

RESPONSE TO DRAFT BUDGET 2021/22



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra Inc.
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Foreword

Streets Alive Yarra is a non-profit, volunteer, resident and ratepayer action group with a [vision](#) for more trees, wider footpaths and vibrant businesses in thriving [neighbourhoods](#). We see our streets being used by people from [all ages](#), irrespective of whether they walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport or drive. Residents and shoppers should be able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra; and park near shops.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 2,600 likes on Facebook. A network of local champions develops concepts and proposals for how to improve their local street or precinct. Streets Alive Yarra is also Yarra's Walkability Action Group (WAG) representative for Victoria Walks.

Further information is available at: streets-alive-yarra.org/about.

Context

Streets Alive Yarra is a group of people. We have stories about children who feel unsafe walking or cycling to school, about parents who would like to age for longer in their own home, and about friends who want to see more trees as well as experience more public open space. We're people who support social justice and equity, and the freedom to get to schools, shops, sport or the library, irrespective of whether we walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport or drive.



Image credits: supporters of Streets Alive Yarra

Social justice

Council has adopted a social justice charter, which places the principles of access, equity and rights above the Council Plan and all other policies, strategies and plans.



Image source: City of Yarra Social Justice Charter

In our view, social justice means that people of all ages and abilities should be able to get from A to B within Yarra, without being exposed to hazards that carry the risk of serious injury or death, irrespective of whether they walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport or drive.

For people walking or rolling on wheelchairs, we need:

- Better clearing of vegetation encroaching over private fences onto footpaths
- Wider, smoother, more level footpaths, e.g. investment to bring all vehicle crossovers up to the same level as Yarra's Standard Concrete Vehicle Crossing drawing YSD601, by 2030
- Continuous footpaths, also known as raised threshold treatments
- More pedestrian crossings, ideally raised wombat crossings
- More trees for shade
- More places to sit and rest

For people cycling, we need:

- 30 km/h zones
- More traffic calming on residential streets, to reduce vehicle speeds and volumes
- A network of protected bicycle lanes to link neighbourhoods
- More places to park bicycles near shopping and activity centres

For people using public transport, we need:

- All the points listed above for walking and cycling, so people can get to public transport stops
- Advocacy to the state government for level access public transport stops
- Better management of parking demand, so that it's OK to remove some car parking spots to build level access public transport stops

For people driving and parking, we need:

- Advocacy to the state government for demand responsive driving charges, to keep traffic flowing
- All parking in Yarra to be converted to paid permit zones, so that occupancy can be managed through the pricing of permits
- Offering user pays permits for sale to any worker or commuter, so that people can park in the new expanded permit zones, and avoid a fine
- Demand responsive parking charges, to ensure a park is usually available on each block
- Enforcement of parking using automated number plate recognition, so that people don't unfairly occupy parking bays without paying

Together, these actions require an expenditure of at least \$10m per year for 10 years:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/expenditure/>

Social justice for future generations

To deliver social justice for future generations, we need to reduce our carbon emissions as fast as practicable. In Yarra, we need to focus on the two largest sources of emissions, from buildings (fossil gas and electricity) and transport (cars). We suggest that the best way to encourage people to upgrade their buildings from non-renewable energy (gas or electricity) to renewable energy (all electric appliances, GreenPower) is to bring the importance of the climate crisis home, by making clearly observable changes to the public realm to support zero emission transport (walking, cycling, trams and electric buses powered by renewables). This will get people talking, learning, understanding and changing.

