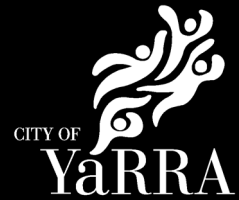


Climate Emergency Plan Community Engagement Report



This report details the specifics of the Climate Emergency Plan community engagement and evaluates the participation. The consultation opened on 23/10/2023 and was live until 04/12/2023.

Why we ran this consultation?

Yarra City Council is developing our second Climate Emergency Plan which will supersede Yarra's first Climate Emergency Plan (2020-24). We conducted community consultation in October to December 2023 (6 weeks), with feedback being used to shape and inform the new Climate Emergency Plan.

Objectives of this engagement

1. Informing the community that the previous Climate Emergency Plan is coming to an end, and we are developing a new Climate Emergency Plan.
2. Understanding the community's aspirations and ambitions for the new Climate Emergency Plan.
3. Seeking ideas from the community and confirming support for areas of priority that emerged as part of the pre-engagement process with key stakeholders. This will help inform the direction of the Climate Emergency Plan.
4. Receiving feedback from the community on:
 - The importance of the key priority themes identified as part of the pre-engagement process
 - Council's leadership role in the climate response
 - Their role in the climate response.
5. Make sure that the voices of those most impacted by the climate emergency are captured as part of the consultation.

Negotiable

1. How the Climate Emergency plan is designed to respond to lived experiences of people who are most impacted by climate change.
2. How much the Yarra community want to be involved in delivering the actions in the plan.
3. The ideas gathered and priorities identified will help inform the development of the Climate Emergency Plan.

Non-negotiable

1. We will deliver a new Climate Emergency Plan that is best practice, sector leading and has a meaningful and maximum impact.
2. We will be ambitious and ramp up our response to the climate emergency.
3. The plan must capture the voices and experiences of those most impacted by, and most at risk of, the impacts of climate change.
4. The plan must cover a broad range of themes and actions to respond to all aspects of the climate emergency.
5. The plan can only contain actions that are realistic and achievable.

What did we ask?

Participants were asked in a survey:

1. We've identified 8 key themes which will help guide Yarra's response to the climate emergency. Please tell us how important you think each of these themes are as focal points for our next Climate Emergency Plan.
2. Through Yarra's Community Vision 2036, our community asked us to prioritise and lead on climate change action. We would like to understand more about what you think Council's leadership role should look like. For each of the

following statements please indicate your level of agreement.

3. Together we can create change. We all have an important role to play in responding to the climate emergency. This includes individuals, households, communities, businesses, not-for-profits and all levels of government. For each of the following actions, please select the option that applies to you.
4. Do you have any other comments about Yarra's Climate Emergency response?
5. Participants were also asked to provide ideas and action for each of the 8 key themes.

(SEE APPENDIX 1 FOR SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE OPTIONS)

What methods did we use?

- Your Say Yarra online portal
- Pop-up sessions (3 – Fitzroy Pool; Gleadell St Market; Councillor Conversations with Community session at Queens Parade, Clifton Hill)
- Yarra Climate Summit (a gathering of key community stakeholders)
- Meetings with Advisory Committees (youth, business, active aging, disability, environment)
- Conversations, workshops, and other events with at-risk communities including young people
- Meetings with representatives of the Wurundjeri Council
- Focus group with a panel of nature experts
- Climate x health panel discussion

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected from those who engaged via the Your Say Yarra page and pop-ups; this is provided in the table below. We did not collect detailed demographic data across other engagements.

