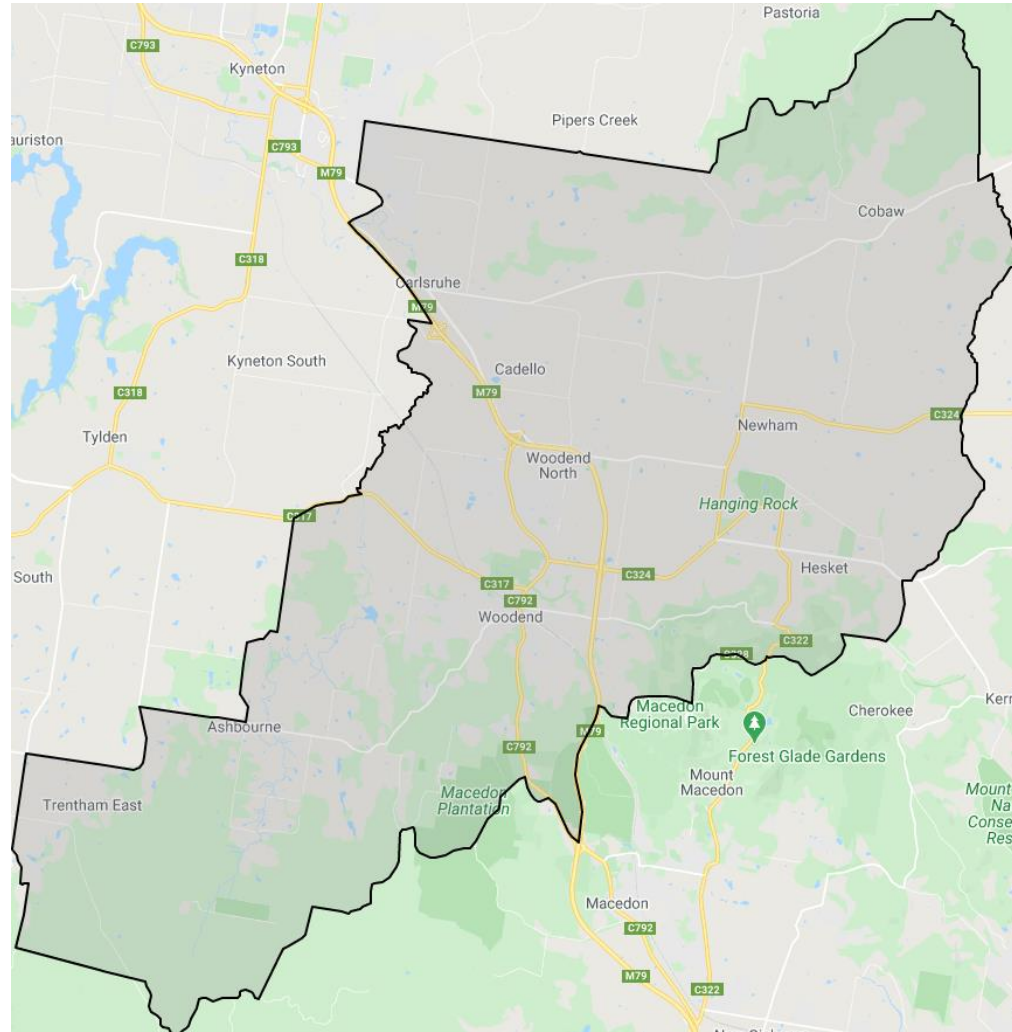


# Cool Changes Woodend Region Climate Change Action Plan



**A Plan by, and for, the Woodend region community**

## Traditional Owners of this Land

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land, the Wurundjeri, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung, as the caretakers and custodians of the lands now situated within the Macedon Ranges Shire.

The Wurundjeri, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung continue to practice their culture and customs and experience a close spiritual, physical, social, historical and economic relationship with the land and waters that make up their country.

They have lived in the country now known as the Macedon Ranges Shire for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans in a way that was sustainable and which preserved the wildlife, habitat, land and waterways of this country.



**Date Published: 3rd September 2020**

## Funder Acknowledgement

The development of this community-based Climate Change Action Plan was made possible due to funding contributions from Macedon Ranges Shire Council and Sustainability Victoria.

## Council Context

‘Cool Changes’ is a Macedon Ranges Shire Council (MSRC) program that works with local communities across the shire to facilitate the development of local climate change action plans.

Cool Changes commenced in 2019 with a pilot project: Sustainable Malmsbury. The [Sustainable Malmsbury Action Plan](#) outlined a number of personal and community actions across: energy, waste and community resilience.

Supported by:



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# OUR PLAN

## Purpose of the Plan

Our Plan aims to empower members of our local community to identify where and how we can work individually and collectively to take climate action that makes a real difference.

## How the Plan was Developed

This Plan was created by a number of community volunteers from the Woodend region. The process commenced in March 2020 and continued through to October 2020.

Unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic hit early in the process, limiting the amount of face-to-face work we could do. Despite this, responses to a survey confirmed that many in the community were keen to continue to develop the Plan using a variety of online methods.

A Foundation Workshop was conducted in May 2020 using online platforms ZOOM and Menti to draft a vision and goals, identify high impact stakeholders, capture community contributions and discuss the project pathway.

Following the workshop, a Conversation Kits was developed to encourage community members to introduce the project and have climate conversations with their networks.

Action idea brainstorming was facilitated online at <https://woodend.crowdicity.com.au/>. Registered community members could submit, comment, and vote on ideas across different themes.

Two more online workshops were held in August to rank and refine the actions and goals. From this, a Plan was drafted and many community members contributed to drafting and refining the Plan. Any actions that were not prioritised into the body of this Plan are included in the Appendix, and may be developed further and commenced at a later date.

The Plan you see before you today is driven by the needs and desires of our Woodend Region community to enable a local response to climate change and bring about effective change.

An illustration of the project process is shown in Figure 1 on the next page.

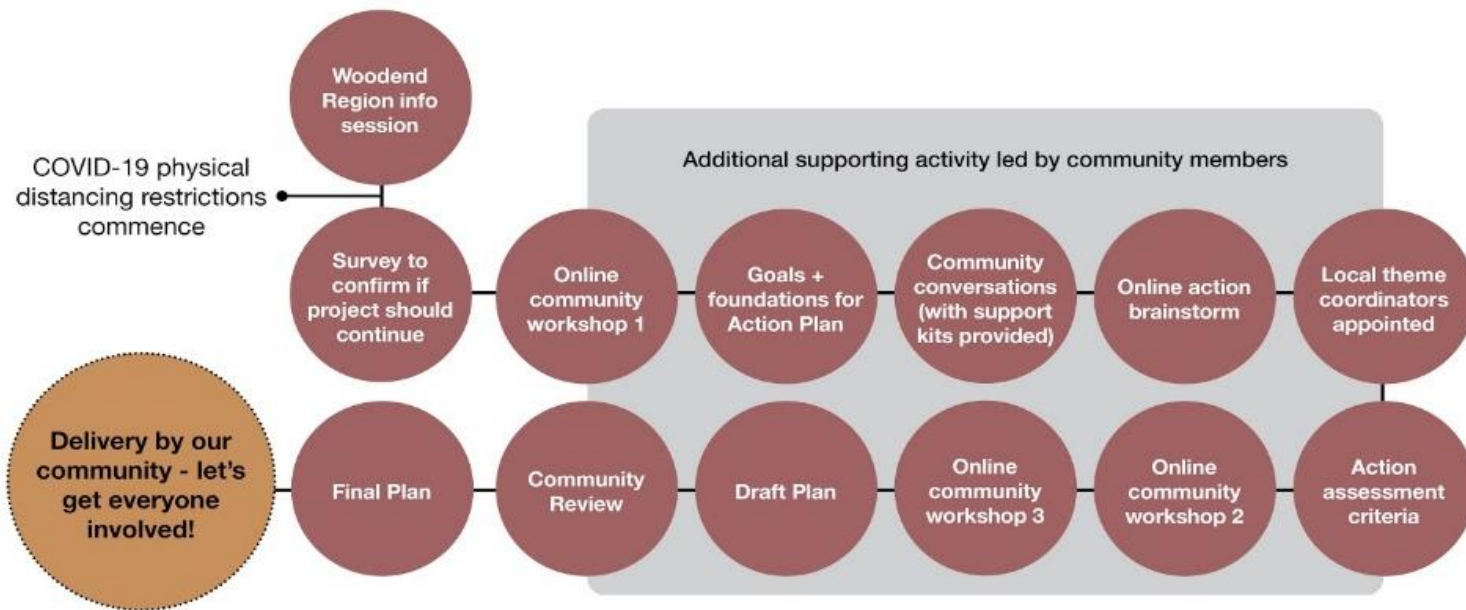


Figure 1: Process undertaken for developing this Climate Change Action Plan

## How to Get Involved

Everyone in our community is welcome and encouraged to get involved and take ownership of this Plan.

Most of the actions listed on the following pages have a Lead group or person identified, along with their contact details. If you are excited by an action, we encourage you to contact the action Lead and offer your collaboration.

Some actions to do not yet have a Lead. Anyone in the community is welcome to take a lead on any unallocated actions. All you need to do is talk with your networks about taking the action on - invite others to join you, talk with local groups and post your intention through your local social media networks.

And remember, you don't need to be an expert to Lead or to contribute to an action. There are many different roles and skills needed and so much to learn by working together.

Also remember that this Plan captures the community thinking at a point in time. Ideas and actions will evolve over time as circumstances allow. If you have other ideas for projects and the willingness to kick-start them, we encourage you to do so.

Together, we can improve the sustainability of the Woodend Region!

## How the Plan will be Administered

We still need to confirm how this Plan will be administered. As far as keeping the Plan valid and coordinating update as projects progress, the options discussed included:

1. Decentralised model: No overarching coordination of the Plan. Essentially the delivery of the Plan will focus on each Lead managing their actions. People will continue to collaborate through information communication channels and through the action "[Connected Groups In Woodend](#)". This was the pathway chosen by the group in Malmsbury.
2. A committee model: A committee is formed to help coordinate and keep the Plan updated. The structure of and representation on the committee, regularity of meetings and communications by this group would need to be determined by the group itself. It could be as simple as an annual check-in or a more frequent connection.
3. A semi-centralised model: A central contact person or small group is formed around each of the principles 'People on Board' and 'Zero Net Emissions' (see page 9). These groups work on their goals and communicate as needed to ensure everyone is moving toward the common vision and supporting each other wherever possible.

While at the end of the plan development process in late 2020, a semi-centralised governance model was informally emerging, we encourage you to chat with your collaborators and hold in your mind that there may be different opinions in the community. We encourage you to keep an open mind about the best way to move forward. Remember, the decision we make, will be our best effort for this point in time. There is always the possibility to try a different coordination model and evolve it as needed.

Amazing action is already underway and you don't need to be held back from taking action while the finer details of the Plan are being resolved over time. If you see an action in this Plan that you would like to get involved in, reach out! Where an action doesn't have a lead or contact, approach contacts listed for related actions in the plan, or contact Silvana Predebon at Macedon Ranges Shire Council to be introduced to others (phone 5421 9659, or [spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au)).





## Building on Strong Foundations

The community in and around Woodend district is already taking action on climate change, and we have undertaken a mapping exercise to make visible on one page action that is already taking place across the themes identified at the start of the project.

The mapping exercise has made a start in identifying groups and organisations that are currently active in the Woodend region community in relation to climate change.

The resulting mind map (Figure 2 on the next page) shows that the Woodend Region community is already taking a broad range of action, which this Plan aims to complement and build on, rather than duplicate.

The boxes shaded in lighter orange show the Themes that the Cool Changes workshops developed, while the boxes in darker orange show the two principles supporting all actions. Current activity in the community has been mapped to the themes to make visible in a new form what is already happening, within the framework of this plan.





