

Yarra Ranges Council



Federal Government Pre-Budget Submission 2023-2024



Contents

Mayor's message	3
About Yarra Ranges	4
Road Sealing Program	5
Roads for the Community Initiative	5
Economic Development and Investment	7
Ridges and Rivers	7
Yarra Valley Trail, Stage 2A	8
Warburton Mountain Bike Destination Stage 1	9
Connected and Healthy Communities	11
Telecommunications	11
Mental Health	12
Sustainable Environment	13
Greening the Suburbs	13
Firestick Cultural Burning Program	15
Biolinks and Regional Pest Animal Program	16
Energy Transition	17
Sport and Recreation	18
Sport and Recreation	18

Mayor's message



On behalf of Yarra Ranges Council, I am pleased to make this pre-budget submission to the Australian Government, calling for support to deliver projects and initiatives that drive positive outcomes for our communities locally and nationally.

Yarra Ranges is a unique region that stretches across urban and rural areas in outer eastern Melbourne, with over 55 townships. From densely populated suburbs to regional towns in the Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Valley, our communities are rich with potential.

However, our communities also have diverse needs and face acute challenges, particularly in relation to climate change and disaster risks.

Our people and our natural environment were severely impacted by the devastating June storms in 2021, during which 25,000 trees were lost and over 79 properties were destroyed. It forever changed our landscape and reminded us of just how vulnerable our residents and natural environment are.

With targeted investment from the Australian Government, our region has the potential to lead the way in developing resilient townships – with better roads that improve emergency access, enhanced tree canopy,

stronger telecommunications, Indigenous cultural burning to reduce fire risk and a range of programs enabling the transition to a renewable economy.

We're also calling for support on initiatives that will enhance our region as a destination of choice for visitors nationally and internationally. With borders re-opened and more Australians opting to 'enjoy their own backyard', Ridges and Rivers will create a world-class tourism offering and deliver positive economic outcomes for local communities.

With Australian Government support, we can also broaden access to mental health services, and fund key sport and recreation infrastructure that supports our communities both day-to-day and through emergencies.

Council has worked closely with the community to develop a strong vision for the future of Yarra Ranges as a thriving and resilient region – the best place in Australia to live, work and visit.

We look forward to bringing this vision to life with the support of the Australian Government and building on our history of successful partnerships.

Cr Jim Child

Mayor, Yarra Ranges Council

About Yarra Ranges

Yarra Ranges is a significant place in Victoria. Located on Melbourne's eastern edge, it is a hinterland that endures as 'Melbourne's Playground' with its vibrant local economy and premier tourist destinations.

Our region covers approximately 2,500km², stretching from densely populated urban areas into the foothills, agricultural valleys and forested areas of the Great Dividing Ranges.

It is globally recognised for its natural environment and diverse habitats, with an array of national parks, state forests and private gardens, while being under an hour's drive from Melbourne's CBD.



With this immense potential, we must ensure our communities have equitable access to services and infrastructure, our local business have the right supports to prosper, our townships evolve sustainably, and our natural environment is protected and enhanced.

Yarra Ranges' advocacy priorities align with the objectives of Yarra Ranges' 2021-25 Council Plan and other key strategies – documents shaped by our community, to support and enable our residents, local economy and businesses to survive and bounce back following the challenges of the past three years.

Roads for the Community Initiative

The Ask

An additional \$93.3 million provided to the program from 2023/24 to 2026/27 to fulfil commitments made to the community.

An additional funding allocation will be required thereafter to complete the overall \$300 million program.

Cardinia Shire and Yarra Ranges are local government areas (LGAs) located on Melbourne's eastern fringe.

Home to a combined population of over 280,000 people, the LGAs stretch from the densely populated outer suburbs of Melbourne, into the Dandenong Ranges, Yarra Valley, forested areas of the Great Dividing Range and the edge of Westernport Bay.

While both metropolitan LGAs are home to long-established communities, there are over 1,500 kms of unsealed roads across the area.