What's your connection to Yarra?	Numbers	Percentage
I live in Yarra	38	82.61%
I work in Yarra	13	28.26%
I visit Yarra	8	17.39%
I study in Yarra	2	4.35%
I own a property or mortgage in Yarra	12	26.09%
I rent in Yarra	7	15.22%
I own a business in Yarra	4	8.70%
What gender do you identify as?	Numbers	Percentage
Man	22	47.83%
Woman	21	45.65%
Self described	2	4.35%
I prefer not to say	1	2.17%
What is your age range?	Numbers	Percentage
Under 11	0	0%
12 to 17	2	8.70%
18 to 24	1	2.17%
25 to 34	13	28.26%
35 to 49	11	23.91%
50 to 59	7	15.22%
60 to 69	7	15.22%
70 to 84	5	10.87%

85 and older	0	0%
I prefer not to say	0	0%
What suburb do you live in	Numbers	Percentage
Abbotsford	2	4.35%
Alphington	0	0%
Burnley	0	0%
Carlton North	3	6.52%
Clifton Hill	3	6.52%
Collingwood	4	8.70%
Cremorne	1	2.17%
Fairfield	0	0%
Fitzroy	4	8.70%
Fitzroy North	7	15.22%
Princes Hill	1	2.17%
Richmond	14	30.43%
I live outside of Yarra	7	15.22%
Select all that apply. I am.....	Numbers	Percentage
Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	11	23.91%
A person living with a disability.	6	13.04%
A member of the LGBTIQ+ community.	13	28.26%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	1	2.17%
None of the above.	24	52.17%

I prefer not to say.	1	2.17%
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Engagement Reach

Engagement Activities	Result
Place-based pop-ups (3)	4 surveys completed, 255 people shared ideas
Your Say Yarra page	198 contributions: 93 survey, 105 ideas
Advisory Committee consultations (youth, business, active aging, disability, multicultural, environment)	More than 30 people (not including staff, councillors or facilitators)
Yarra Climate Summit	28 community attendees
Nature Focus group	8 attendees
Climate x health panel discussion	15 community attendees (not including staff, councillors or speakers)
Targeted consultations with at-risk communities	More than 140 people
Targeted consultations with young people (predominantly students)	More than 45 people
Detailed community submissions	2
Meeting with Wurundjeri Council	1 (3 representatives in attendance)

Communications Activities	Result
Social media (paid)	4,621 reach
Social media (organic)	7,321 impressions, 490 engagements, 71 click throughs
Email newsletters	14,951 subscribers, 193 clicks

What did we hear?

Feedback Theme 1		
What did we hear		Our response
<p>The community deemed all topics to be important, however ‘Nurturing nature’ and ‘How we travel’ came through as the most important.</p> <p>This was reflected Your Say Yarra survey data (Q1) and the collation of suggested actions across all engagement data.</p>		<p>All topics will be covered in the Climate Emergency Plan.</p> <p>The topics will be reorganised to better reflect community interests and prevent overlap between the topics.</p>
<p>Your Say Yarra Q1 in order of importance (How important is each of these themes as focal points for our next CEP)</p>	<p>Tell us your ideas (across all engagement activities in order of number of suggested actions)</p>	
<p>How we travel (4.68)</p>	<p>Nurturing nature (446)</p>	
<p>Nurturing nature (4.66)</p>	<p>How we travel (218)</p>	
<p>The homes we want (4.47)</p>	<p>A resilient and just community (212)</p>	
<p>Transforming our energy systems and reducing emissions (4.62)</p>	<p>Developing a circular economy (210)</p>	
<p>Developing a circular economy (4.41)</p>	<p>The homes we want (149)</p>	
<p>Strengthening our food systems (4.36)</p>	<p>Transforming our energy systems and reducing emissions (113)</p>	
<p>Council leadership in the climate emergency (4.34)</p>	<p>Strengthening our food systems (72)</p>	
<p>A resilient and just community (4.27)</p>	<p>Council leadership in the climate emergency (84)</p>	
Feedback Theme 2		
What did we hear		Our response

‘Climate action must be integrated into all Council Plans and considered for all projects, initiatives and decisions’ was the most important role identified by the community.

However, all the roles were deemed to be part of Council's climate emergency role.