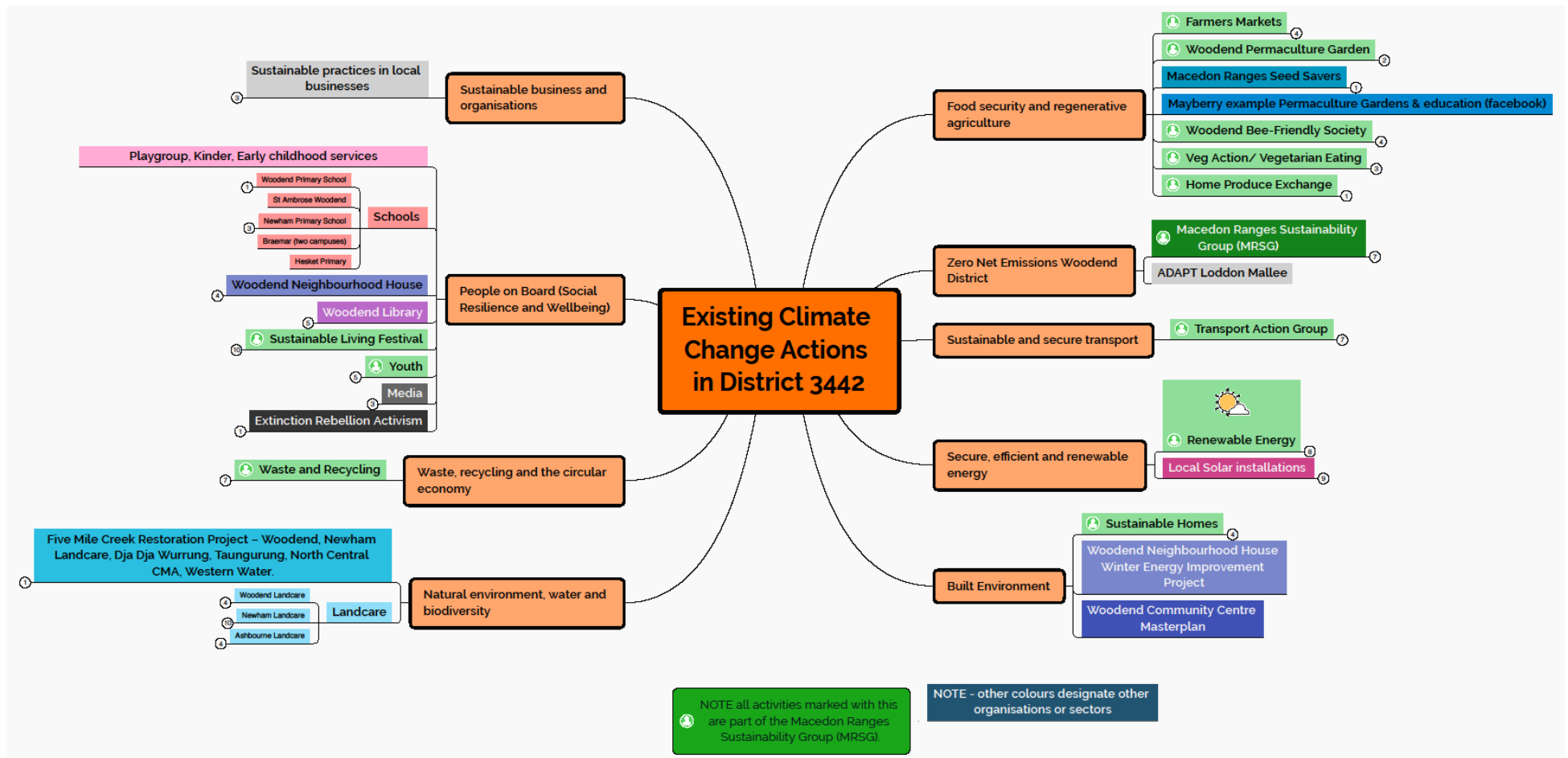


Figure 2: Activity for sustainability underway in the Woodend district in 2020, mapped to key themes

## Overarching Principles

When the project commenced in March 2020, three key goals were identified to guide action:

**People on Board.** To build local climate literacy, confidence, clarity and conviction in taking action. To help us all feel empowered and supported in the face of climate change.

**Zero Net Emissions.** For the Woodend district to achieve zero net emissions by 2030.

**Adapting to climate change.** To ensure our people and place is resilient against the inevitable impacts of climate change.

As discussions progressed, an understanding that actions working towards zero net emissions and/or facilitating adaptation to climate change would continue to grow as awareness and engagement grew amongst the community. The three goals were subsequently replaced by two overarching principles to support all actions in the plan - an aim for **Zero Net Emissions**, enabled by **People on Board**.

## People on Board

Shifting many more people from awareness to action is key to accelerating and amplifying our collective progress and impact. Actions that connect people and interests and result in reducing the adverse impacts of everyday actions help to ensure:

- Our community is a strongly bonded network of groups and individuals who embrace our climate goals and support, appreciate and add value to each other's work.
- Local businesses, organisations and schools are active participants in our climate change action journey, acting as strong agents for change
- Our community has a high level of climate literacy

Whilst there is an obvious interest in climate change and the public's awareness and understanding of climate change is improving, we cannot assume that all members of the community have a full and accurate understanding of the causes and consequences of climate change.

Consequently, we also cannot assume that all members of our community will see the need for the projects we develop.

But social norms are a powerful thing! By taking action ourselves, we are modelling what's possible and what can and will become normal to us all. Through People on Board, we seek to engage people to help them understand the reality of climate change and just as importantly, help them understand that they have power in this equation. Change is best seeded where people have a sense of the problem, how it will impact them and those they love, AND how they can make a positive difference.

Because our community is diverse and we all have different learning styles it is essential that a variety of approaches are offered. It is also important that dialogue about climate change take place in a number of different settings.



## Zero Net Emissions

Our community is deeply ambitious and committed to real change. Working together we can reach zero net emissions by:

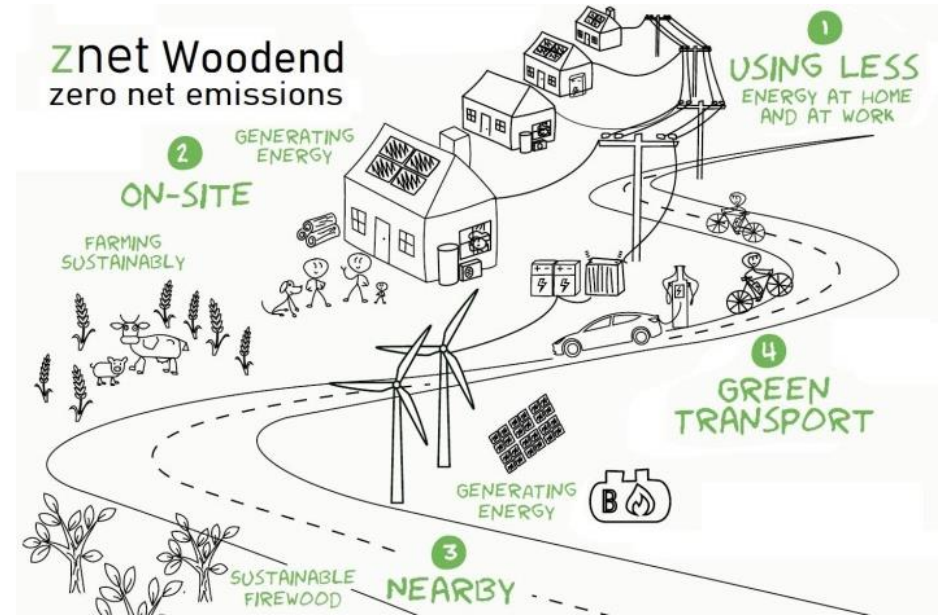
1. Reducing the amount of energy we use at home, at work and in how we travel
2. Switching to renewable energy sources (like wind and solar)
3. Seeking ways to sequester\* carbon so it is not released into our atmosphere and contributing to climate change
4. Reducing the amount of waste we send to landfill

Achieving zero net emissions will help to mitigate climate change. What is mitigation you might ask? Well, imagine you're on board a sinking ship with a big leak. Sealing the leak to halt more water coming in is mitigation. In other words, it's addressing the root cause of the problem rather than dealing with its effects. In a climate context, as the International Panel on Climate Change describes, mitigation is "human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases".

While zero net emissions might sound ambitious, Woodend Region is not alone in its ambition. Macedon Ranges Shire Council is committed to achieving zero net emissions for its corporate operations by 2030-2031. The Victorian Government wants to see Victoria reach zero net emissions by 2050 (we'd like to see it happen much earlier!). And several councils across the state are working with their communities towards similar goals, for example, the whole of Hepburn Shire is aiming for a zero net emissions status by 2029.

The current carbon footprint for the Macedon Ranges community can be found in Appendix 3, showing the relative contribution of different emission sources to the total amount of emissions generated by activity within the shire. The profile can be used as a guide for directing action in high impact areas.

\* Carbon sequestration is the capturing and long-term storage of carbon dioxide. When something sequesters carbon, it removes it from the atmosphere. Think about trees - they absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and store it in their leaves, stems, trunks and roots. This is carbon sequestration, and trees aren't the only ones who can do it! Seaweed, the ocean and well nourished soils also sequester carbon.



## Themes

The community members who helped create this Plan agreed a holistic approach to climate action was essential to have real impact and ensure we reach our community vision. In line with the three goals initially identified for the plan, that meant considering:

- **Mitigation:** For the Woodend region to rapidly decrease fossil fuel use, meet our energy needs with renewables and take action to reduce carbon in the atmosphere, to achieve zero net carbon emissions by 2030.
- **Adaptation:** To ensure our people and place are resilient against the inevitable impacts of climate change that are already locked in.
- **Resilience:** To enable collective sense making about where we find ourselves as individuals and in community in regard to climate change and what it means. To build local climate literacy, confidence, clarity and conviction in taking climate positive action. To help us all feel empowered and supported in the face of climate change.

These three considerations apply to the seven themes outlined below.



### Natural environment, water and biodiversity

Restoring our natural environment connects us to nature and improves our wellbeing, while creating an important carbon sink and establishing habitat for native fauna.

Through our collective action we aim to ensure:

- Our local ecosystems are lively, strong and healthy
- We support nature to flourish while remaining aware of current and future fire risks which are exacerbated by climate change
- Our key waterways, the Campaspe River, Five Mile Creek and Slatey Creek, and their tributaries are valued, clean and healthy
- At home, we are creating habitat in our gardens and using water wisely to improve the catchment



### Waste, recycling and the circular economy

A circular economy is one that exchanges the typical cycle of make, use, dispose in favour of as much re-use and recycling as possible. This not only ensures that more value is extracted from valuable resources, it is also a significant contributor to reducing our emissions.

Through our collective action we aim to ensure:

- The Woodend region is free of single-use plastics
- Our whole community lives a circular economy lifestyle and this is viable in our homes, businesses, community organisations and schools
- Wherever possible, we are an insourced community, meaning that we look to local products and solutions first



### Sustainable and secure transport

Transport emissions are the second biggest contributor to our overall emissions profile. We can also improve our health and wellbeing by prioritising active transport like walking, cycling and skateboarding.

Through our collective action we aim to ensure:

- Woodend is a walking, cycling, mobility scooter and wheelchair centric town, where active transport is safe and normalised for everyone
- Availability of low carbon transport options for villages within the region
- Using low or zero carbon transport options such as car-sharing, electric vehicles (including electric bicycles) and public transport



### **Secure, efficient and renewable energy**

Carbon emissions from electricity generation, fuels consumed in the manufacturing, construction and commercial sectors, and domestic heating (stationary energy emissions) is the single largest contributor to our emissions.

Through our collective action we aim to ensure:

- Everyone in our community has access to sustainable energy and technology to ensure our homes are warm in winter and cool in summer so we can all be happy and healthy



### **Food security and regenerative agriculture**

We value the contribution of our local producers for the produce they supply, and recognise the role of regenerative practices to enhance land and waterways while supporting a reduction in carbon emissions.

Through our collective action we aim to:

- Support and encourage farmers in their stewardship of the land and waterways
- Support our local farmers and food producers of all scales
- Share and distribute food locally to ensure everyone has the healthy food they need



### **Health and wellbeing**

People are at the heart of driving change and so it is vital that everyone in our region has the physical and emotional support they need, particularly in the increasingly uncertain and challenging times climate change is creating.