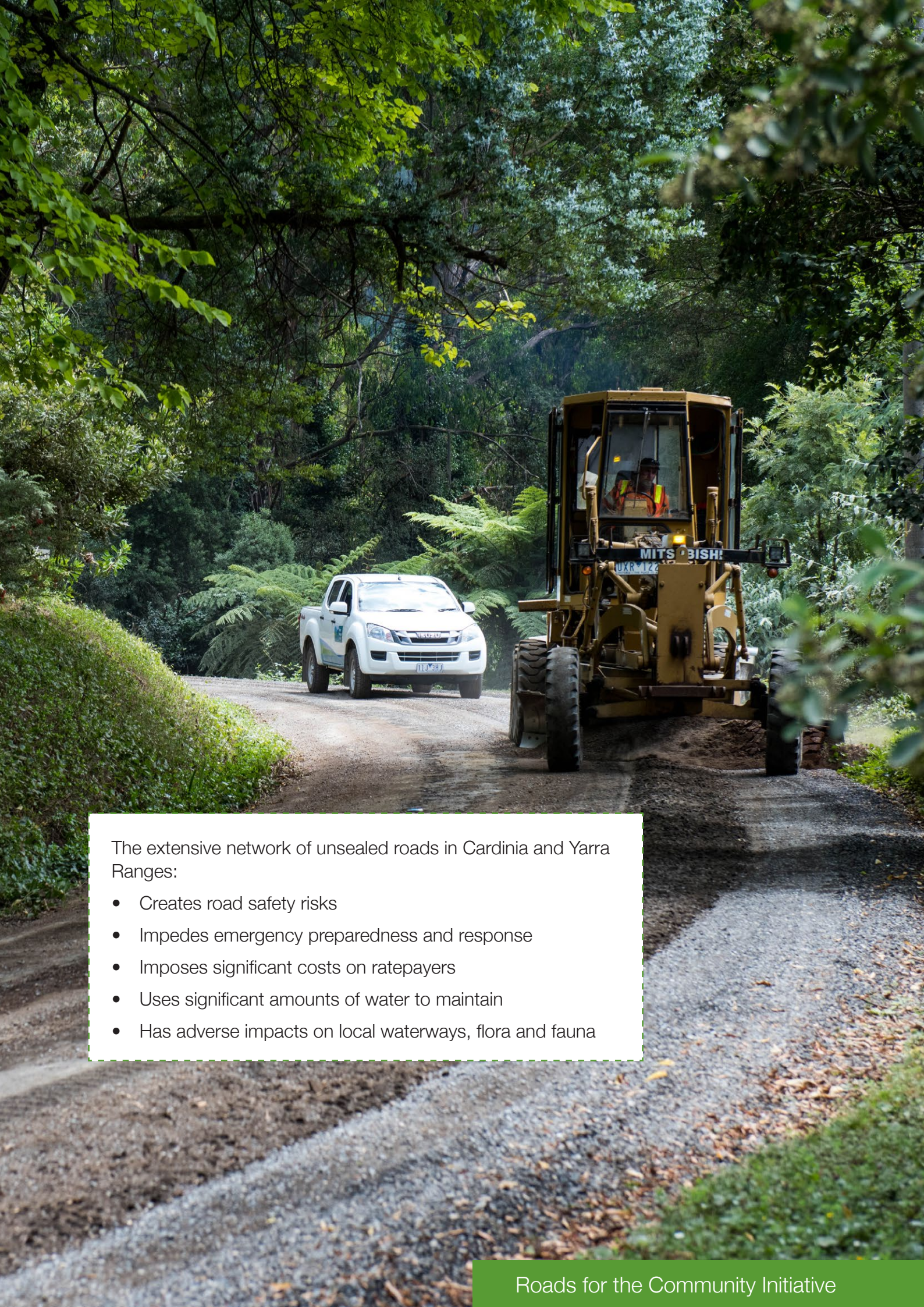
In 2019, the Australian Government committed \$300 million to be shared across the Yarra Ranges and Cardinia Shire to seal hundreds of kilometres of unsealed and unsafe roads – a project that had gained bipartisan support early that year.

However, in 2023, the Commonwealth Government confirmed it would reduce the amount of funding provided to the road sealing programs \$41 million and \$47.7 million in Cardinia and Yarra Ranges respectively.

There remains a strong expectation across the communities in Cardinia and Yarra Ranges that the bipartisan commitments made to the road sealing program in 2019 will be upheld into the future.

With the funding provided in full, Councils can leverage up to an additional 25% via landowner contributions via SCS, and deliver over 700 sealed roads overall, giving benefits to over 10,000 landowners, as well as the broader community and visitors.

