corporate emissions by 2032, and our pursuit of net zero community emissions by 2040. With this, council has joined Solar Savers this year to continue to support its community access solar and energy efficiency upgrades. In addition, council has progressively transitioned its purchase of 100% renewable electricity from VECO and from 1 July 2024 will purchase all its electricity requirements via this joint initiative. EAGA’s collaboration with the wider Victorian Greenhouse Alliances and other alliances such as the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment has been instrumental to further its advocacy efforts and reach – from New Vehicle Efficiency Standards to the Victorian Inquiry into Climate Resilience, this continued partnership has allowed for impactful submissions to be made, raising the profile of our communities’ role in contributing towards climate mitigation and adaptation.”

**Cr Amanda McNeil,  
Whitehorse City Council**

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“In the 2023–24 period, our membership with EAGA proved instrumental in driving our efforts to achieve more ambitious climate change outcomes, aligning with Stonnington’s Climate Emergency Action Plan. The value of EAGA was particularly evident this year through the multitude of advocacy opportunities it provided. From responding to the federal government’s First Nations Clean Energy Strategy Consultation Paper to a submission informed by the perspective of councils to the Victorian Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services, EAGA facilitated our active participation in crucial discussions. Furthermore, with Stonnington joining Solar Savers in 2024, we are excited to witness the program’s benefits in facilitating the installation of high-quality solar PV systems for more Stonnington residents.”

**Cr Mike Scott,  
City of Stonnington**

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“Thank you to EAGA officers and all staff involved from across the councils for the year of achievements. Climate change is a cost-of-living issue already, from heatwave energy spikes to food price shocks or home damage after flooding. It has been great to be part of a group reducing long-term climate change impacts and getting benefits for community members now. Councils are always listening and working to respond to issues and opportunities we hear from residents and ratepayers, and see in the natural environment. EAGA also helps us to advocate where these align with state and federal goals for meaningful climate action. Federal funding for community batteries and the EV charger roll out have been two areas it has been important to have our unique regional perspective on in the last year. EAGA helps us work together to save time and money in reducing greenhouse gases and achieving community benefits. In a warming (and tight fiscal) environment, this collaboration becomes even more important.”

**Cr Johanna Skelton,  
Yarra Ranges Council**



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