Through our collective action we aim to ensure:

- Our community is physically and mentally well and supported to live well, even in the face of a changing climate
- We have the energy to continue our work toward a better Woodend region and thereby, a better planet



### **Better built environment**

The homes we live in and the community infrastructure we use should provide us with adequate shelter and keep us comfortable now and into the future. With the changing climate, it is important that our existing and new buildings are able to adapt while also supporting our net zero emissions goal.

With this Plan we aim to ensure that our buildings and infrastructure:

- Are resilient to climate change
- Support a zero carbon future by reducing overall energy demand and reliance on fossil fuels
- Provide comfortable amenity for all users and occupants



# OUR ACTIONS

To help us reach our Vision, we have created a set of actions that we, the community, will work to implement. To demonstrate the depth of our work, each action is tagged with an icon to show which Themes they deliver on (see list to the right). All our actions have multiple benefits (or co-benefits as they are often called) so many actions are tagged with multiple themes.

We encourage you to review the actions and consider where you would like to contribute your energy.

The actions are not presented in any particular order - the numbering is there simply to allow for easy referencing. Most of the actions listed on the following pages have a lead group or person identified, along with their context details. If you are excited by an action, we encourage you to contact the action lead and offer your collaboration.

Some actions do not yet have a lead. Anyone in the community is welcome to take a lead on any unallocated actions. All you need to do is talk with your networks about taking the action on - invite others to join you, talk with local groups and post your intention through your local social media networks.

And remember, you don't need to be an expert to lead or to contribute to an action. There are many different roles and skills needed and so much to learn by working together.



Natural environment, water and biodiversity



Waste, recycling and the circular economy



Sustainable and secure transport



Secure, efficient and renewable energy



Food security and regenerative agriculture



Health and wellbeing



Better built environment

## 1. Support Schools to embed Climate Studies in Curriculum and Undertake Practical Climate Projects

**PURPOSE:** This action will support our local schools and students to take an active role in delivering this Plan. Our youth are the future custodians of this world and are the ones who are likely to suffer the brunt of climate change. The recent and ongoing student-led climate demonstrations clearly show that they care and want to see action. Families could also be engaged through the students.

**ABOUT:** To support schools to deliver quality content about climate change in their curriculum and to actively involve and support them in Cool Changes projects. Some steps could be:

1. Audit the school curriculum to see where climate change is taught and if required, suggest how this could be embedded into delivery.
2. Provide teachers with support resources and if required PD sessions to ensure they can effectively deliver content. The audit will enable us to see what each individual school needs and for us to tailor an approach that best suits their circumstances.
3. Encourage and support schools to take actions to mitigate climate change and become involved in activities in this Plan. We would aim to link a volunteer to each school to act as a mentor.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Local schools and volunteers from local environmental organisations and groups. Links to action 2.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** This is a low or no cost action.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** An understanding of the curriculum and understanding how climate change can fit.

**STATUS:** Planned

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action leads Pete or Alice via Silvana on [spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au)



## 2. Share Local Climate Stories

**PURPOSE:** Our personal stories are powerful tools for shifting many more people from climate awareness to climate action.

Our stories reveal less known backstories, showcase work already being done and inform the community about the broad range of ways to participate and contribute according to their interests.

Warm, well designed conversations are likely to grow optimism, catalyse changes of understanding, calm anxieties that block action, build positive relationships, connect people to others taking action, and influence people to take action themselves.

**ABOUT:** Video record locals telling their personal climate story. Empower locals to video themselves or others in their networks telling their climate story. Share stories through social media.

Understanding and sharing our personal stories of changing feelings and actions around climate change is core to having productive conversations about climate change, as described in the Climate Change Conversation Kit (CCCK) which was created as part of this project (see Appendix 2).

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Any locals taking climate action including, MRSG and its Action Groups, the Neighbourhood House, the Woodend Library, Landcare Groups, church groups, youth groups, schools, artists, businesses etc. Links to actions 1 and 3.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Victorian Government Let's Stay Connected funding scheme (in connection with the MRSG/SLF).

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Video, interviewing and interpersonal skills.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action leads Pete or Alice via Silvana on [spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au)



### 3. Connected Groups in Woodend

**PURPOSE:** Communities that are better connected, cope better during disasters and bounce back more quickly. Climate change will see us facing increasing intensity and frequency of shocks and stressors

**ABOUT:** A community conversation about Summer Living in Woodend was held in February 2020. It commenced with insights from some locals who work in the area of emergency management. A book was produced to capture community comments and concerns expressed after the summer's devastating bushfires and you can find it [here on the Woodend Neighbourhood House website](#).

Through this action we will continue to foster the relationships between some of the active connectors in our community and engage with other community groups to foster more connection between groups and thereby build a stronger, more resilient local community.

This action can be low effort and include social events as well as formal events and presentations to share information, news and ideas between groups.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** All local community groups and organisations: Rotary, Lions, MRSG, Woodend Neighbourhood House, Churches, sports groups, CFA, Red Cross, SES, Landcare, Council, and others. Links to action 2.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Low cost action.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Participation from community groups.

**STATUS:** Ongoing.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact the action lead Woodend Neighborhood House if your community group would like to participate [reception@woodendnh.org.au](mailto:reception@woodendnh.org.au).



### 4. A Safe Place: Conversations About Our Connection to Earth

**PURPOSE:** This action will build the resilience and wellbeing of our community. It will take care of needs that often have no outlet or support. These conversations - with the mind and heart - will help give us the courage to act ourselves and with others. This type of reflective practice has proven to assist volunteer and workforce sustainability, i.e. the energy and passion to continue to stand and act when it feels like you are going against the tide.

While this action might not be for everyone, there will be a portion of the population that is drawn to this work and will find it energising.

**ABOUT:** Build on the global Courage & Renewal Retreats framework to offer a safe reflective space to encourage people to share their story, their feelings and experiences around their connection to Earth, people and the climate conversation.

This can lead to communities of congruence and social action that can influence people's energy to act.

There are local facilitators of other modes of reflective practice that could lend themselves to this purpose.

Sessions could be held via Zoom and in personal COVID restrictions and facilitator availability allowing.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Approach the Woodend Neighbourhood House, welcoming other modes of safe dialogue.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Local facilitators nil, other facilitators might need to be engaged through funding.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Facilitators with relevant skills or accreditation.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action lead Louise via Silvana on [spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au)



## 5. Bush Kindergartens

**PURPOSE:** Foster a deep connection to nature for children and their carers, in turn create a feeling of desire to care for our environment. Help our kids become curious, resilient and resourceful.

**ABOUT:** Create opportunities for nature playgroups and bush kindergarten experiences. This could be through current community kindergartens or by setting up something like [Eco Explorers Bush Playgroups Melbourne](#) or [Timbernook](#). For example TimberNook provides nature-based play experiences for children that challenge the senses and inspire creativity, independence, and imagination in the great outdoors. It is a business model, so someone from the community would need to be able to set this up as a business.

There are also examples of community-led, free programs run by parent group volunteers.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Projects could also be run through the Community Kindergarten program or perhaps Cobaw Health. Woodend Playgroup, Woodend Kindergarten, 2 Woodend childcare centres.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** None identified.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Resources required would depend on the selected model. This action could be delivered free with very few resources or set up as a pay-per use model if there was enough local demand.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** No action lead has been identified. If you're passionate about this action, you are encouraged to talk to your networks and take a lead on this action.



## 6. Green Sports

**PURPOSE:** This action will engage a section of the community in climate action that is already feeling the effects of climate change as they take to the "field". This action will support the local sports community to be involved in climate action while participating in activity they are passionate about - sport.

It gives a broader section of the community an opportunity to take part in delivering this Plan and help us achieve zero emissions.

**ABOUT:** Sport is a powerful engagement tool. This action adopts the [United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework](#) and acts through an audit, planning and communication model. Activities may include:

- Providing workshops, skills and resources to enact change.
- Becoming [Team Champions for Earth](#).
- Local clubs leading 'green rounds'. Similar to 'pink rounds' that support Breast Cancer or 'blue rounds' for Beyond Blue, Clubs wear green arm bands or something green as a public show of support for our planet and the future of our smallest sports fans, our children.
- Advocating for new facilities to be built with zero emission frameworks and older facilities to work towards this goal.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Council sport and recreation officers, club committees and administrators, kids from clubs (a great opportunity for young people to take a leadership role in their clubs), State Sporting Associations, local leagues, VicHealth, Sport and Recreation Victoria, Team Champions for Earth (@Champions4Earth), #sportstrike4climatetoo, #greenarmbandsforclimateaction, United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework #UNSfCAF. Sports Environment Alliance (<https://sportsenvironmentalliance.org/> #SEA\_theChange #noplanetnoplay), The Sustainability Report (<https://sustainabilityreport.com/>, @SusReport)

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Seek funding through VicHealth or Sport and Recreation Victoria, Sports Environment Alliance.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Participation of local sporting teams and clubs.

**STATUS:** Ongoing. New season starts post October 2021.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action lead Annabel at [annabel.greensports@gmail.com](mailto:annabel.greensports@gmail.com).





## 7. Z-NET Woodend Region

**PURPOSE:** Z-Net aims to provide a clear pathway to zero net emissions by 2030.

Our region already has a large number of sustainability initiatives: the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group (MRSNG) and its numerous Action Groups, Landcare, the Neighbourhood House and other community groups.

Z-Net Woodend will help local groups and individuals understand the full spectrum of locally relevant actions and their likely scale of impact. It will seek to make the intangible tangible and orientate us all behind a common goal and timeline. It will highlight high-impact carbon reduction opportunities that we are not yet tackling. This knowledge will help us collaborate for higher impact and will also add weight to our funding applications.

**ABOUT:** This action will start a Z-NET Woodend Region program to develop with a Community Zero Carbon Transition Plan with clear actions and implementation phases (e.g. 1 year – quick wins, 5 year – zero energy, 10 years – zero emissions). We will seek to track and visualise progress of each initiative, as well as the overall program.

Z-Net is a technical modelling approach to documenting and prioritising emission reduction and carbon sequestration actions. Our approach will follow the tried and proven [Z-NET Blueprint model](#) and draw heavily on the findings from the [Hepburn Z-Net project](#). We can access their open source databases to support the development of our model, however some data relevant to our region may need to be sourced and entered.

Although the modelling part of the Z-Net is highly technical, the ultimate output from the Z-Net approach is a user-friendly, graphic representation of the findings that help everyone understand where we are at, where we want to be and how we can all collaborate to get there.

This Woodend “pilot” – once successfully up and running – could lead to a Shire-wide Z-NET program.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Z-Net Hepburn, [z-net.org.au](http://z-net.org.au), Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group and [Action Groups](#), Council, Woodend Neighbourhood House, Woodend Landcare, Woodend CFA, Rotary, Lions Club, Business Association etc.

This action could be an umbrella action that supports, expands and helps to drive all the zero net emissions in this Plan.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Funding will be needed to support this action and may be sought from MRSNG, Council, State, Federal grants program.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** We can reuse a lot of material from Z-NET Hepburn to reduce our resource needs.

Required skills are very broad from community consultation, communications, graphic design, writing, data analysis and database management, grant application development, leading and participating in hands on initiatives. A lot of these skills are already present in the above mentioned organisations and can be harnessed for this common goal.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact the action lead, Zero Net Emissions Woodend district working group at [znet3442@gmail.com](mailto:znet3442@gmail.com)





## 8. Home Sustainability: Information is Power!

**PURPOSE:** Encourage and enable renters and buyers to look for the attributes that will help them save money, be more comfortable in their homes and use less energy. It will provide incentive for owners and vendors to provide sustainability features in rentals and properties for sale. The net result should be an increase in the overall "sustainability" standard of housing available locally.

**ABOUT:** To create a market for sustainable housing in the Macedon Ranges by:

- Improving renters' and homebuyers' access to information about property attributes important in the Macedon Ranges (Climate Zone 7)
- Encouraging owners and vendors to disclose how their properties measure up on the important attributes, as part of rental or sales promotions
- Helping real estate agents improve their knowledge of home sustainability

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Local real estate agencies, Sustainability Victoria, [The Centre for Liveability Real Estate](#).

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Some funding would be required. Training for Real Estate Agents could be self funded as a CPD activity.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Access to real estate agents, sustainable design knowledge (which Sue has), volunteers to help with delivery.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action lead Sue at [susthomes@mrsg.org.au](mailto:susthomes@mrsg.org.au).



