



Climate Emergency

What is the Climate Emergency?

Today, we find ourselves facing a climate emergency as a direct result of our increasing contribution to greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

These greenhouse gas emissions come from the burning of fossil fuels for energy, manufacturing and transport; agriculture; and deforestation. The gases released through these activities trap heat, causing increased temperatures across the world. This also leads to an unstable climate, with other impacts like changes to rainfall, increasing extreme weather, and rising sea levels.

Since the late 19th century, global average temperatures have risen by over 1.1 degrees Celsius, with major social, economic and environmental impacts. The past five years have been the warmest on record globally. Scientists predict global temperatures will increase by 3-5 degrees Celsius in the coming decades, with catastrophic effects.

To address the climate emergency, we urgently need to stop releasing greenhouse gases, and remove excess greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. The good news is that we have solutions to do this. The challenge now is to work together to implement those solutions, and 'cool the planet' to make it safe for our children, their children and their future generations to enjoy.

"Right now we are facing a [hu]man-made disaster of global scale, our greatest threat in thousands of years: climate change. If we don't take action, the collapse of our civilisations and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon."

~ Sir David Attenborough

Why should we care?

Human health, public safety, infrastructure, food systems and our environment are already being impacted by the climate emergency. The devastating bushfires that ripped through Victoria in 2019-2020 are a recent example – and harsher fire weather and longer fire seasons are predicted to follow, with an increasing trend in Victoria of hotter and drier weather.

Within the City of Maribyrnong, climate impacts expected to increase include the frequency and severity of heatwaves, flooding, and storms.

Extreme weather events not only impact community health, but cause damage and disruption to homes, roads, businesses, power supply, water supply and public transport. Our valuable ecosystems and wildlife are also at risk. Regional and national climate impacts will also affect us, like food shortages that will flow from impacts to agriculture and the loss of fisheries.

Urban areas like Maribyrnong are more vulnerable to rising temperatures as they trap more heat than natural landscapes, especially where greenery is limited. An increasing reliance on fans and air conditioning to escape this heat also creates financial pressures.

Initiatives like increasing greenery across Maribyrnong and making homes more energy efficient with less need for heating or cooling not only helps address climate change, but also makes our city more liveable.

We know that if we do nothing, temperatures will rise and our community will struggle through increasingly brutal heat waves, especially the young, elderly, people with pre-existing conditions or a disability, those experiencing homelessness and people living in poverty.





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What are we doing about it?

In February 2019, Council acknowledged a climate emergency, joining an international movement of local governments taking leadership on the climate emergency.

In September 2020, Council adopted its Climate Emergency Strategy which identifies opportunities where Council can make a difference.

Climate action will have many other positive benefits for the City of Maribyrnong. Some of the things we can do to address the climate emergency in our city include:

- providing a greener city with more trees
- safer and more connected cycling and walking options
- more solar and renewables across the city
- supporting a switch to electric vehicles
- increasing the liveability of homes through energy efficiency measures
- supporting a circular economy to reduce and reuse waste
- supporting business and community climate initiatives
- building local community climate resilience and looking after the most climate vulnerable
- embedding climate action across Council, and including climate emergency in all policies and strategies
- going to zero emissions and beyond for our own operations
- advocating to state and federal governments to generate an urgent emergency response



What can you do about it?

We all have a role in addressing the climate emergency, and making sure we have a safe future. There are many ways you can take action, including:

- talking with your friends and neighbours about the issue – and sharing ideas on ways you can collectively contribute to the solution
- joining a climate action group
- reducing your own greenhouse gas emissions, e.g.:
 - using less energy by turning off lights and appliances
 - walking and riding more, or using public transport
 - installing renewable energy or buying green power
 - reducing food and other waste
- working with your neighbours or others on community climate projects
- putting your money in banks and super that don't invest in fossil fuels
- supporting local businesses that also do their part
- voting for those that prioritise the climate emergency and related issues
- getting politically active and advocating to all levels of government for stronger action

