



Yarra Ranges Council Annual Sustainability Report 2022

Renewable Energy

All council electricity is now sourced from renewable energy. Council moved its small and large market energy accounts to the Victorian Energy Collaboration which uses wind power from western Victoria.



8 SOLAR
systems installed
on council-owned
buildings

65 in total



**1.47
MWp**
energy
capacity

Resilient Buildings

We are undertaking disaster risk reduction and resilience measures at 21 council-owned community facilities to help reduce the impact of climate change and to ensure thermal comfort and renewable energy reduces the operational costs for tenants.

To date, energy resilience, energy efficiency and thermal comfort upgrades have been completed at the following sites:

- Healesville MEMO
- Yarra Glen MEMO
- Olinda Recreation Reserve
- Yarra Centre Pool
- Yarra Glen Bowling Club
- Coldstream Community Centre
- Mooroolbark Community Centre

Each site received bespoke upgrades based on vulnerability assessments and energy audits. Examples of upgrades: solar and/or batteries, insulation, ventilation, draught sealing, electrical separation (to extend off grid operation), LED lighting and double glazing.

All sites received generator plug in points to help to build local energy resilience and assist with community recovery during and after outages/ storm events.



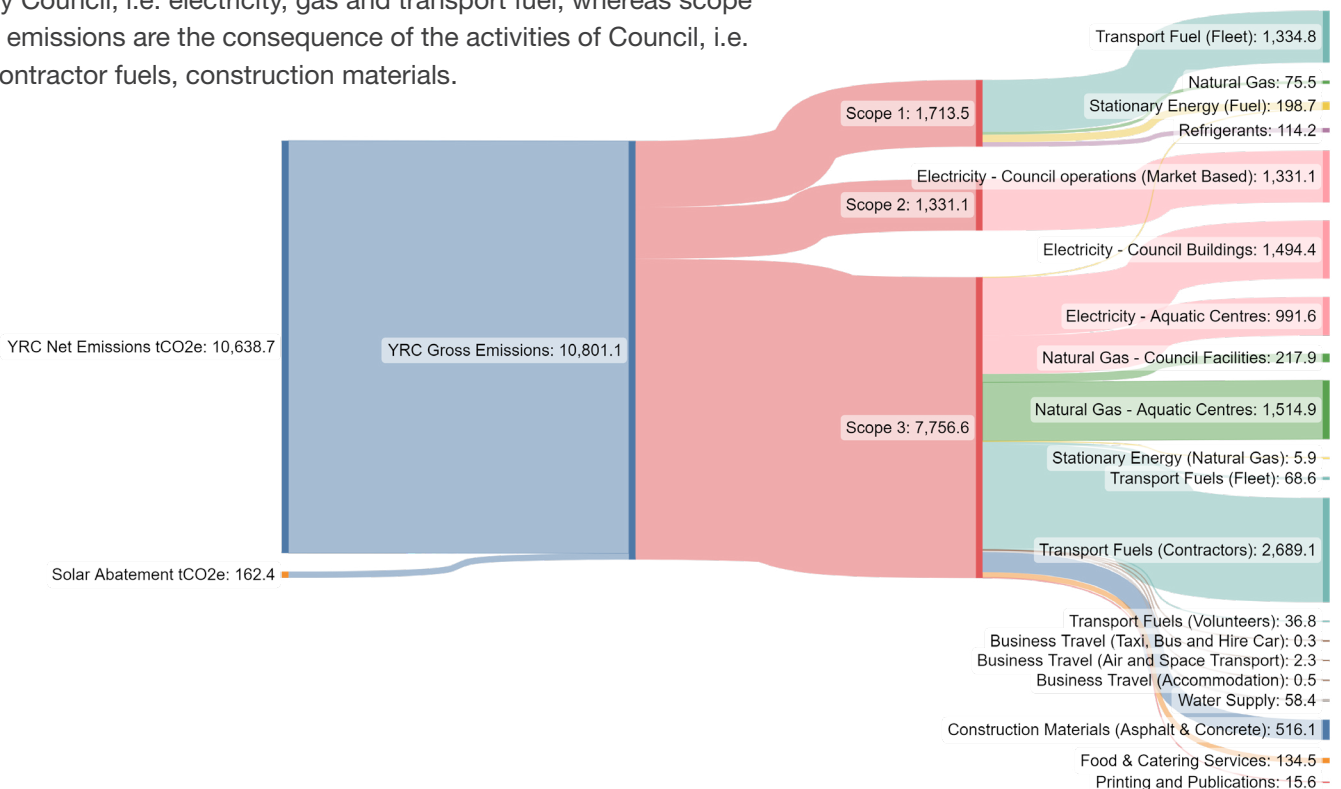
Microgrids

Council collaborated with Monash University on the Active Energy Precincts project, working towards the delivery of a microgrid feasibility study for Healesville and Yarra Junction, alongside securing funding to replicate the study in Monbulk as part of the Resilient Energy Precinct project.

