

FEEDBACK ON DRAFT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN

Summary

In general, we support the vision, transformations, and objectives.

We support the following actions: 1.1.6 ...implement...Yarra's Transport Strategy and Transport Action Plan; 5.3.2 ...implementation of Roads to Parks program; 5.3.3 Identify streets... that would most benefit from being converted to a one-way street lined with trees to mitigate urban heat island effects...review Urban Forest Strategy to maximise greening on public land; 6.3.1 Ensure cool routes support active transport and walkability of Yarra.

We're concerned that the draft actions:

- don't consider the enormous possible carbon savings by allowing many more people to live in Yarra, benefitting from the ability to use low carbon modes (walking, biking) to access jobs and services, and to live in modern all-electric energy-efficient residences; i.e. the benefit of adopting a population target of e.g. 300,000 people, which is within Council's sphere of influence via the Yarra Planning Scheme
- don't indicate an approximate cost for each action, either absolute or per tonne of CO₂ saved, and thereby enable community members to balance them against the possible detrimental impact (in a rate capped environment) on other council services
- don't scale for a population of over one hundred thousand, e.g. growing food
- add many tasks (and associated costs) which can distract council from focussing on proven effective actions that lead to reductions in CO₂, such as investing in walking, biking, trees, and place making

We'd like to see more explicit actions regarding streets and public spaces, such as:

- increasing funding for the Transport Strategy and Transport Action Plan to \$10 million per year
- accelerating delivery of the Kerbside & Parking Management strategy, including:
 - reforming how on-street parking is priced, to deliver an additional \$30 million per year
 - locating an on-street tree in between each on-street car parking bay

Vision

We support the draft vision (Yirramboi) for streets, transport, and public spaces:

How we travel has also changed. The streets look different now, with protected bike lanes and shady trees, so that more people are cycling and walking. Major investments in public transport mean it is more accessible, affordable, and reliable. Those who drive do so in electric vehicles, which they recharge easily with cheap renewable energy.

Greenery and flowers are everywhere. Now our community has shelter from the sun under our growing tree canopy and more areas of open space. And best of all, the restored Birrarung welcomes swimmers and biodiversity alike.

Objectives

We support the following objectives:

1.1 ...Individuals and groups can make choices to use active and public transport...

6.3 ...creating public spaces that reduce urban heat and provide safe and shaded active and public transport routes to our jobs, schools, grocery stores, doctors, and other services...creating and expanding public spaces that connect us to nature and each other, including parks and social spaces...

We're concerned about the following objective:

4.2 We are actively working towards ensuring electric and other zero emission vehicles are commonplace...

Cars, even electric cars, shouldn't be commonplace like they are now, they should be rare. For further information, refer to the Climate Council report 'Charging Ahead'. A better phrasing would be similar to "We are actively working towards ensuring that the vehicles that remain are electric or zero emission..."

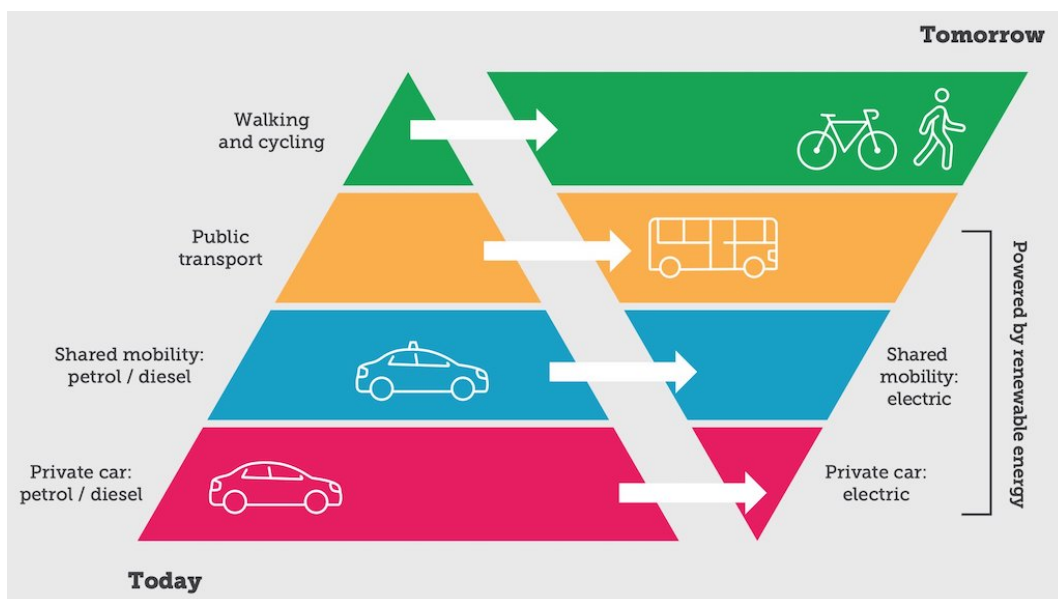


Image credit: [Climate Council](#).