## 9. Home Energy Audits and Retrofits

**PURPOSE:** This action aims to significantly reduce energy usage in homes. This will save households money and contribute to our zero net emissions goal. Many of the retrofits will also make the home more comfortable and resilient in times of extreme weather.

**ABOUT:** An energy assessment would be undertaken to understand opportunities for improvement across heating and cooling, heating hot water, appliances, and lighting. The [Victorian Residential Efficiency Scorecard](#) is one option for an assessment tool.

High priority retrofits would be identified for each household and advice given to support implementation, including suggestions for reputable local suppliers. For low income households, grant funding could be sought to implement energy saving retrofits for free.

There are existing resources to support home retrofits including [Your Home Manual](#), [Ecomaster videos](#), and [Sustainability Victoria](#) website.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** MRSG Sustainable Homes Action Group, [MRSG Healthy Homes Project](#), Woodend Neighborhood House, Ecomaster and other suppliers, Cobaw Health. [Geelong Sustainability](#) has a successful model for delivering household audits and retrofits. Their advice could be sought.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** This action could be delivered by volunteers, with households funding their own upgrades or funding could be sought to ensure auditors and project managers are paid. Funding will be essential to deliver retrofits to low income households.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** TBC.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** No action lead has been identified. If you're passionate about this action, you are encouraged to talk to your networks and take a lead on this action.



## 10. Bulk Buy Solar Systems

**PURPOSE:** Increase the uptake of solar installations by households, business and other organisations in the Woodend region.

More solar systems means more renewable energy created within the area. This directly reduces the electricity consumed from the grid and reduces our emissions. It also gives people access to more affordable power.

**ABOUT:** Continue the collaboration with MASH, and increase promotion of the existing bulk buy program through local advertising, social media, stands at farmers markets, MRSG newsletter etc.

Through a concerted local campaign, we will aim to normalise the installation of solar right across the Woodend region.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** [MASH](#) and MRSG [Renewable Energy Action Group](#)

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Not required.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Communications support, project management.

**STATUS:** Planned - once a target number for solar installations has been established.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact the action lead, Zero Net Emission Woodend District working group at [znet3442@gmail.com](mailto:znet3442@gmail.com).



## 11. Green Waste Recycling at Home

**PURPOSE:** The community can learn how to create compost, build soil and reduce the carbon emissions that are created when we send waste to landfill.

**ABOUT:** Teach and give tools to the community to compost their own green waste at home. This can be turned into fertiliser and very rich compost perfect for gardens.

This will reduce the cost of green waste removal and processing by the council.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** MRSG and Council, [Compost Revolution](#), Woodend Community Permaculture Garden

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Seek funds to help supply worm farms or compost bins. Costs could be reduced through a DIY build a worm/farm or compost workshop.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Know how to compost and create a worm farm

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** No action lead has been identified. If you're passionate about this action, you are encouraged to talk to your networks and take a lead on this action.



## 12. Not Down the Drain: Household Water

**PURPOSE:** Water is an essential and precious resource. We will likely see overall drier conditions as a result of climate change. We must learn to capture, use and reuse water wisely so that we are resilient in the facing of a changing climate.

**ABOUT:** This action would involve a communications campaign and potentially programs that help people better manage their water and install water saving technologies.

The action could include water tanks, grey water systems, water efficient fixtures, saving water in the garden, education to reduce water contaminants (less chemicals, paints etc down our drains).

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Western Water, Council.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** TBC.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** TBC.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** No action lead currently identified. If you're passionate about this action, you are encouraged to talk to your networks and take a lead on this action.



### 13. Pop Up Protected Bike Lanes

**PURPOSE:** This action aims to demonstrate the need for and benefit of safe cycleways. It will give people the opportunity to experience the pleasure of well-protected bike lanes. Ultimately this action seeks to increase the number of people walking, riding, skateboarding etc - transport that is safe, zero emissions, improves health, encourages connection with our environment and each other, frees-up parking space for higher benefit activities and improves resilience.

**ABOUT:** [Pop-up cycleways](#) have proven successful across the globe. Using temporary measures like traffic cones, signage, temporary paint and planter boxes, create protected bike lanes along each side of High street, and potentially a few key destinations (e.g. local school).

Temporary signage and traffic control would direct motorists to give way to pedestrians and cyclists on the side roads, and reduce speed.

The Pop Up event could be held over a long weekend or potentially over the course of a week. The number of bike lane users could be documented and the user experience captured to support advocacy efforts for permanent cycle ways.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** MRS [G Transport Action Group](#), [Bike Safe Macedon Ranges](#), VicRoads, Council, local traders, schools, community groups. Links to action 10.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Funding can be sought for the pop up.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Volunteers, pop up supplies (chalk paint, stencils, planters, signage), graphic design and printing, traffic engineering, communications and engagement.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** No action lead has been identified. If you're passionate about this action, you are encouraged to talk to your networks and take a lead on this action.



### 14. Bulk Buy - Electric Car Scheme Like Hepburn

**PURPOSE:** To increase the uptake of Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the district via an EV bulk buy initiative. The increased uptake of EVs will directly reduce the petrol usage. Even if the EV is charged from the grid the emissions are significantly lower compared to an ICE (internal combustion engine) car. If the EV is charged using solar panels or with renewable energy from the grid the operational emissions are zero.

**ABOUT:** To facilitate a bulk buy initiative of imported used EVs together with the [Good Car Company](#).

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** MRS [G Renewable Energy Action Group](#)

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Not required.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Communications support, project management.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact the action lead, Zero Net Emission Woodend District working group at [znet3442@gmail.com](mailto:znet3442@gmail.com).



## 15. A Pocket Full of Plastics

**PURPOSE:** Aim for a plastic free Woodend region to reduce landfill emissions and protect fauna and their food chain.

Plastics are an environmental challenge that we could start addressing in a pocket size amount and move onto bigger plastic free and recycling initiatives.

**ABOUT:** Kick start a plastic free Woodend Region by identifying plastics in the community, and recyclable and non-recyclable options.

Encourage residents to pick up a "pocket full" of plastic over a specific time period and bring their plastics to a collection point for sorting. Publish the sorted results as recyclable and non recyclable. Identify where these plastics could be recycled and how to dispose of them thoughtfully. Identify ways to replace those plastics with sustainable options. Highlight specific brands or industries that have produced the collected plastics. Involve local artists to work with the collected plastic to "tell the story" through different mediums.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Schools, child care and kindergartens, Repair Cafe, Woodend region food industry and other businesses, Coles, sports and community clubs, Plastic free July, The New Joneses, Take 3 for the Sea (<https://www.take3.org/>) Transfer Station, Council, Neighbourhood House.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Not required (community driven).

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Space to house plastics collected, promotions, individuals able to sort plastics, artists to help tell the story.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** No action lead has been identified. If you're passionate about this action, you are encouraged to talk to your networks and take a lead on this action.



## 16. One Million Trees (or More)

**PURPOSE:** To sequester carbon (equivalent to the district's transport carbon emissions) by planting a significant number of trees (e.g. a million) in a coordinated way across the district.

This action will not reduce carbon emissions, but it will offset emissions and help reach the goal of zero net carbon emissions. Once planted, trees continue to sequester carbon until they reach maturity. Then they continue to store that carbon.

**ABOUT:** It will be impractical to reduce the district's emissions completely to zero (at least in the medium future). Carbon sequestration by planting trees can offset the remaining emissions.

The Zero Net Emission Woodend District working group could identify available land, funding opportunities and keep a tally of trees planted. We will need to select species that are resilient in a changing climate.

People could also participate by planting trees on their own property.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Everyone! From Sustainability and Landcare groups to schools, kindergartens and sport clubs. Organisations and community groups could "adopt a tree zone". Links to actions 18, 20, 22.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Grants would be sought to buy trees and materials. Investigate options for local residents and businesses to purchase local carbon offsets.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Tubestock, tree guards, available land, lots of volunteers to plant and nurture trees for the first couple of years.

**STATUS:** Planned - once a target number of trees has been established.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact the action lead, Zero Net Emission Woodend District working group at [znet3442@gmail.com](mailto:znet3442@gmail.com).



## 17. Pledge for More Veg

**PURPOSE:** Numerous studies have shown that the greatest way for individuals to combat climate emissions is to reduce red meat and dairy in our diets. Only 14% of people in Macedon Ranges eat sufficient vegetables so a reduction in meat consumption and an increase in veg will also have positive health impacts.

Behaviour change research tells us that information does not change habits – social norms and role models have a much greater influence.

**ABOUT:** An annual campaign to encourage institutions (schools, community organisations, sporting clubs, council etc) to [make a public pledge](#) to promote more environmentally sustainable and healthy foods, drawing from the [Planetary Diet concept](#).

The activity would potentially involve: a) Distribution of materials explaining the concept and process. b) Workshop for local businesses. c) Pledge negotiations and support. d) Pledge marketing to promote organisations that have signed a pledge. e) Ongoing monitoring of pledges and support to maintain/build on these.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** MRSG – Veg Action + Waste team, local businesses and organisations (public and private), Council, Doctors for Nutrition, VicHealth. Links to actions 1 and 21.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Grants would be sought to support a communications campaign. Could also seek partnerships, funding, support or donations from local or Victorian food producers.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Partnership development, graphic design, workshop skills, network management, publicity, monitoring, nutritionist / food advisor.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action lead Claire at [veg@mrsg.org.au](mailto:veg@mrsg.org.au)



## 18. Catchment Plan for Five Mile Creek

**PURPOSE:** Developing a Catchment Plan will engage landholders and identify opportunities to enhance the biodiversity and waters of Five Mile Creek and its tributaries. In Woodend, a masterplan for the public space will help us consider future recreation needs and further enhancements to improve the natural environment.

**ABOUT:** Originating on Mount Macedon and passing through Newham and Woodend, Five Mile Creek supports a range of threatened flora, fauna and vegetation and in particular the threatened Black Gum. Within the township of Woodend, the creek provides a major open space and environmental asset for Woodend.

Woodend Landcare has been working to rehabilitate the public land along Five Mile Creek for 20 years. Newham Landcare has been working with many landholders in the Newham Area.

To gain the most value from future enhancement and rehabilitation work, it is important that we have a shared vision and that efforts contributed by different stakeholders are well integrated.

This project seeks to work with the community, Council and key stakeholders to identify and map future projects on the Creek.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Western Water, North Central Catchment Management Authority, sporting groups and creek users.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Landcare could apply for a Landcare or Council community grant to fund the initiatives. Links to action 16.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Landscape design and catchment management expertise, input from community and local groups.

**STATUS:** Commenced - masterplan development planned for 2021.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action leads Woodend and Newham Landcare [woodendlandcare@gmail.com](mailto:woodendlandcare@gmail.com)





## 19. Edible Verges

**PURPOSE:** Local food production and seasonal eating increases our resilience. We can be more self-sufficient, understand and engage with the seasons, and discover food production potential. We can re-value Aboriginal food knowledge to support reconciliation.

Less than 14% of locals eat sufficient vegetables. Eating more veggies, legumes, grains, nuts and seeds, improves human health, reduces emissions (if meat/dairy is reduced), and can reduce environmental damage from industrial livestock farming.

**ABOUT:** The development of seasonal vegetable streetscapes, including bush foods, on Woodend's Main Street (managed by Council) and [on our nature strips](#). These edible verges would be supported by regular events/activities/behaviour change communications to promote more sustainable diets.

The verges will provide a visual guide to what's in season; ensure the streetscapes align with our sustainability values; provide free, accessible food for all; and produce for community cooking classes.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Council, [MRSG Veg Action](#), local businesses, Cobaw Community Health, South Gippsland Shire Council see [Foster](#) project), tourism sector, Traditional Owners ([Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Aboriginal Corporation](#), [Taungurung Land and Waters Council](#), [Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation](#))

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Seek funding or in-kind support from Council and health or environment grants programs.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Gardener/horticulturist, behaviour change communication, indigenous bush foods specialist, community liaison.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action leads Lucy and Robin via Silvana at [spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au)



## 20. Expand Biodiversity Projects: More People Planting

**PURPOSE:** More people learning and observing nature multiplies the knowledge and power we have to maintain and expand biodiverse ecosystems and biolinks that are fundamental to life on earth. This project will advance the resilience and wellbeing of ecosystems and of humans, and help us feel more bonded to the lands we live on. This appreciation will provide the energy we need to stand up and speak and vote for the climate and for biodiversity.