A comprehensive pre-budget submission for the road sealing program has been prepared by Yarra Ranges Council and Cardinia Shire Council.



The extensive network of unsealed roads in Cardinia and Yarra Ranges:

- Creates road safety risks
- Impedes emergency preparedness and response
- Imposes significant costs on ratepayers
- Uses significant amounts of water to maintain
- Has adverse impacts on local waterways, flora and fauna

Ridges and Rivers

Yarra Ranges Council has a vision to create a world-class trail-based tourism destination in the Yarra Ranges.

Ridges and Rivers is a \$30 million investment funded between the Commonwealth Government, Victorian Government, Yarra Ranges Council and Bendigo Bank (Warburton & Yarra Junction). It includes three signature outdoor attractions:

**Yarra Valley
Trail**

**Warburton Mountain
Bike Destination**

**nguurak barring
(formerly RidgeWalk)**

Council requires support and investment from the Australian Government to progress plans for Warburton Mountain Bike Destination Stage 1 and Yarra Valley Trail Stage 2A.

Strategic Links

- Council Plan 2021-25 major initiative
- Economic Development and Investment Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Plan



Yarra Valley Trail, Stage 2A

The Ask

That the Commonwealth Government confirm in the 2023-2024 budget its election commitment to provide \$4.9 million funding for Yarra Valley Stage 2A.

The Yarra Valley Trail is an immersive visitor experience that connects people with some of Melbourne's best wineries, arts and culture experiences and iconic destinations such as the Healesville Sanctuary, and the natural beauty of the Yarra River.

The trail is designed as a valley-wide loop, that connects a network of trails through Lilydale, Yarra Glen and Healesville. In addition to tourism benefits, it significantly improves infrastructure for local communities with opportunities for walking and cycling with improved safety and accessibility.

Stage 2A will extend from Yarra Glen to Healesville, linking to the Northern and Southern Yarra Glen Loops and surrounding major tourism destinations.

Labor committed to providing funding of \$4.9 million to construct Stage 2A in 2022.

Key benefits

- 18.8 FTE jobs created.
- 220,000 annual visitors.
- Average of 635 daily users and over 100,000 annually on the Yarra Valley Trail through 2021.
- Outcomes by 2031:
 - 140.5 FTE jobs created.
 - \$10.804 million regional income generated by the operation of the trail.
 - Estimated health benefit for users in excess of \$20 million.
 - User/visitor spending in the region above \$29 million.



Warburton Mountain Bike Destination, Stage 1

The Ask

\$5 million to enable the full delivery of the WMBD Stage 1, as scoped in existing funding agreements with Commonwealth and Victorian Governments.

We're planning a world-class mountain bike destination in Warburton comprising an extensive network of trails across Mount Donna Buang, Mount Little Joe and Mount Tugwell, inviting locals and visitors to experience Warburton's natural beauty and relaxing village atmosphere whilst providing a boost for the local economy.

To understand what planning approvals will be granted and what conditions need apply, the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination (WMBD) underwent a rigorous Environmental Effects Statement process – the most detailed assessment of mountain biking and its environmental impacts ever conducted in Australia.

The EES document was on display for eight weeks, with 2707 submissions, 2412 of which were resoundingly positive.

A public inquiry was held on the EES, with an independent panel providing advice to the Minister for Planning. As a result, the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination was approved by the Minister, with 160km of trails approved - some trails within the Yarra Ranges National Park will be removed and re-assessed.

Key benefits

Once complete in 2031, WMBD will:

- inject \$48 million a year into the local economy
- create 229 FTE jobs
- attract 128,000 new visitors to the Yarra Ranges annually
- generate 77,000 overnight stays annually
- see 222,000 rides per year.

Telecommunications

The Ask

1. Improve mobile connectivity in 5 key areas with low or no mobile service quality: Dandenong Ranges, Hoddles Creek, East Warburton, Steels Creek, Fernshaw.
2. Upgrade NBN broadband services from fixed wireless, satellite and FTTN to FTTP in key areas with slow broadband service.
3. Strengthen telecommunications network resilience during power outages and emergencies e.g. increased battery back-up at mobile towers, generator power for NBN nodes.