Actions

We suggest that the vision and transformations should lead to more explicit actions regarding streets and public spaces.

Transformation	Proposed actions
<p>In Yarra every choice we make and every action we take responds to the climate emergency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose to increase funding for the Transport Strategy and Transport Action Plan to \$10 million per year. • Choose to accelerate reform of the pricing of on-street parking, delivering an additional \$30 million per year. • Choose to adopt a population target of 300,000 and revise the Housing Strategy and Yarra Planning Scheme to suit. • Choose to publish Open Data showing the distribution of assets and infrastructure around the municipality, so gaps can be identified and filled, including maps of trees, pocket parks, play spaces, modal filters, shared zones, bike hoops, car sharing vehicles, loading bays, and disabled parking bays.
<p>In Yarra, community members at greater risk from climate impacts are connected, supported, and empowered to build resilience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting and empowering community members to build resilience means investing in infrastructure for low cost and low carbon modes of transport, i.e. footpaths, crossings, 30 km/h zones, and protected bike lanes.
<p>Yarra is active, empowered and raising our voice together for a stronger climate emergency response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stronger climate emergency response means adopting a Kerbside & Parking Management strategy that reforms the pricing of on-street parking.
<p>Yarra is a leading and prosperous zero-emissions city.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosperous means community members can get around using low cost modes of transport, i.e. walking, biking and public transport. • Zero-emission means community members are safe to choose walking, biking and public transport, because council has invested in footpaths, crossings, 30 km/h zones, and protected bike lanes.

Transformation	Proposed actions
Yarra is Caring for Country. Our landscapes and waterways are healthier, greener and more biodiverse, and our communities feel at one with nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier and greener means adopting a Kerbside & Parking Management Strategy that locates an on-street tree in between each on-street car parking bay.
In Yarra, everyone in Yarra lives and works in comfortable and climate-safe homes and buildings, supported by climate resilient public spaces and infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate resilient public spaces and infrastructure means tree-lined footpaths and protected bike lanes, and well shaded pocket parks.
In Yarra, we are transitioning to a circular economy by consuming less, reusing, repairing, sharing and recycling more and sending less waste to landfill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consuming less and sending less waste to landfill means transitioning most journeys use walking, biking, or public transport, so that car tyre wear is significantly slowed and fewer car tyres are sent to landfill. • Similarly, it means supporting lighter weight vehicles (including EVs), because tyre wear is a function of vehicle weight.

We're concerned that Action 4.3.1 proposes to allocate further resources (Officer time and Council budget) to support cars (and driving), including the designation (locking in) of public land for charging. Electric cars still have significant negative externalities (rubber particulates, occupation of public space, contribution to road violence). We consider that allocating Council funding to their uptake is an inequitable and ineffective step in mitigating climate change. If people wish to drive an electric car, a more appropriate and scalable solution is for them to wait until high speed (e.g. 10 minute) charging is available from private off-street charging stations, noting that battery and charging technology is improving rapidly, and 10 minute charge times are more likely to be readily available before Council is able to deliver a large number of (lower speed) charging stations on public land.

We suggest that Council should prepare an emissions inventory that accords with global guidance (<https://ghgprotocol.org/ghg-protocol-cities>) and use this to identify and develop appropriate supporting actions to reduce emissions in accordance with its targets. For an example of a quantitative pathway, refer to the framework from Zero Carbon Merri-bek (<https://zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Moreland-Zero-Carbon-2040-Framework-Revised-February-2022.pdf>).

We suggest that Council should conduct an equity assessment alongside development of abatement options (in line with the actions identified from the emissions inventory mentioned above) to understand the trade-off of different pathways to achieving net zero. For example, refer to Merri-bek's Travel Smart website (<https://zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au/travel-smart/>), which has combined emission reduction with improving overall equity.

Concluding remarks

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

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Appendix - About us

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 3,000 followers 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 a member of the Victoria Walks Walkability Action Group network.

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