

# Climate Change Policy

## COUNCIL POLICY NO. 146

### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Council with a strategic framework for mitigating and adapting to climate change. The objectives of the policy are to:

- Provide a strategic framework for Council to manage its response to climate change by using both adaptation and mitigation strategies;
- Reduce the environmental impacts and operating costs of Council operations and minimise fuel consumption while reducing corporate energy use, transition to 100% renewable energy and achieve corporate net zero emissions by 2025, and net zero emissions at the Landfill by 2040;
- Undertake actions to reduce the community's emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2040 by providing opportunities for public engagement, education and action;
- Respond to the risks of climate change to Council assets and services and assist the community to be more resilient to the effects of climate change; and
- Actively join climate change initiatives that promote education, economic growth and the community to become more sustainable and increase livability.

### 2. BACKGROUND

Gannawarra Shire Council acknowledges the scientific evidence and the risk that climate change presents to the community and the planet. Council cites the *Local Government Act 2020* requirements for councils to take climate risks into account in its planning and decision making, therefore in the 'Growing Gannawarra 2021-2025 Council Plan,' Council set the following strategic priority:

*Support community resilience through climate adaptation, clean energy, environmental sustainability and waste management programs*

Over the years Council has undertaken a range of positive actions, including solar installation on assets, heat mapping assessments and promoted the construction of renewable energy and transmission assets in the region. This work has helped the initial steps towards combatting Climate Change but this policy will help Council recognise the need to consolidate its actions and create a planned response to adapt and mitigate climate change. Council also recognises The Gannawarra is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and it needs to commence early measures to increase the municipalities' resilience. It is necessary that Council builds its capacity to adapt to and mitigate the challenges of climate change, enable a more effective response, and minimise economic and social impacts caused by climate change. With its current position The Gannawarra has the capacity to become one of the top renewable energy producing municipalities in the state and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, shifting to 100% renewables, engaging the community, Council will help support a long-term transition to an environmentally and economically sustainable municipality.

### 3. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The achievement of Council's Climate Change objectives requires leadership from Council, collaborative engagement and support from all sectors of the municipality. It is policy that Councillors and Council staff are committed to:

- applying the precautionary principle in a risk management framework to strategic planning, operational and management decision making when considering the potential implications associated with climate change;
- transitioning to 100% renewable energy and achieve corporate net zero emissions by 2025, and net zero emissions at the Landfill by 2040;
- undertaking actions and supporting the community and helping lead the community towards achieving a 50% reduction in emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2040; and
- responding to the risks of climate change to Council assets and services and assist the community to be more resilient to the effects of climate change.

This will be progressed by:

- Commissioning a strategy to identify opportunities available to Council to effect change and improve climate risk in decision making across Council service areas, including plans to guide Council from now into the future.
- Undertaking actions and projects within the organisation to reduce emissions and enable adaptation to future climate scenarios.
- Integrating the principles of climate change adaption and mitigation into existing policies, procedures and decision making, considering both short-term and long-term perspectives.
- Developing new organisational procedures and resources to address climate change mitigation and adaption gaps in Council's plans and procedures.
- Regularly review strategies, plans, policies, and procedures, where their content may be affected by climate change, to ensure currency as the science develops.
- Ensuring Council's actions, decisions and policy response to climate change remains current and reflects the Council's operational capacity and community expectations as the science around climate change develops.
- Embracing innovative and new technology to develop, promote and implement environmental sustainable solutions that promote and support a circular economy.
- Establishing Council's current emissions profile, set goals and reporting the impact of action in reducing emissions.
- Seeking funding to continue to adapt to and mitigate climate change within council operations and services, and to undertake projects in partnership with the community.
- Working with community sectors to facilitate action on climate change as relevant to their circumstances.

## 4. RELATED POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Gannawarra 2025
- Gannawarra future scan
- Gannawarra Shire Council Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans
- Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan
- Procurement Policy

## 5. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review this policy initially within twelve months of its adoption, thereafter it will be reviewed as required but always within twelve months of a general election of the Council.

At the time of review, this policy was compliant with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

## 6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna Office or online at [www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au](http://www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au). Any enquires in relation to this policy should be directed to the Director of Infrastructure & Development on (03) 5450 9333.