Broadband and mobile services are essential for how we work, learn and connect with each other. Reliable connectivity is also critical in an emergency.

But we know Yarra Ranges has widespread mobile blackspots, lagging broadband speeds, and poor network resilience. Service is broadly unreliable and substandard, even in urban townships.

During the June 2021 storm events, telecommunications service was cut to thousands of residents. People were left with no line out of the impact zone, and no access to emergency information for days.

Improving connectivity means better access to education and employment opportunities, improved social connections and mental health, access, and greater preparedness for and responses to emergencies.

Connectivity may be strengthened by: provision of new and upgraded infrastructure throughout the municipality; the deployment of infrastructure that supports multiple

mobile carriers in Yarra Ranges' regional areas; upgrading NBN services to fibre technologies; resilience measures including built solutions and activation of key community members to assist in protecting and restoring services in isolated locations during and after emergencies.

- An independent study on mobile blackspots in Yarra Ranges found that 25% of sites tested had unusable signal or no coverage.
- The study tested more than 24,000 sites, including key segments of the road network, community fire refuges, schools, aged care and CFA stations.
- More than 98% of residents rely on telecommunications in an emergency.

Strategic Links

- Municipal Recovery Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Plan

Mental Health

The Ask

- Expanded resourcing for mental health services, including headspace Lilydale, and support to integrate mental health services with general health service provision.
- Funding for Anchor to deliver mental health outreach services across the region: 1 x FTE position, funded at approximately \$130,000 per year, plus car, to reduce homelessness and early school leaving. Potential to support schools to identify young people at risk of homelessness, facilitate referral pathways to services, coordinate responses from health/mental health and family services.

Yarra Ranges communities are vibrant and resilient, but the compounding impacts of the pandemic and storm events of 2021 are taking a serious toll.

Our communities need and deserve access to quality mental health services, to support their wellbeing and recovery through some of the toughest times we've ever faced.

But services are struggling to attract staff who are adequately skilled to support our diverse communities, and there are extensive waiting lists for psychologists across the municipality.

Further, in 2023, the funding agreement for the Lilydale Youth hub expired, leaving a gap in integrated health services for young people in Yarra Ranges.

Ensuring Yarra Ranges communities have access to appropriate services means our people can get back on their feet, build their resilience and back to thriving and fully participating in our community.

Strategic Links

- Council Plan 2021-25 major initiative
- Municipal Recovery Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Plan

Greening the Suburbs

The Ask

\$9.5 million to plant over 130,000 trees, with a mix of street tree planting and bushland reserve planting across various townships in the urban, valley and hills areas.

Project funding will resource planning, community engagement, plant selection and procurement, project management and delivery, and maintenance.

Trees are fundamental to the story of Yarra Ranges, shaping our cultures, values and communities. They are a prominent feature in our landscape, providing benefits to our health and wellbeing, community and culture, the environment, ecology and economy. But as the climate changes and our urban areas evolve, severe weather events will become more frequent and tree canopy will continue to decline.

During the savage storms that swept through the region in June 2021, our region is estimated to have lost around 25,000 trees, forever changing the landscape.

We need more trees, with the right tree in the right location, through a targeted tree-planting initiative that will 'Green the Suburbs'. It will:

- improve amenity and liveability for families across the region
- provide sun protection for pedestrians
- future-proof our environment against climate change
- enhance the 'green' character that makes Yarra Ranges villages a destination for people to recharge and engage with nature.

The initiative has potential to incorporate school-based programs and other participation opportunities for volunteers and community groups. Council expects to deliver the program over four years, with first trees planted within 12 months.

- Between 2014 and 2018, our built-up areas lost 186 hectares of tree canopy cover, equivalent in size to 104 MCGs.
- Street tree planting provides direct benefits to residents e.g. 50 households engaged per street.
- Bushland planting provides opportunities for revegetation on a larger scale, with approximately 500-1,000 trees per site.

Strategic Links

- Liveable Climate Plan
- Nature Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Plan



Firestick Cultural Burning Program

The Ask

Funding to build Firestick practice capability to enhance local fuel management programs, through two project components:

1. \$200,000 to build **Cultural burning capability** and understanding of the efficacy of Firestick practices for fuel management and asset protection on private, Council or public land. Deliver Cultural burning activities around Monbulk, Healesville & Yarra Junction. Facilitated by a funded Project Officer - Cultural Burning.
2. \$100,000 to deliver a **research project** to understand and develop Culturally appropriate tools and measures for future Cultural burning activities, that can be shared with fire management and land managers at local, regional and state level.