Council Emissions

Emissions are moving in the right direction at ~10,500 CO2 and on track to meet the 2025 target of 8,500 CO2 and with strong intervention coupled with offsetting will meet Net Zero by 2040.

Scope 1 and 2 are those emissions that are owned or controlled by Council, i.e. electricity, gas and transport fuel, whereas scope 3 emissions are the consequence of the activities of Council, i.e. contractor fuels, construction materials.



Working With Community

Gardens for Harvest Program



The Gardens for Harvest program aims to inspire people to grow their own food.

- 10% membership growth 2021-22
- delivered 6 events including talk by Permaculture expert David Holmgren attended by 115 people

Food Systems Program



We commenced a food systems program to address food insecurity for the region. The work has encompassed:

- membership to Sustain Australia
- work with Eco Vineyards and investigating local Regenerative Agriculture techniques
- assessing the Community Gardens network
- investigating leasehold opportunities to encourage young farmers.

This work has many implications in the adaptation response to climate change and will continue to grow throughout the coming years.

EV Charger

The Yarra Glen Community Renewable Energy Group — Yarra Glenenergy — worked with Council and the Victorian State Government to install Yarra Ranges' first public electric vehicle fast charger.

The charger uses excess solar energy from the Yarra Glen Memorial Hall and is supplemented by renewable energy.

Environmental Upgrades



Environmental Upgrade Agreement (EUA) is an agreement between a building owner, a bank and the building owner's local council that facilitates a building upgrade to improve environmental performance.

Four Pillars Gin Distillery

- expanded their solar capacity

Yarra Valley Dairy

- sought funding for a specialised treatment plant

Solar Savers (Residential)



12 residents signed up for solar installation in 2022 taking the total for the region to 97.

Resource Smart Schools



The program expanded from 5 participating schools at the beginning of the year to 16 at the end of 2022.

Energy Savers (Business)



Council signed up to Energy Savers, a regional program assisting businesses undertake targeted energy efficiency upgrades.

This involves retrofitting existing appliances and equipment that are subsidised by the State Government under the Victorian Energy Upgrade Program. These include LED lighting, high-efficiency air conditioning units, refrigerated display cabinets and other items.

My Energy and Water Saver Kit



The wait list for 3 loanable kits that help people assess their energy, water and waste grew to over 100 people in 2022 after being introduced into the library system in January.

Plans were implemented to introduce additional kits as soon as possible.



Zero Emissions Fleet

Secured an EV Charging for Council Fleets (EVCCF) grant for four electric vehicle chargers.

Small plant electric alternatives purchased taking the total to 57 small plant items i.e. blowers, chainsaws and hedge trimmers.

The Lillydale Lake maintenance boat petrol replaced with an electric.

Council depot LPG forklift replaced with an electric version.

Purchase of 4 HINO 300SERIES Hybrid trucks for the fleet.



Water

Council and Melbourne Water commenced a strategic partnership to address stormwater and protect waterways in priority catchments.

The stormwater partnership will deliver:

- Catchment investigations to identify strategic stormwater harvesting and infiltration opportunities
- Delivery of on-ground projects
- Increased resources to support stormwater management
- Better alignment between the two organisations

Council secured funding from the Integrated Water Management (IWM) grant program for the construction of a stormwater harvesting system at Monbulk Recreation Reserve. The system will supply 4 ML/year of treated stormwater to irrigate the sports field. This will save potable (drinking) water, while reducing pollutants reaching Emerald Creek (a high priority waterway with a breeding platypus population).

The Monbulk Stormwater Harvesting project also received a Melbourne Water grant through the Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways program.

Monbulk Creek Project

The Monbulk Creek Catchment Connection project commenced in October 2022. The 3-year research project will explore the potential of cutting-edge technology to deliver multiple benefits to Monbulk Creek including: environmental flows to support the platypus population, stormwater management, water supply for household use and reduced risk of localised flooding. The project involves a partnership between the University of Melbourne, Yarra Ranges Council, Melbourne Water and South East Water. The project team will work with the community to install rainwater tanks operated using a networked real-time control system, along with “smart” operation of larger water storages in the catchment.



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