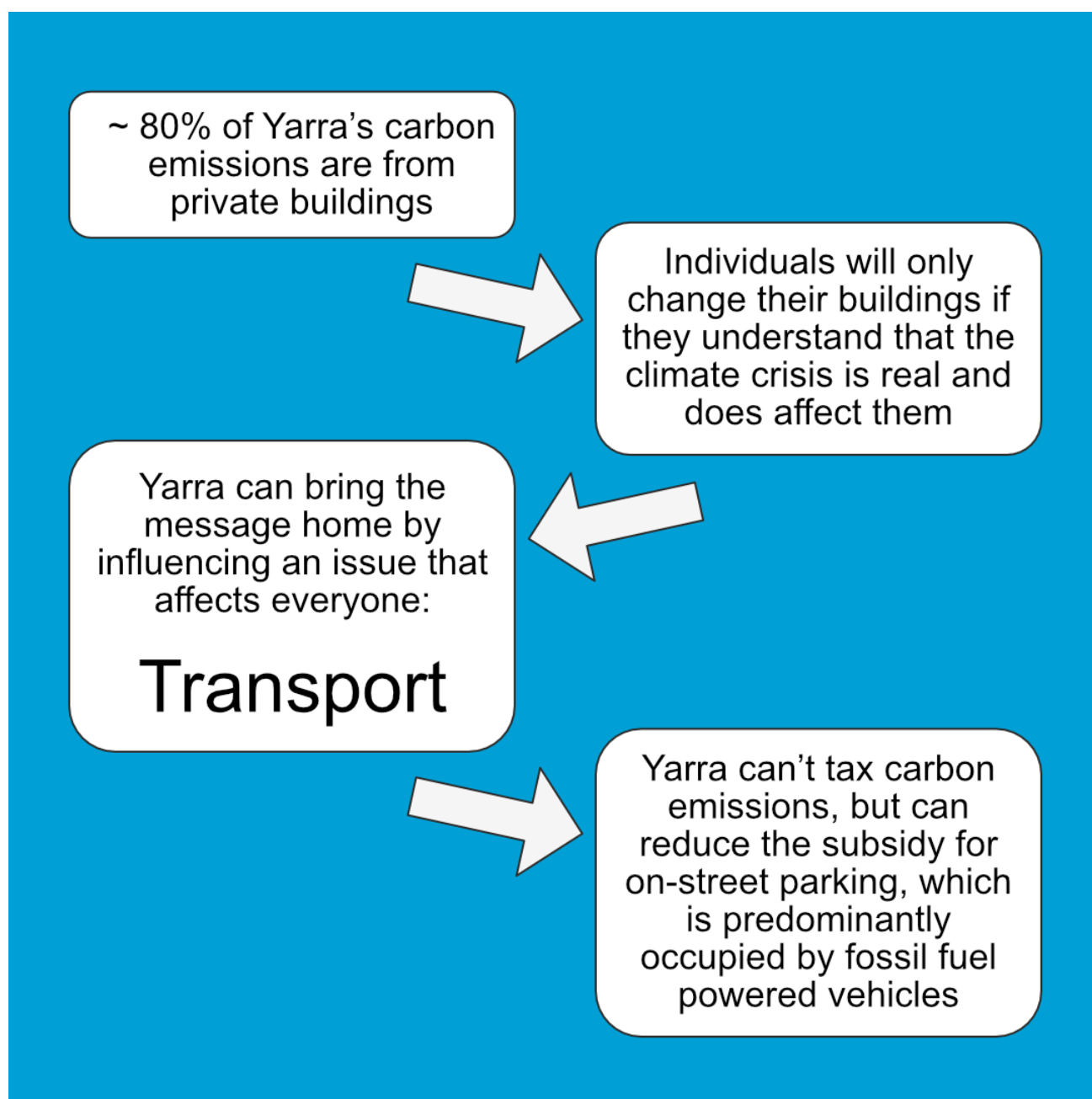


Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra

Actions for a social justice budget

To deliver a social justice budget, council can:

- Allocate \$10m per year for walking, cycling, trees and placemaking through the LAPM process, including reallocating some space away from on-street car parking
- Expand the use of trials and tactical urbanism to rapidly deliver safe infrastructure
- Convert [all parking to paid permit zones](#), with digital permits and “pay by app”
- Offer car parking permits at three pricing levels, such as:

	Residents & businesses who are eligible for existing permits	Residents & businesses who are at present ineligible for existing permits	Commuters & shoppers (non-residents)
Hourly (only for the shopping zone)	n/a	n/a	Demand responsive \$0 to \$10 per hour
Daily	\$2 (for visitors)	\$10	\$20
Weekly	\$10 (for visitors)	\$50	\$100
Monthly	\$30 (for visitors)	\$150	\$300
Yearly	\$41 (1st permit) \$100 (2nd permit)	\$1,500	\$3,000

Image source: <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/better-for-parking/>

- Increase the price for residential and business permits from \$41 (11 cents per day) to \$365 (\$1 per day), which is the most direct form of carbon tax that council can impose.

Concluding remarks

The council budget should better align with the Social Justice Charter and the Council Plan, including greatly increased investment in walking, cycling, trees and place making. Although Yarra has often led the way in the past, compared with other municipalities, this does not mean that council is doing enough to comply with its own adopted policies, or even to align with the [broad community support](#) for a more beautiful, liveable and accessible city.

Streets Alive Yarra would be delighted to provide further detail or explanation of the themes raised in this document.

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