**Your Say Yarra Q2 responses in order of importance
(what you think Council's leadership role should look like)**

Climate action must be integrated into all Council Plans and considered for all projects, initiatives and decisions (4.52)

Council should deliver our climate response in partnership with community groups, local businesses and other organisations (4.49)

Council should strengthen our advocacy to State and Federal Governments for a stronger climate response (4.40)

Council should deliver a leading, transformational climate change response (4.34)

Council must prioritise support for those in our community most at risk of experiencing climate impacts, including young people, older people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (4.21)

Council needs to support people to take climate action with friends, family and their community (4.19)

The Climate Emergency Plan actions and strategy will have a strong focus on integrating climate action into projects, initiatives and decisions at Council.

The other leadership roles will also be covered.

Feedback Theme 3

What did we hear

Our response

There is a willingness to take more action, but for some people additional support is needed.

More than half of respondents (53.06%) are already taking individual action. Close to half of respondents (44.90%) are already taking action at home.

Your Say Yarra Q3 responses in order of where people would be willing to take action if they had support (I would do this but I need more support)

Joining with friends, family and local community to take action together (29.59%)

Making changes in my workplace (26.53%)

Making changes within my household (26.53%)

Influencing others and advocating for change (21.43%)

Taking individual actions (21.43%)

Getting involved in Council-led workshops and initiatives (21.43%)

Joining a climate-based community organisation (15.31%)

The Climate Emergency Plan will include actions for Council to support community action, both collective and individual.

This data can also be used during implementation of the Climate Emergency Plan to support community programming.

Feedback Theme 4

What did we hear

Our community cares about equity in climate action.

“It needs to centre First Nations voices.”

“Engage with all CALD networks to help people know about it.”

“Please pay attention more to CALD community.”

“It’s important to ensure renters are supported in climate adaptation & responses. E.g. rates discounts for retrofitting (e.g. window tinting)”

“Recognition of those with disabilities, and the impact of catastrophic Climate change on them, is of paramount importance when developing Yarra’s updated Climate Emergency Response”.

“I am very happy to see an equity lens over climate action, and an acknowledgement of the need to support the most vulnerable in our community. This is critical”

“Yarra needs to strengthen its ability to support community members who are at a disadvantage.”

Our response

The climate Emergency Plan will have a strong equity and First Nations lens.

Feedback Theme 5

What did we hear	Our response
<p>The community expects a broad, strong, and aligned response.</p> <p>"I think we have to get really bold with climate action in Yarra"</p> <p>"There is a disconnect between Council's words and actions. On paper Council is doing well but what actions Council takes are not consistent with its policies and stated objectives. Council fails active transport users whilst subsidising motor vehicle usage. Council maintains open space in a manner convenient to administer/maintenance rather than for activation and use by people, native animals and addressing climate change"</p> <p>"Yarra has been leading in advocacy on climate action for some time. This has created a significant expectation and experience gap. I see my council out there advocating and promoting low emission initiatives. Yet, when I try to take the very action promoted and encouraged, I am hit with brick wall after brick wall of barriers and bureaucracy to take the simplest of changes. There is no guidance and everything requires finding the one person within the bureaucracy who can help find a practical way forward. I would like to see council stop advocating for a while and roll up your metaphoric sleeves to help residents and owners actually make the changes you have been promoting for so long. Residents and owners have been left to navigate the byzantine conflict between heritage and climate action. Council needs to get in the game and provide the settings that both can be achieved easily"</p> <p>"This is a big call. The subtext to this poll is that all Yarra residents would become proactive advocates for climate change. If anywhere in Australia can make this happen, it's got to be City of Yarra -as long as it doesn't get militant as that approach is counter productive"</p> <p>"I think the most important thing is to elevate the climate emergency response such that it is at least the equal highest priority in all decision-making, budgeting and resource allocation. Hard decisions have to be made and sometimes you can't please everyone. Climate should be the deciding factor, even if it means getting some pushback from the community, heritage advocates etc."</p> <p>"We will strongly support a Yarra City Council, its executive, and Councillors to be ambitious and bold with significant resource allocation to responding to the climate emergency. You have our support and the social license from the community to take significant steps!"</p> <p>"There seems to be a disconnect between the declared emergencies and action."</p>	<p>The Climate Emergency Plan will be ambitious and seek to embed climate action into everything Council does.</p> <p>A big challenge for Council will be ensuring all teams are aligned behind the climate emergency response so there is not a disconnect between Council's words and actions.</p>
Feedback Theme 6	
What did we hear	Our response