**ABOUT:** Build on the foundations established by Landcare and other environmental groups - they're doing a mighty job. [Newham & District Landcare Group](#) has exciting educational events and hands on learning. People love them, and many more locals could be drawn into these activities. Ashbourne Landcare is creating a biolink protecting the headwaters of the Campaspe River. Existing programs include: Collecting nocturnal fauna data by torchlight; [protecting remnants of biodiverse ecosystems](#) with many wildflowers and rare species; planting native plants in biolink projects.

Work is led by Landcare. Opportunities exist for connectors and communications to increase participation in existing activities. Let's get together and see how we can build a huge force of citizen scientists and nature custodians, based on and multiplying the first-class programs that already exist locally.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Landcare groups, local businesses, environmental groups, Council, landholders, Traditional Owners, [NCCMA](#), Western Water. Links to actions 16 and 22.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Additional grants can be sought to increase activity and community communications/engagement.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Community engagement, many hands!

**STATUS:** Ongoing

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact your [local Landcare Group](#).



## 21. Re-Localising Food: Connecting Consumers to Farmers

**PURPOSE:** Australia's food supply systems focus predominantly on large scale producers and retailers. We need to diversify our food supply systems to be more resilient and secure. Increased focus on developing local food systems has the big benefit of reducing food miles and ensuring a better price for food to farmers that produce it.

One way to invigorate local food supply and focus farming efforts on regenerative agriculture is to make purchasing local food easy.

**ABOUT:** Produce an information booklet and web resource on what our local farmers produce and how it can be accessed (farmers' markets, veggie boxes, shops that sell goods, farm gate sales). This will build greater connection between consumers and producers, and strengthen local food supply chains.

Develop promotional materials such as video interviews, blogs and articles that increase support for local suppliers and farmers.

Build in focus on regenerative farming and environmental efforts of farmers and the 'planetary diet' (diet that supports both human and planetary health) to promote a shift towards healthier and better eating.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Council, [MRSG Veg Action](#), farmers, small retailers, Doctors for Nutrition, Vic Health. Links to action 17.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Grant sought via Council or Vic Health.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Outreach, documentation, design and layout, marketing and promotions.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action lead Claire at [veg@mrsc.org.au](mailto:veg@mrsc.org.au)



## 22. Biodiverse Backyards / Tiny Urban Forests

**PURPOSE:** To increase bio-diverse natural environments in towns, villages and hamlets. This will improve resilience in our natural environment, and thereby increase resilience in our community too. As exposure to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.

**ABOUT:** Biodiverse backyards can contribute to biolinks, create small carbon sinks, incorporate tiny wetlands and tiny urban food forests. The forests can include bee homes, nesting boxes and cut logs for community meeting, resting and meditating spaces.

[Tiny urban forests](#) use a method invented by a Japanese botanist in the 1970s. Dense copses bursting with biodiversity can thrive in areas the size of a tennis court. Known as 'Miyawaki' forests, the trees grow more quickly and absorb more CO2 than plantations grown for timber. Species selected need to be climate change resilient. Tiny urban forests are springing up in Europe. We could lead in Australia!

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Landcare, Council, schools, farmers, small landholders, community groups and individuals (to grow tube stock), tree lopping businesses, Men's shed, field naturalists group, seed saver group, bee keepers, wildlife groups. Links to actions 16 and 20.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Staff time from Council. VicHealth could provide funding for mental health and social connection.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Plant lists, seed exchange, tube stock growers, fencing, community engagement, land.

**STATUS:** Commenced.

**GET INVOLVED:** Woodend Landcare has started an initiative "A Box of Habitat" to create biodiverse backyards in Woodend. Newham Landcare offers low cost tubestock to residents. Contact [woodendlandcare@gmail.com](mailto:woodendlandcare@gmail.com).



### 23. Carbon Neutral Firewood

**PURPOSE:** Ensure supply of Carbon Neutral / sustainably produced firewood and biofuel

**ABOUT:** The community in Woodend use a significant amount of firewood every year. As shown in previous sustainability studies, this is mostly likely from sources such as non-managed forest, and doesn't ensure firewood is regenerated. Burning wood from sustainably managed forests is carbon neutral. And while household heating by open wood fireplaces has a low efficiency, it can be significantly improved with modern wood burning stoves.

The woodend timber mill site could be used to process sustainably sourced logs (and thinnings from fuel reduction works) into timber for joinery, firewood and biofuel for power generation. A local market for timber would allow the culture of open fires to continue in a sustainable manner, and could provide an incentive for local landholders to plant trees.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Landcare, Trust for Nature, Wood for Good

**RESOURCES NEEDED:** People with skills in forestry, and sustainability modelling.

**STATUS:** planned

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact action lead Karl at [Karl@kolora.com](mailto:Karl@kolora.com)



### 24. Community Garden

**PURPOSE:** Create a space where anyone in the community could walk in, feel welcome and inclusive, make a few friends and get a bite to eat. This will improve the resilience of our community by building social connections.

**ABOUT:** Create a community garden in Woodend that allows anyone in the community to come and sit in the garden, meet people, learn some skills and take home some food, locally grown.

The community garden can also supply food to the local foodbank and supply seeds to the community. A plot of land about the size of 4 tennis courts would be needed for the garden.

There are many examples of this model ([Ceres in Melbourne](#), the [Macleod Community Garden](#) and also the [St Kilda Community Garden](#)).

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** MRSG.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** In-kind support from a local landholder - potentially Council or VicTrack - to provide suitable space for the garden.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Passionate gardeners or aspiring gardeners, seeds/seedlings, gardening supplies.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** No lead currently identified. If you're passionate about this action, you are encouraged to talk to your networks and take a lead on this action.





## 25. Sustainable Consumption - An Inspired Affluent Society

**PURPOSE:** Carbon emissions are rising worldwide, alongside our increasing affluence. Our community is relatively affluent, is highly educated and has a high number of volunteers. We have a unique opportunity to lead a change in the relationship between affluence and consumption. This action aims to support our community to urgently reduce their consumerism, while living a rich meaningful life.

**ABOUT:** This action will deliver a local campaign to educate, encourage and challenge Woodend residents to reduce consumption. We will develop a toolkit to guide people through a change process to help people challenge themselves with the question: “what do I actually need?”. The toolkit could cover issues such as:

- Food: Support local and regenerative farmers. Grow your own food and swap produce. Eat low carbon foods.
- Transport: Prioritise walking, riding and public transport.
- Refuse, Reuse, repurpose and recycle: use local op-shops and Buy Swap Sell websites. Borrow from friends and neighbours.
- Seek pleasure locally: Connect our environment, holiday locally, experience and buy local art.
- Building and renovating: Use passive solar design, seek high efficiency homes and appliances, use sustainable and recycled materials.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** MRSG Action Groups

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** None identified.

**RESOURCE NEEDS:** Sustainability, behaviour change and communications expertise.

**STATUS:** Planned.

**GET INVOLVED:** No lead currently identified. If you're passionate about this action, you are encouraged to talk to your networks and take a lead on this action.



*The ABC's War on Waste program reminded us about the importance of sustainable consumption. Image courtesy of the ABC.*

## Action Map

The map over the page (Figure 3) was developed by our community to show how the actions proposed in this plan add to existing activity in each of the key themes.

Perhaps you would like to take a moment to explore the map, reflect on the power of work we're doing and what we can achieve together.

We ask you to consider where and how you might like to get involved in strengthening our community and becoming a zero net emissions region.





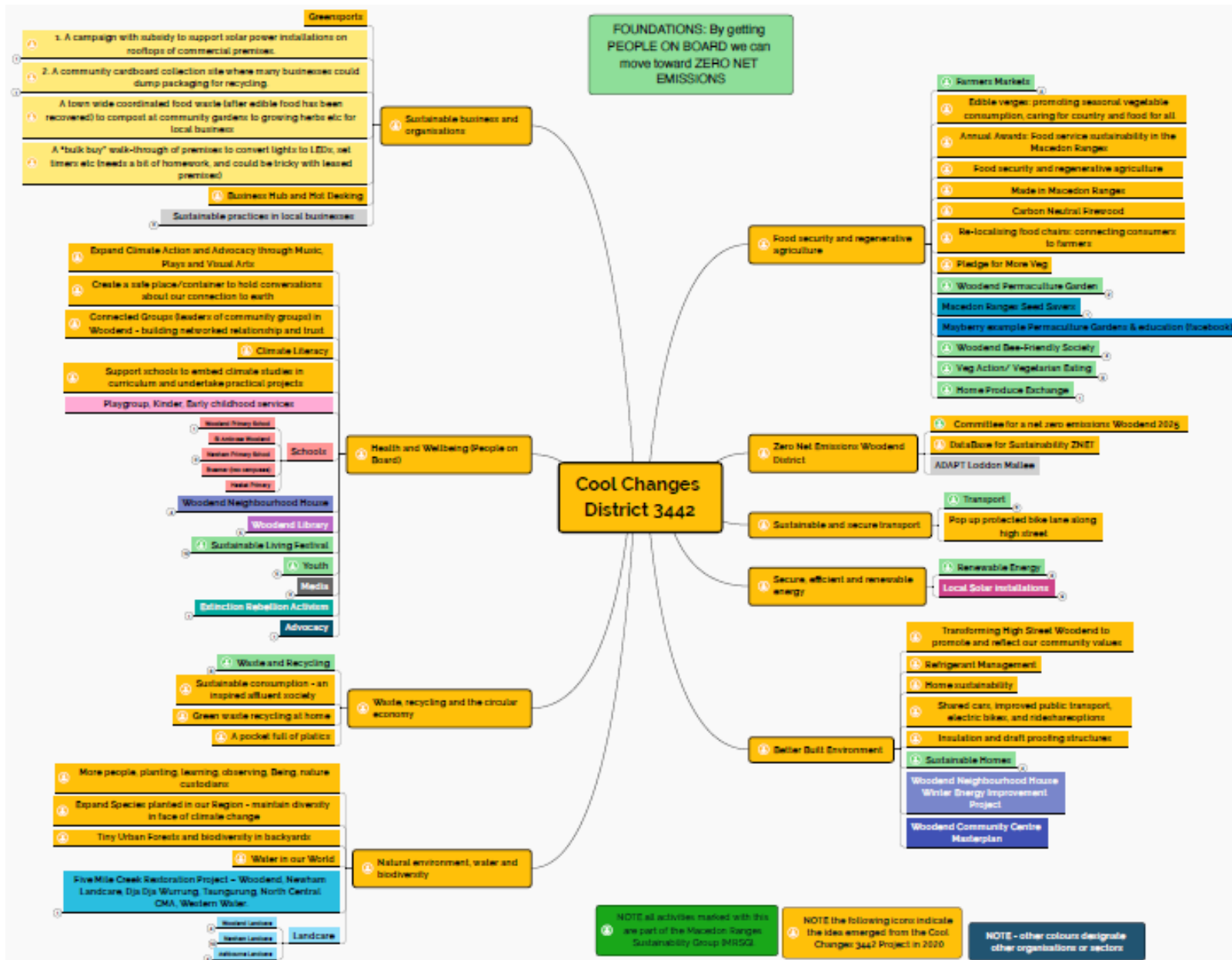


Figure 3: An overview of current and proposed community action for sustainability, mapped to key themes



# APPENDIX 1: OTHER POTENTIAL ACTIONS

The 'potential' actions presented in this section were developed through the Action Brainstorming process via the Cool Changes Woodend Region online [platform](#), and online workshops.

The actions presented here are currently not priority actions for the community, but can be drawn on for inspiration and implementation at a later date when the timing is right and circumstances allow.

Due to the variety of input sources, some ideas have been discussed and documented in detail while others are only seedling ideas. The following list is a compilation of all the information that was gathered through the process of developing this Plan.

## **Action:** *Transforming Our High Street*

**Description:** The redevelopment of High Street will demonstrate our community values. The transformation will create comfortable, inviting, playful and safe outdoor places so we can "live in the environment", linger and connect with each other. This will help reduce social isolation and promote visibility of everyone (all ages and abilities) in our community. Let's create a friendly village feel!