In 2020, Council established a three-year partnership with the Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation (FAIC) to deliver a Firestick cultural burning program. Firestick uses the ancient practice of Firesticks or cultural burning on private and public land, to manage fuel loads, increase biodiversity and provide a positive impact on wellbeing.

The application of Indigenous land management practices supports the healing of Country, advances climate change adaptation, and provides space for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to share Aboriginal culture and heritage, creating a platform for Reconciliation to thrive.

The Firestick program aligns with the United Nation's Nature-based Solutions approach to Disaster Risk Reduction.

Strategic Links

- Council Plan 2021-25 major initiative
- Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Reconciliation Action Plan

Biolinks and Regional Pest Program

The Ask

Funding contribution of \$450,000 to kick-start a Biolinks and Regional Pest Animal program, and an additional \$350,000 per annum for 10 years.

This comprehensive program would contribute to the resilience and control of pest animals by:

- developing a Biolinks Plan to establish important habitat corridors for biodiversity protection and enhancement.
- facilitating a strategic cross-tenure program to address pest animals such as deer, foxes, rabbits, feral cats and Indian myna birds.
- Providing community education and incentive programs



Energy Transition

Community Solar Program

Funding contribution \$8 million (\$2 million per annum for 4 years).

Continuation and expansion of Council's program to retrofit solar, batteries and LED lighting at community facilities. Reducing operating costs for our community groups to enable program expansion and continued community outreach.

Zero Emissions Vehicles Transition

Funding contribution \$2 million for charging infrastructure, for all light and heavy vehicles and plant assets.

Infrastructure would be used by Council and the public, supporting Council's fleet transition and community uptake of electric vehicles. Key townships identified for the provision of charging stations include: Monbulk, Yarra Junction, Lilydale and Sassafras or Upwey.

Climate Resilient Buildings Program

Expansion of Council's existing program, at an estimated cost of \$300,000 per site, depending on the extent of works required.

Upgrades to community facilities that service isolated communities that would likely be cut-off in a storm, bushfire or other emergency. Scope of works will include a combination of energy and water efficiency measures, solar, battery, and generator plug-in points and potential for a microgrid / community battery. A Building Climate Vulnerability Assessment will be undertaken to further detail and prioritise works.

Sports and Recreation

Yarra Ranges Council provides a diverse range of community infrastructure assets that directly support healthy and active living, tourism and connection to culture and community. Our assets are enjoyed by millions of people from all over Victoria, Australia and the world.

However, there continues to be a widening gap between available revenue and the infrastructure and asset requirements of our community.

The following projects are priorities for council that can be delivered over the next four years with external funding support.

Further details about Council's priority projects and long-term infrastructure program can be provided upon request.

Community Sport Pavilions

Priority projects	Location	Cost
Don Road Recreation Reserve Pavilion Redevelopment	Healesville	\$ 5,310,000
Wesburn Community, Recreation and Education Centre	Wesburn	\$ 8,800,000
Long-term program, including priority projects		Total cost
15 x community sports pavilions		\$85,000,000

Temporary Change Facilities

Priority projects	Location	Cost
Seville Temporary Change Facility (relocation)	Seville	\$ 100,000
Woori Yallock Temporary Change Facility (relocation)	Woori Yallock	\$ 100,000
Yarra Glen Temporary Change Facility (new)	Yarra Glen	\$ 360,000
Olinda Temporary Change Facility (new)	Olinda	\$ 480,000
Narre Warren East Temporary Change Facility (new)	Narre Warren East	\$ 480,000
Wesburn Park Temporary Change Facility (relocation)	Wesburn	\$ 100,000
Long-term program, including priority projects		Total cost
9 x temporary change facilities		\$2,400,000

Sportsfields

Priority projects	Location	Cost
Upwey No.1 Oval Redevelopment	Upwey	\$ 875,000
Yarra Hills Mt Evelyn Campus	Mt Evelyn	\$ 875,000
Gateway Oval Redevelopment	Lilydale	\$ 750,000
Upper Yarra Secondary School	Yarra Junction	\$ 625,000
Mt Evelyn Oval No.2 Redevelopment	Mt Evelyn	\$ 375,000
Keith Hume Frazer No.2 Oval Redevelopment	Montrose	\$ 250,000
Long-term program, including priority projects		Total cost
16 x ovals and sporting pitch renewals		\$15,000,000