<p>The views of young people broadly aligned with the overall sentiment. Nurturing nature was a particularly strong theme, along with mental health. Justice was an emerging theme young people were keen to explore.</p> <p>“Having indigenous plants and trees to bring more indigenous animals can exist in”</p> <p>“Clean up the Yarra River”</p> <p>“Prioritise the health of the environment over money”</p> <p>“There's not enough shade - want more trees, natural grass, and drinking fountains”</p> <p>“More mental health resources” (anxiety, grief, depression, despair in relation to climate change)</p> <p>“Put people into nature and have more nature in mental health facilities”</p> <p>“Increase First Nations voices & ensure those voices are being heard”</p> <p>“Having the voices of minority groups more represented”</p> <p>Young people (teenagers and young adults) also feedback their need places to go where they can congregate and hang out, safe in the climate / weather, safe from police's racial profiling, and free to access after hours.</p>	<p>These themes are covered in the Climate Emergency Plan and associated action plan.</p> <p>Safe spaces for young adults should be addressed during the implementation, following an audit of the spaces currently available.</p>
Feedback Theme 7	
What did we hear	Our response
<p>Three core issues – heat, safe healthy homes, and connectivity (social and physical) – emerged from consultation with communities more exposed to climate change.</p> <p>“Commission housing not designed for the heat. No AC in apartments. Impacts on the learning and wellbeing of students”</p> <p>“During heat waves, lots of us stay home with the A/C on. But then everyone does that and we have blackouts”</p> <p>“We need shopping centres and places to go to cool down”</p> <p>“More shade trees”</p> <p>“So more green areas, shade at bus stops”</p> <p>“Community gardens connecting community”</p> <p>“Public transport is too expensive”</p> <p>“I have asthma and on certain days I try to walk and realise I can't so I come back home. So I'm locked at home because of the weather”</p>	<p>Supporting those most in need is a key focus for the Climate Emergency Plan, particularly where direct investment is required.</p>

Evaluating the engagement

Objective	Evaluation
1. Informing the community that the previous Climate Emergency Plan is coming to an end and we are developing a new Climate Emergency Plan.	<p>The campaign reached ≈24,356.</p> <p>This represents around one quarter of the Yarra community (≈26% based on most recent census data). However, it's likely some of the campaign reach may have been to people outside of Yarra and there will be some duplication within the reach.</p>
2. Understanding the community's aspirations and ambitions for the new Climate Emergency Plan.	<p>Aspirations were made clear through the submission of actions, and the open field comments.</p>
3. Seeking ideas from the community and confirming support for areas of priority that emerged as part of the pre-engagement process with key stakeholders. This will help inform the direction of the Climate Emergency Plan.	<p>Through the consultation we gained a clearer understanding of community priority areas, which led to a reshaping of the themes that will appear in the Plan, and helped understand how Council should invest against different themes.</p>
<p>4. Receiving feedback from the community on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of the key priority themes identified as part of the pre-engagement process • Council's leadership role in the climate response • Their role in the climate response. 	<p>The engagement responses made community priorities clear, however the challenge Council faces is that all themes and roles were deemed to be on the important end of the scale.</p>
5. Make sure that the voices of those most impacted by the climate emergency are captured as part of the consultation.	<p>Over 138 people particularly vulnerable to climate impacts or working in partnership with people experiencing vulnerability were consulted.</p> <p>Over 45 people young people and teachers were consulted.</p> <p>The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation have been consulted and will continue to be consulted across the development of the CEP.</p> <p>First Nations woman Marcia Galea has undertaken a subconsultant role to ensure the First Nations perspective is integrated, recognising the Wurundjeri Council has time constraints.</p> <p>The rights of nature were explored thoroughly, particularly during the Climate Emergency Summit.</p>

Appendix 1

TELL US YOUR IDEAS

We've heard from the Yarra community that you want us to be bold and ambitious in our response to the climate emergency. To help us get there we want you to tell us your ideas and suggestions. We've identified these 8 themes to help guide us in our climate emergency response.