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** High Street Woodend has looked pretty much the same since it was part of the Calder Highway. The centre lanes and through traffic are dominant and the "people" parts are squeezed off to the sides. The northwest and southeast sides are disconnected.

Using sustainable principles and working collaboratively, this action will create space for people to gather, socialise and play. It will create sheltered spaces where it is pleasant to sit outdoors. Transport infrastructure will prioritise human powered and shared transport, while also recognising High Street's role as a local corridor. Space should be used creatively to allow for greenery, exhibitions, start-up businesses and micro-businesses.

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Council, VicRoads, local traders.

**Are funds needed?** Grant funding needed for significant infrastructure changes. Smaller changes could be done through local collaborations.

**What skills, expertise or other resources would be needed?** Expertise needed includes town and public space planning, sustainability, and community engagement.

**Action:** *Refrigerant Management (built environment)*

**Description:** A lot of people were surprised when refrigerants popped up as the number one solution to global warming in Project Drawdown. One of the side-effects has been to raise the profile of what is usually an invisible industry: Refrigeration, Air conditioning and Heat Pumps. It could be useful to reinforce this by making Woodend a test case for using a community based model. Refrigerant Management is not yet on the radar of the local community.

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Households and businesses. Target businesses, focus on corporate responsibility.

**Is there a willing action lead(s):** Phil.

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** In Australia, the operation of refrigeration and air conditioning systems consumes about 23 percent of all the electricity generated in the country and is responsible for more than 12.5 per cent of Australia's total national emissions. Indirect emissions from HVAC&R systems typically represent 90 per cent or more of total emissions, so HVAC&R energy consumption clearly has a significant sustainability impact.

We do not know what the stock of refrigerant containing systems is in Woodend but the community led approach could help galvanise a local effort and provide a way of gathering local information to lead change on a national, and potentially a global level. It would also help surface and share stories that could help make the town more sustainable.

**Are there groups or organisations you would collaborate with?** Lots of governments, industry associations and regulators have an interest in collaborating in this project. These include: The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE), Refrigerants Australia, Refrigerant Reclaim Australia, Australian Refrigeration Council, Australian Institute of Refrigeration Air Conditioning and Heating.

Bendigo has created a Drawdown Bendigo group too.

**Are funds needed?** Yes - investigate green loan programs for businesses to improve sustainability. First step is to create a thinking group to create a shared understanding of the problems. Government, and maybe refrigerant companies may sponsor specific aspects or contribute in-kind resources.

**What skills, expertise or other resources would this action need?**

Stakeholder engagement is the main skill, project management, and communications.

**Action:** *Community Battery. (renewable energy)*

**Who is likely to participate in this action:** Community, Council & REAG

**Is there a willing action lead(s):** Henry & Ralf

**Are there (or are there likely to be) willing collaborators:** REAG

**Action:** *Hybrid Energy Park (renewable energy)*

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Community, Council and REAG

**Is there a willing action lead(s):** Henry & Ralf

**Are there (or are there likely to be) willing collaborators:** REAG

**Are funds needed?** No

**Action:** *Grid capacity for installing (renewable energy)*

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Community and REAG

**Is there a willing action lead(s):** Henry & Ralf

**Are there (or are there likely to be) willing collaborators:** REAG

**Are funds needed?** Yes

**Action:** *Promotion of Green Power (renewable energy)*

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Community and REAG

**Is there a willing action lead(s):** Henry & Ralf

**Are there (or are there likely to be) willing collaborators:** REAG

**Are funds needed?** Yes

**Action:** *Microgrids (renewable energy)*

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Community, REAG, CVGA

**Is there a willing action lead(s):** Henry & Ralf

**Are there (or are there likely to be) willing collaborators:** REAG

**Are funds needed?** Yes

**Action:** *Electric bikes for hire / Subsidies for electric bikes / Charging stations for electric bikes (health & wellbeing, sustainable transport)*

**Description:** Along the lines of a "bike share" program (like carshares in metro cities), where households subscribe to own a share in an electric cargo bike stored and charged (solar) in local neighbourhoods

**Action:** *Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station (Sustainable Transport)*

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Tourists and visitors from outside of the Ranges.

**Action:** *Shared cars, improved public transport, electric bikes, and rideshare options*

**Description:** We have a high reliance on cars in the area because of the lack of public transport or rideshare options around town. It's often one person in the car to make a trip to the supermarket and back, and for many of us it's just not practical to do this by foot or push bike. The Flexi-Ride bus service needs to extend to at least the town boundary and other rideshare, shared car, or even shared electric bikes could be considered

**Action:** *Recycle Batteries and Solar Panels (renewable energy, and circular economy)*

**Are there (or are there likely to be) willing collaborators?** REAG.

**Action:** *Education around why we have solar. Power your own vehicle with your solar energy (renewable energy)*

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Community and REAG.

**Is there a willing action lead(s):** Henry and Ralf.

**Are there (or are there likely to be) willing collaborators?** REAG.

**Are funds needed?** Yes.

**Action:** *Business Hub and Hot Desking. WNH and Library precinct - hot desks, like the Foundry (health & wellbeing, sustainable transport, and built environment)*

**Description:** Create a space in Woodend (at the community house?) where people can work from instead of travelling to work. They can walk/bicycle to the desk and work from Woodend. There are many areas in Melbourne that have similar community shared areas.

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** This will encourage the community to meet each other, share ideas and build relationships as well as reduce the use of fuel, ease congestion on public transport and increase health and wellbeing of the community.

**Are there groups or organisations you would collaborate with?** MRSG

**Does this idea need funding? If so, how might you fund it?** Yes, this could be a small self established business within the community house.

**What skills, expertise or other resources would this action need?** None, just some good connection to the internet and a few hot desks etc.

**Action:** *Government Funding - being invested into green energy - what can we get ready for projects when funding is available (renewable energy)*

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Community and REAG.

**Is there a willing action lead(s):** Henry and Ralf.

**Are there (or are there likely to be) willing collaborators?** REAG.

**Are funds needed?** No.



**Action:** *Committee for a net zero emissions Woodend 2025 (Z-net) (renewable energy)*

**Description:** Develop a committee for Woodend with a shared vision for a net zero emissions Woodend 2025.

Estimate and project the total cost that residents, businesses, and governments will spend in the township on services, products and infrastructure over the next 5 years.

Bring that figure back to the present and ask: If we collectively invest that budget now in different technology, infrastructure and social innovations, what would be possible?

Prioritise effort based on the reduction of shire emissions resulting from electricity generation (51% of emissions), transport (30% of emissions), and gas (10% of emissions).

Introduce evidence frameworks that challenge self-imposed individual and institutional beliefs on achievable rates of change.

Pressure test both the vision and the means to achieve it. What negative impacts may occur? How will benefits and harms be shared?

Create partnerships with knowledge, technology, regulatory and finance providers to build a community led opt-in scheme for residents, businesses and governments to achieve that vision within the desired timescale.

Record, showcase and export that process to other parts of Australia and the world as a model for achievable change.

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Community, Council and REAG.

**Is there a willing action lead(s):** Henry and Ralf.

**Are there (or are there likely to be) willing collaborators?** REAG.

**Action:** *Advocacy (all themes)*

**Description:** Advocacy must be central and coordinated across sectors. As most actions will be facilitated by frameworks and programs at the State and Federal level, the need to advocate for appropriate change to ensure action for sustainability at the local level is well supported and not undermined. Areas for advocacy include update building and other regulations, carbon pricing, independent environment agency with sustainability goals, pricing of externalities, an economic system review to move to a sustainable model across all sectors. Advocacy to remove otherwise major roadblocks to sustainable actions being effective.

TBC - a focus area or action in its own right, or part of all focus areas

**Action:** *'Made in Macedon Ranges' (food security and health & wellbeing)*

**Description:** Create a label "Made in Macedon Ranges" and use the same ideas as "made in Australia". Market this to allow an increase in local product uptake to decrease the amount of food miles on food but also encourage local business growth.

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** This will reduce food miles on products, grow local community business.

**Are there groups or organisations you would collaborate with?** MRSG

**Action:** *Replace diesel bus with Community electric bus (health & wellbeing, and sustainable transport).*

**Is this action technically viable?** To be investigated.

**Action:** *Annual awards: Food service sustainability in Macedon Ranges (food security and health & wellbeing)*

**Description:** Focused on the cafes/ businesses /organisations in the area, these awards would recognise efforts towards (and promote through extension prior engagement with local businesses):

- Promoting the consumption of more local, seasonal food
- Promoting an increase in vegetable consumption and planetary health
- Reducing food waste.

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** We know from behaviour change research that information does not change people's habits – social norms and role models have a much greater influence on the average consumer. Businesses such as cafes in the area can play an important role in changing dietary habits: creating amazing food to inspire people to eat differently (more veg), emphasising where food comes from (local / regenerative farming) and promoting seasonal eating. Leadership of business and organisations within the community can shape consumption patterns and encourage the adoption of the desired behaviour in the local population.

We can support businesses on this path by:

- Running workshop(s) for the sector explaining the environmental imperative for changing menus and waste practices, including the concept of a planetary diet
- Providing ideas/ support + connections to organisations keen to make change
- Developing a network of cafes /businesses working to make change that can support each other through 6 monthly informal events
- Hosting an annual awards event recognising the steps businesses have taken to improve their practices.

**Are there groups or organisations you would collaborate with?**

MRSG – Veg Action + Waste team, Local businesses/cafes, MRSC, Australian doctors for nutrition and Sustainable restaurant association UK

**Does this idea need funding? If so, how might you fund it?** Yes - MRSC funding for awards event + publicity materials

**What skills, expertise or other resources would this action need?**

Partnership development, Design skills, Workshop management, Network management and Event management

**Action:** *Expand Species Planted in our Region to Maintain Diversity in face of Climate (health & wellbeing, and natural environment)*

**Description:** Local indigenous species will not all be able to survive and thrive with the changed climate. Adjusted species list for biodiversity plantings need to be made available and promoted.

These new lists must include species from our west and north which are better adapted for the climate that our local ecosystems will face as climate change progresses. Research into suitable species is ongoing and the new information needs to be clarified and disseminated to all who are engaged in biodiversity planting.

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** Greater resilience in our ecosystems as climate changes. Better chance of survival of more species.

**Are there groups or organisations you would collaborate with?** Yes - have to check out who has the data we need. Newham Landcare are in touch with suitable experts and groups.

All landcare groups and any other networks of people doing environmental planting. Council and landholders could also participate.

**Action:** *Water in our world (health & wellbeing, and natural environment)*

**Description:** Placing water security, quality and restoration as a filter on the whole project.

During further consultation can a key question be asked.

"is there a way that this project can support 3442 to provide and protect Water security, quality and restoration"?

Improving the health of the catchment could be part of the Five Mile Creek Action Plan which is something the CMA and Landcare Groups and the local indigenous community are looking to do so that work needs to be supported and added into the Plan. This was discussed during this workshop - actions already underway need to be included in the Plan.

Note: This is a goal. There needs to be a set of actions that address the issues of water security, quality and restoration, be that at a local or industrial level

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** It creates the world of water as an important commodity, in a similar way to food security and waste management.

Ideas develop and become integrated into broader community work:

- In a sports context water could be identified in ground management, single use plastics
- In a biodiversity context maintaining species in plantings that filter water
- In a built environment context informing building etc..

**Does this idea need funding? If so, how might you fund it?** No.

**Anything else you'd like to tell us about your idea?** I don't think it needs a lead as such - if thought of as the way to go it could be incorporated into the writing process for the Action Plan.

**Action:** *Wellbeing Program at Woodend Community House (health & wellbeing)*

**Description:** Create a program for any community member to attend, free of charge to get skills in Wellbeing or be part of Wellbeing classes like meditation, yoga, financial advice, planning, diets and health, etc

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** Having Social Resilience is a major part of having a sustainable community. Human Factors influence everything we do everyday and how we approach our environment

**Does this idea need funding?** We might need funding to be able to design and set up a good program structure and then pay specialists to run some of the workshops or appointments.

**Additional information:** There is a similar program called "Thrive" that has services for diets, finance, life planning, medical services, etc.