Lighting

Priority projects	Location	Cost
Menzies Creek Reserve	Menzies Creek	\$275,000
Yarra Glen No. 2 Oval	Yarra Glen	\$240,000
Don Road No.1 Oval	Healesville	\$275,000
Pinks No.1 Oval	Kilsyth	\$240,000
Wandin North Oval	Wandin North	\$240,000
Seville No.1 Oval	Seville	\$275,000
Long-term program, including priority projects		Total cost
17 x lighting projects (new and upgraded)		\$4,000,000

Sports courts

Priority projects	Location	Cost
Upwey South Multipurpose	Upwey	\$420,000
Belgrave Heights Tennis	Belgrave Heights	\$480,000
Lilydale Tennis - Courts	Lilydale	\$420,000
Borthwick Park Multipurpose - Courts	Belgrave	\$420,000
Upwey Tennis - Courts	Upwey	\$420,000
Don Rd Netball Courts & Lighting	Healesville	\$720,000
Long-term program, including priority projects		Total cost
13 x courts (new and upgraded)		\$6,000,000

Cricket facilities

Priority projects	Location	Cost
Belgrave	Belgrave	\$265,000
Kiloran Park	Mooroolbark	\$265,000
Mount Evelyn	Mt Evelyn	\$265,000
Mooroolbark Heights	Mooroolbark	\$265,000
Yarra Junction	Yarra Junction	\$265,000
Wesburn	Wesburn	\$180,000
Long-term program, including priority projects		Total cost
10 x cricket facility renewals		\$3,000,000

Playspaces

Priority projects	Location	Cost
Carmen Reserve Playspace	Lilydale	\$300,000
Glenvalley Reserve Playspace (Local Renewal)	Seville	\$300,000
Wright Avenue Playspace (Local Renewal)	Upwey	\$300,000
Morrison Reserve Playspace (Upgrade from Local to District)	Mt Evelyn	\$600,000
Mount Evelyn Recreation Reserve Playspace (Local Renewal)	Mt Evelyn	\$300,000
Queens Road Reserve Playspace	Lilydale	\$300,000
Long-term program, including priority projects		Total cost
26 x playspaces (new and redeveloped)		\$14,000,000

Dirt Jumps and Tracks

Projects	Location	Cost
Wesburn Pump Track Stage 2 (lighting and technology)	Wesburn	\$400,000
Seal and rebuild Mt Evelyn Pump Track	Mt Evelyn	\$504,000
Yering Mountain Bike loops	Yering	\$144,000
Seville Pump Track	Seville	\$558,000
Kimberley Reserve Pump Track	Chirnside Park	\$480,000
Montrose Brickworks Skills and Dirt Jumps	Chirnside Park	\$480,000
		Total cost
		\$3,000,000

Off-lead dog parks

Projects	Location	Cost
Wesburn Station Off-Lead Dog Park	Wesburn	\$225,000
Don Road Off-Lead Dog Park	Healesville	\$200,000
Wesburn Park Off-Lead Dog Park	Wesburn	\$150,000
Yarra Junction Off-Lead Dog Park	Yarra Junction	\$100,000
Wickhams Road Off-Lead Dog Park	Launching Place	\$150,000
		Total cost
		\$825,000

Other

Projects	Location	Cost
Healesville Meeting Place Garden Landscape and Indigenous Art Works	Healesville	\$300,000
Wesburn Equestrian Facility Upgrades	Wesburn	\$980,000
Powelltown Adventure Hub Feasibility Study	Powelltown	\$100,000
Warburton to Walhalla Trail Feasibility Study	Warburton	\$100,000
Yarra Valley Regional Recreation Park Feasibility Study	Coldstream	\$100,000
Karwarra Gardens Education and Community Centre	Kalorama	\$6,000,000
		Total cost
		\$ 7,580,000





Yarra Ranges Council

PO Box 105
Lilydale Vic 3140

1300 368 333
mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au
yarraranges.vic.gov.au