1. **How we travel:** fewer cars, more electric vehicles, active transport and safer travel routes, more accessible transport options, and better public transport.
2. **The homes we want:** Equitable, efficient, sustainable and accessible housing that is affordable.
3. **A resilient and just community:** Our community is resilient. We are equitable, inclusive, collaborative and care for each other and we learn from First Nations knowledge.
4. **Transforming our energy system, reducing emissions:** Yarra is all electric and zero emissions. We use and share energy equitably, so everyone has what they need.
5. **Nurturing nature:** Yarra has a beautiful, inviting urban forest and healthy waterways that support biodiversity. We invite water into our landscape and capture it for reuse.
6. **Developing a circular economy:** We are on our way to zero waste thanks to repair, sharing, reduced consumption, and vastly improved recycling and reuse systems.
7. **Strengthening our food systems:** We produce food locally and ensure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food. We have embraced low carbon, low impact eating, including vegetarianism and veganism.
8. **Council leadership in the climate emergency:** Yarra is leading the climate emergency and collaborating with neighbouring councils to amplify our impact.

Think about these themes and tell us what sort of future you want to see. What does taking strong action look like to you?

SURVEY

Q1. We've identified 8 key themes which will help guide Yarra's response to the climate emergency.

1. **How we travel:** fewer cars, more electric vehicles, active transport and safer travel routes, more accessible transport options, and better public transport.
2. **The homes we want:** Equitable, efficient, sustainable and accessible housing that is affordable.
3. **A resilient and just community:** Our community is resilient. We are equitable, inclusive, collaborative and care for each other and we learn from First Nations knowledge.
4. **Transforming our energy system, reducing emissions:** Yarra is all electric and zero emissions. We use and share energy equitably, so everyone has what they need.
5. **Nurturing nature:** Yarra has a beautiful, inviting urban forest and healthy waterways that support biodiversity. We invite water into our landscape and capture it for reuse.
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7. **Strengthening our food systems:** We produce food locally and ensure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food. We have embraced low carbon, low impact eating, including vegetarianism and veganism.
8. **Council leadership in the climate emergency:** Yarra is leading the climate emergency and collaborating with neighbouring councils to amplify our impact.

Please tell us how important you think each of these themes are as focal points for our next Climate Emergency Plan.

Q2 Through Yarra's Community Vision 2036, our community asked us to prioritise and lead on climate change action. We would like to understand more about what you think Council's leadership role should look

like.

For each of the following statements please indicate your level of agreement. Strongly disagree

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Cannot say
Council should deliver a leading, transformational climate change response.						
Council must prioritise support for those in our community most at risk of experiencing climate impacts, including young people, older people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.						
Council needs to support people to take climate action with friends, family and their community.						
Climate action must be integrated into all Council Plans and considered for all projects, initiatives and decisions.						
Council should deliver our climate response in partnership with community groups, local businesses and other organisations.						
Council should strengthen our advocacy to State and Federal Governments for stronger climate action.						

Q3. Together we can create change. We all have an important role to play in responding to the climate emergency. This includes individuals, households, communities, businesses, not-for-profits and all levels of

government.

For each of the following actions, please select the option that applies to you.

	I would do this	I want to do this, but I need more support	I'm already doing this	I would not do this	I can't say
Taking individual actions					
Making changes within my household					
Making changes in my workplace					
Joining with friends, family and local community to take action together					
Getting involved in Council-led workshops and initiatives					
Joining a climate-based community organisation					
Influencing others and advocating for change					

Q4. Do you have any other comments about Yarra's Climate Emergency response?