**What skills, expertise or other resources would this action need?** Human Factor Specialists and Psychologists

**Action:** *Crowdicity Platform Usage (health & wellbeing)*

**Description:** Ensure the Crowdicity Platform is used in the long term for collecting ideas, forming a team and executing these. This could also be an example source for other areas in Australia on Projects.

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** It is important for the community to be able to have a place where they can post an idea, other community members can join and comment and then use the same platform as a communication and collaboration tool to execute the project.

**Who is likely to participate in this action?** Community, Council and REAG. Potential to collaborate with MRSG.

**Is there a willing action lead(s)?** Henry & Ralf.

**Does this idea need funding? If so, how might you fund it?** Yes. The cost of the platform from the supplier of crowdicity. Henry will find out the potential costs.

**Implementation comments:** Not very high community representation <1%

**Action:** *Expand climate action and advocacy through music, plays and visual arts (health & wellbeing)*

**Description:** A project to engage our choirs, singers and songwriters, visual artists and playwrights and comedians of all ages to create works expressing their feelings and thoughts about climate change, with the goal of encouraging more of our community to process their feelings and move into action.

Possible Activities:

- Song competition for best climate change song (videos online, community voting, performances at Sustainable Living Festival and Farmer's Markets etc, many community venues, during Covid online mainly)
- Invite visual artists through all our art groups, schools and beyond to make works connected to climate change in the local context particularly ; exhibit and display those works widely. Interview the artists and those who are affected by the art about how it has influenced their action on climate change.

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** Artistic works touch our hearts and minds. Local artworks by local artists may impact locals more deeply.

Artists may not see their work as climate change related. By inviting and encouraging artists to express their feelings and thoughts about this crisis through their creative work, we may bring a whole group of community members to see a way that they can take powerful climate action.

Social change is brought about by transforming the way we collectively think and feel. (see more on the social research behind this statement in Rebecca Huntley's new book Talking about Climate Change in a way that Makes a Difference).

In 3442 and everywhere else we need to swell the ranks of climate activists. People produced this problem, only people can solve it.

The proposition: Local people expressing their thoughts and feelings in powerful ways will move other locals to action more powerfully.

**Are there groups or organisations you would collaborate with?** Many - artists groups of all kinds, choirs, bands, schools

**What skills, expertise or other resources would this action need?** People and promotion skills for the arts projects.. Speaking skills to groups and individuals.

**Action:** *Create a new Cool Changes theme that encompasses Climate Literacy and Social Resilience & Wellbeing*

**Description:** The current list of Themes includes Social Resilience and Wellbeing.

A group is forming through Cool Changes with a bunch of connected ideas around catalysing people to grow in their motivation to act on climate. Some of these ideas go beyond the Resilience and Wellbeing theme.

The term Climate Literacy has been defined in terms of climate systems science in the past. This term could be broadened to include the psychology of human attitudes and our ability to change. Or we could create a new term that encompasses both the climate science and the social science that underpins successfully engaging the majority of the human population in tackling the climate crisis.

As social scientist Rebecca Huntley says in her book "How to Talk about Climate Change in a Way that Makes a difference" - "More science isn't the solution. People are the solution. "

The key to progress on climate change is in the psychology of human attitudes and our ability to change. We need everyday conversations about climate change going on locally and everywhere to enlarge the ranks of the concerned, engage the disengaged and persuade the cautious for the need for action.

People created the climate problem, only people can solve it. Therefore we need to understand better how to engage with people about climate in a way that makes a difference.

Climate Literacy as well as resilience and wellbeing in relation to climate change needs to grow in all of us, to be able to experience the emotional change as well as the climate systems understanding to make the informed choice to be engaged and active on climate.

Climate (Science) Literacy is defined as an understanding of your influence on climate and climate's influence on you and society.

A climate-literate person in this definition

- Understands the essential principles of Earth’s climate system
- Knows how to assess scientifically credible information about climate
- Communicates about climate and climate change in a meaningful way, and
- Is able to make informed and responsible decisions with regard to actions that may affect climate.

This (in progress) diagram below explores the way that climate literacy connects with climate conversations and other interactive events that lead to increased resilience and wellbeing , confidence and conviction, leading to personal climate action (with community).

**Why is this idea important for Woodend? What would it achieve?** Our goal is to swell the ranks of the climate change actors and advocates in our community.

We need to use many ways to reach and influence people and we need a theme that encompasses all these methods.

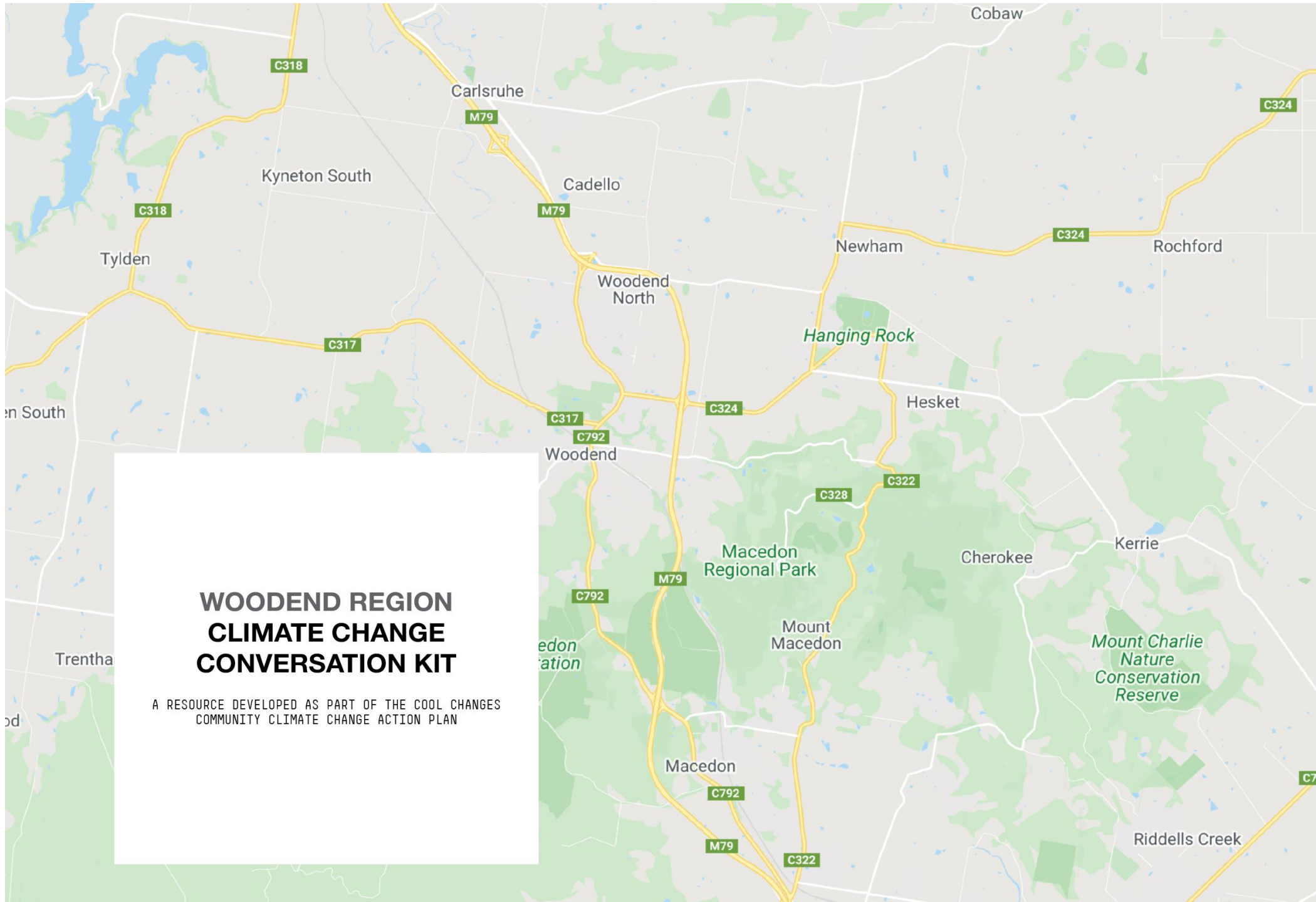
Climate Literacy is a suggestion for a theme under which we can connect and engage in diverse ways with people to transform their (and our own) understanding at the cognitive and emotional levels.

Open to better ideas for the missing theme!

## APPENDIX 2: CONVERSATION KIT

The following 6 pages contains the ‘Conversation Kit’ that was distributed as part of the engagement process. The kit was created to allow community-members already involved in the Plan’s development to introduce the project and guide conversations with additional participants. The process generated invaluable feedback from the community regarding the project and action refinement.





**WOODEND REGION  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
CONVERSATION KIT**

A RESOURCE DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COOL CHANGES  
COMMUNITY CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

If you care about climate change action, this kit is for you.

If you wish you could talk about climate change but are feeling blocked or frustrated, this kit is for you.

This kit will help you think about your climate story and give you prompts to make conversations easier to start and hold.

In having these conversations, you can feel more connected, more supported, and more informed.

When people in Woodend are chatting climate in the street, at schools pick ups, while we're shopping and over cups of tea or coffee, we can make talking and acting on climate change the norm. We can share the load. We can make things happen!

Hopefully this kit will encourage you to share stories, exchange information and support one another in these challenging times.

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Woodend locals, Angela Thiel Paul, Alice Aird, and Kellie Flanagan all provided vital insights to develop this kit.

If you are keen to keep developing and sharing your climate change conversation skills beyond this kit, please email Alice: [airdhedge@gmail.com](mailto:airdhedge@gmail.com).

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived sustainably with the Land for more than 120,000 years.

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land in and around the place now known as Woodend, the Dja Dja Wurrung people. We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, and emerging, and by extension, the other Aboriginal people residing on this land.

Traditional Owners and Custodians are Aboriginal people who have ongoing traditional and cultural connections to country. Aboriginal people in Victoria were dispossessed of their traditional lands and often forced off their country onto missions and reserves following European settlement of Victoria.

Many Aboriginal people do not live on their traditional lands today, however that does not diminish the rights or responsibilities of Traditional Owners and Custodians to their country.

While the Macedon Ranges has a strong Indigenous association, there is very little documented information on Indigenous history in the Macedon Ranges Shire.

We do know that tribal clans, mainly the Wurundjeri, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung, roamed along the grassy waterways of this region to hunt, fish and gather food across territory defined by tribal language, and bounded by geographical features such as mountain ridges, creeks or rivers.

Dja Dja Wurrung tribes covered a very large area of central Victoria, including land around the present towns of Kyneton, Woodend and Malmsbury and the west side of the Campaspe River around Carlsruhe and Kyneton.

#### COOL CHANGES PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council has launched the Cool Changes Program work with local communities across the shire to facilitate the development of local climate action plans.

The Cool Changes Program evolved from the successful pilot project, Sustainable Malmsbury, and has been informed by a shire-wide survey undertaken in September 2019.

Cool Changes is now being conducted for the wider Woodend district (postcode 3442). Through a series of workshops, meetings, informal gatherings and online conversations, we aim to develop a Climate Change Action Plan by and for the Woodend region community.

Despite the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the development of the Plan will continue, with the final draft due in October 2020.

This project has been funded by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council and Sustainability Victoria's Zero Carbon Communities Transition program. Cool Changes will test a community model for climate change action. Insights will be captured and shared so that other communities can follow.

Document developed by: [HIP V. HYPE Sustainability](#)

The following people have made insightful inputs into this document: Angela Thiel Paul, Alice Aird, Kellie Flanagan and Silvana Predebon.

Revision: V3

Date: 13.06.20

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# Woodend Region: Climate Change Conversation Kit

Climate conversations are now more important than ever. They normalise climate change, create space for shared solutions, provide support and ultimately, have the power to drive real and sustained change.

But, we know it can feel difficult to start conversations about climate change, which is why we created this kit.

So, grab a cuppa, have a read, and think about the conversations you'd like to have with your neighbours, friends, family or colleagues.



IMAGE BY KIM LANDY.

## REMEMBER, MOST PEOPLE AGREE

Talking to people about climate change is probably easier than you think - you'll most likely find lots of common ground.

The 2020 Australia Talks National Survey found that 72% of Australians rate climate change as a problem for us personally<sup>1</sup>.

The most common view among Australians is that "climate change has been established as a serious problem and immediate action is necessary", with 60% of us feeling that way. Another 24% of us agree climate change is taking place and feel that "some action" should be taken.

That's 84% in favour of action!

Given the overwhelming support for climate action, and the underwhelming level of action currently occurring at the global level, many people are feeling anxious or concerned about climate change, even if they're not talking about it publicly. By opening up a conversation, you may be able to provide vital support to someone. Also, in sharing concerns, motivations and opportunities you will likely create more energy for local action!

## HOW WILL MY CONVERSATIONS CONNECT TO THE WOODEND COOL CHANGES PROJECT?

The purpose of having local, personal climate conversations is to make these conversations completely normal. The more we talk about climate change, the more we'll feel empowered rather than burdened, and be able to act together for deep change.

The Woodend Cool Changes project can be a convenient conversation opener. "Hey, have you heard about the Cool Changes project we're working on at the moment?..."

Your conversation may also be a way to draw new energy into Cool Changes and/or another community climate group. But you don't need to think of every conversation as a recruitment channel. It's the conversations themselves that are the most important. No doubt they'll give you a much better sense of where your community is at and what they care about when it comes to climate change (and beyond). All this shared understanding is invaluable for designing and delivering effective local initiatives.

## References

1. What Australians really think about climate action, Annika Blau, 5 Feb 2020, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-05/australia-attitudes-climate-change-action-morrison-government/11878510?nw=0>



# Woodend Region: Climate Change Conversation Kit



IMAGES BY KIM LANDY.

## YOUR CLIMATE STORY

Climate change can be a complex topic, but you don't need a science degree to talk about climate change.

Of course you know that there is overwhelming support and evidence from the scientific community that climate change is a human-caused phenomenon. While you want to be firm in your science based conviction, you don't need a list of data to bring to your conversations.

Motivation often comes from a connection with someone's values or lived experience, rather than statistics. Sadly, we now all have our own lived experience to talk about.

It's helpful to practice telling your own climate story. You might like to use some of the questions below as prompts to get you started.

- \_ When did you first start to think about climate change? What prompted it?
- \_ Why do you believe we should act on climate change?
- \_ How have you and those you love been impacted by climate change?
- \_ What feelings do you associate with climate change?
- \_ What action have you seen that inspires you?
- \_ What provides a source of hope when it comes to climate change?
- \_ What do you do that gives your energy for climate action?
- \_ How do you get support for your climate journey?
- \_ What excites you about Cool Changes Woodend?

## WHY IS MY STORY IMPORTANT?

Stories make change. There has even been research to show that listening to stories can change brain chemistry. Your story is your truth. It's authentic and personal which generally makes it engaging (certainly more engaging than a string of dry facts!).

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD CONVERSATION?

The most effective method to engage with others on climate change is to find and connect through shared values and narrative.

Think of a positive conversation you've had with someone and how it came about.. Often, it is when you've felt heard and realised a shared connection. It. These elements can be achieved even if two people are not in agreement about everything they discussed.

Positive conversations can be transformative for people's perspective and their own feeling of agency on complex issues such as climate change.

Think about how your conversations can empower others. Try to show your understanding of their view, provide support and demonstrate care in your response to them.

As you probably know, the key principles to guide a constructive conversation on climate change are to:

- \_ Listen
- \_ Ask questions to understand their perspective, story, values and concerns
- \_ Connect on the values you share
- \_ Be authentic
- \_ Seek and tell stories
- \_ Keep it local
- \_ Offer opportunities to connect into local action and support networks
- \_ Avoid jargon
- \_ Use positive body language
- \_ End on a positive note

# Woodend Region: Climate Change Conversation Kit

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## CONVERSATION PROMPTS

### STARTING A CONVERSATION

Prompt a conversation by asking by asking open-ended questions. For example:

- \_ I've been thinking a lot about climate change lately. I wonder, how do you feel about climate change?
- \_ What comes to mind when you think about climate change?
- \_ When did you start thinking about climate change? What triggered it?
- \_ Have you heard about the Cool Changes Woodend Project?

### SHARE YOUR STORY

Personal stories are powerful. Don't forget to share yours. It might start with a phrase like:

- \_ I did not always feel this way, it changed for me when...
- \_ I have a daughter/son as well and when they said to me...
- \_ I feel like I have to do something because...
- \_ I've been really inspired/motivated by...
- \_ I've found it really helpful to get involved in...

### HELP PEOPLE FEEL HEARD

It can be useful to summarise what the other person has said. This acknowledges the other person's feelings, and helps make sure you've heard and understood their views. It can also help to uncover common ground. Useful phrases might include:

- \_ Have I got this right, you're struggling with...
- \_ From what you're saying you feel that...
- \_ I know what you mean about feeling anxious...
- \_ Why do you think this makes you anxious?
- \_ When you talk about project "... " I feel really inspired by "... "

### COMMON GROUND AND CONNECTION POINTS

When you hear you have something in common or learn something from the other person, be sure to highlight that in the conversation:

- \_ I also find it difficult...
- \_ I think you and I are alike in that "... "
- \_ That's a good point, I never thought of that..
- \_ You know what it feels like to...
- \_ Wow, I didn't realise that...
- \_ It really sounds like we're on the same page about "... "

### NEXT STEPS RATHER THAN SOLUTIONS

Aim to finish the conversation on a positive note. You don't need to have found agreement on all issues or have found the solution to climate change. Aim to inject hope and share your passion for climate action. Express excitement for a solution and next steps to get involved with local initiatives. You might like to:

- \_ Invite the person to get involved in the Cool Changes project
- \_ Suggest a local group for them to join
- \_ Offer to share this kit with them so they can start their own climate conversations
- \_ Ask for a check-in conversation in the future. Simply saying something like "I've found this conversation so helpful. It'd be great to check-in with you again and see how we're both going."

### TIP: NAME THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

It may sound counter intuitive, but if a conversation ever gets uncomfortable, usually the best thing to do is name it. If you're feeling uncomfortable, chances are the other person is too. By naming the feeling of discomfort you release the tension and at the same time, uncover a small patch of common ground.



IMAGE BY KIM LANDY.

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### BUT WHAT IF I END UP TALKING TO A CLIMATE DENIER?

Don't panic! The same ideas apply. And as long as you're polite, authentic and keep listening, you'll be on solid ground. You may even learn something to help with future conversations.

Remember, you don't need to carry the burden for "convincing" that person. In having the conversation you may open space for them to think just a little differently, and that's an important step.

In conversation with a climate denier, the most important thing is to find common ground. You live in the same town so you've certainly got some shared interests or connection points. Try to remain curious! If nothing else, remember we all want to take care of the people we love and that's common ground.



# Woodend Region: Climate Change Conversation Kit

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER TRICKY QUESTIONS

**'Isn't that the job of Council / State / Federal Government?'**  
Absolutely. To create the change needed, action at all levels of government is essential, as is community action. And we know some levels of Government aren't doing their bit, so we have to keep showing leadership and take control where we can.

**'It's too overwhelming, I don't know where to start.'**  
I agree, climate change can be overwhelming. It's a big problem to tackle. Personally, I've found joining <insert name of local group/ mailing list/ social media page> helped me focus my limited energy and keep me inspired.

**'Here we go again, another greenie.'**  
It's true, I am a bit of a greenie. You sound unimpressed with us 'greenies'. I'd like to understand where you're coming from. Could you tell me a bit more about your perspective? (Then seek to find common ground in their perspective. You may need to prompt them with a question like 'So I'm busy thinking about climate change, what issues are occupying your thoughts?').

**'The little that I can do won't make a difference anyway.'**  
I know it can feel that way but the truth is that every bit really does count. For me, taking action where I can helps me feel like I have a bit more control. Over time, I'm finding I can add more climate action into my daily life. Remember when we first started recycling? It was weird but now, we pretty much all do it. It's become normal.

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## NEED SUPPORT AND PRACTICE?

If you're new to climate change conversations, we recommend having a practice conversation with a trusted friend or someone that you know shares your concern about climate change.

Talking with like minded people is not a waste of time! You'll consolidate your story, inspire each other and most likely learn something new from your friend's journey.

### TALK LOCAL

If you are keen to keep developing and sharing your climate change conversation skills beyond this kit, please email Alice: [airdhedge@gmail.com](mailto:airdhedge@gmail.com).

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## KEEP LEARNING

If you want to learn more about having effective climate conversations you might be interested in:

- \_ [Book: 'How to Talk About Climate Change in a Way That Makes a Difference'](#) by Rebecca Huntley. It's due out on 2 July 2020.
- \_ [Talking Climate Handbook: How to have conversations about climate change](#) by Climate Outreach
- \_ [Climate-Ready Communities, A Guide to Getting Started](#) by the Red Cross
- \_ [Beginning the Climate Conversation, a Family Guide](#) by the Climate Reality Project
- \_ [Conversation Guide: Explaining Climate and Weather](#) by the Climate Council

If you feel you want to brush up on your climate knowledge the [Victorian Government's climate change website](#) is quite useful as is the [Climate Council website](#).

If you're interested in the psychological impact of climate change, you might like to visit [Psychology for a Safe Climate](#).

Need inspiration? [Try the film 2040](#).



IMAGE BY KIM LANDY.

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## THIS KIT IS FOR SHARING

We invite you to share this kit with your local community to help start even more conversations.

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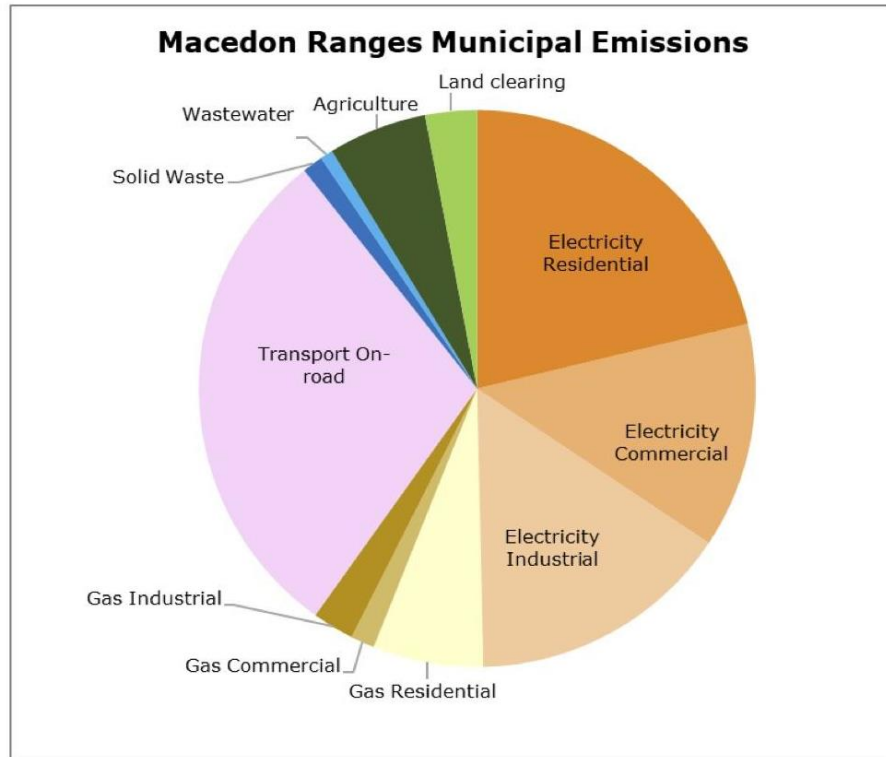
## WOODEND GROUPS

Woodend is lucky to have a range of local groups that can support your climate change journey, including [Landcare](#), [Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group](#) and [Extinction Rebellion](#).

The [local library](#) and [Neighbourhood House](#) also run sustainability events and education periodically.

# APPENDIX 3: MACEDON RANGES COMMUNITY EMISSIONS PROFILE

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council's community emissions for the financial year 2017/18 have been calculated as 760 kt CO<sub>2</sub>-e (carbon dioxide equivalent). Data provided by Ironbark Sustainability in the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Community Emissions Profile Report.



**Figure 5: Macedon Ranges Shire Council community emissions by subsector (excluding negative emissions sources - afforestation)**