

Community Climate Response Plan 2023–2028

Working together towards
climate resilience in the Mallee.





Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, which now comprises the Mildura Rural City municipality. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memories of their ancestors.



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Declaration of Climate Emergency

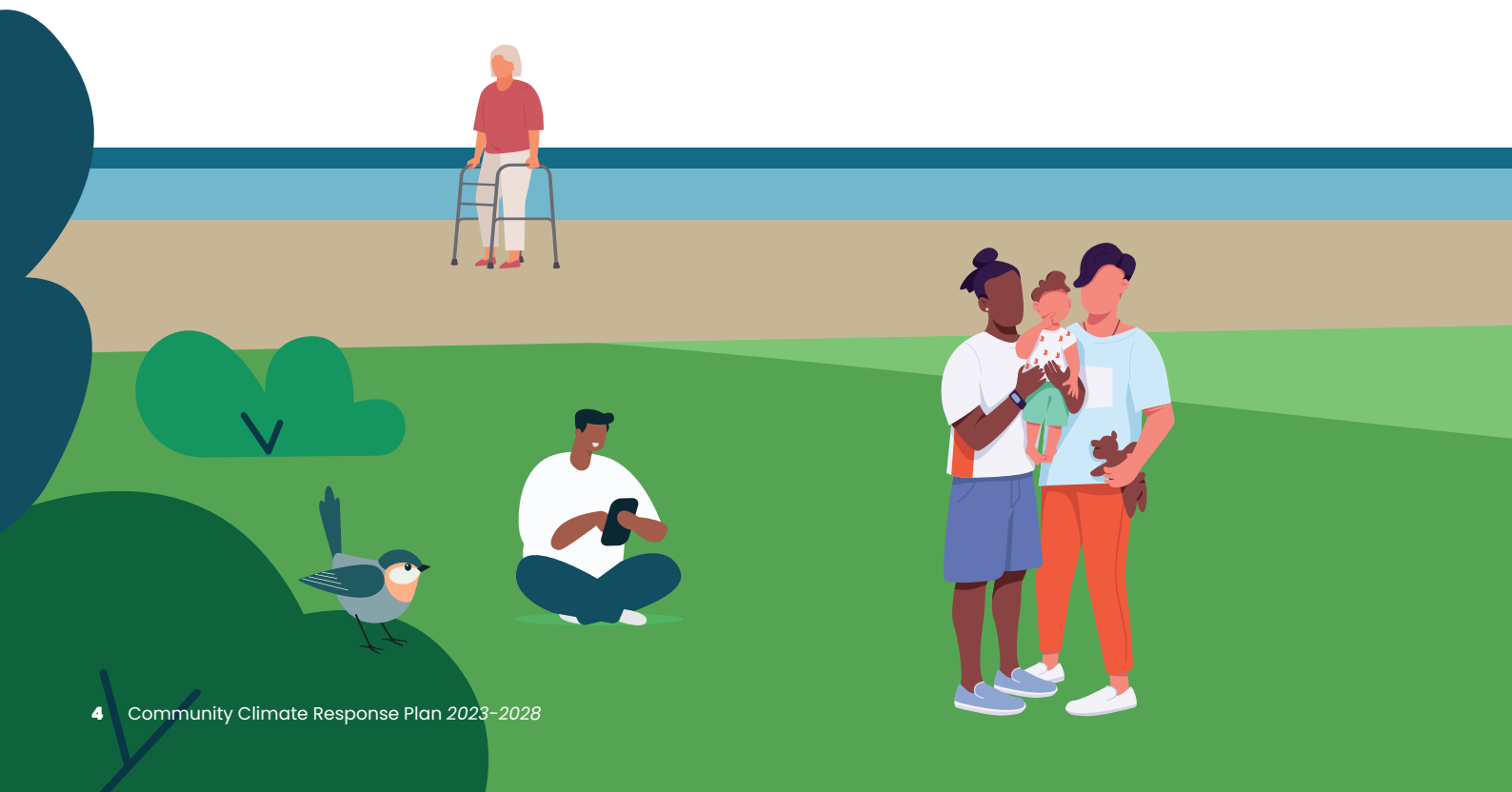
On 26 February 2020, Mildura Rural City Council (Council) became the 30th local government in Victoria and the 94th in Australia to declare a climate emergency. It is a call to action for all levels of government to take meaningful steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to develop strategies to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Council's commitment to reduce emissions and consult with the community on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies is an important step in the right direction. We must all work together to ensure that our actions today will create a better future for generations to come.

Message from the Climate Emergency Community Advisory Group

We are proud to bring you this Community Climate Response Plan. It's our first step to bringing everyone in the Mallee region together to address climate change. We're talking about everyone – residents, businesses, schools, and local government. Our aim is to come up with plans that will protect our unique environment, help our local economy to grow, and make sure everyone in our community is doing well. We invite you to read this Community Climate Response Plan. We hope it will inspire you to get involved in your community and join us in our effort to reduce the amount of carbon in our atmosphere.

As we continue to work with the community, we're sure that together, we can make the Mallee a stronger, more prosperous place that takes good care of our environment.

Together, we can create a brighter and more sustainable future for our community.



Introduction

Climate change might seem like a complicated topic, but it's really about too many greenhouse gases in the air. These gases trap heat, sort of like a blanket around the Earth that stops it from cooling down. This has been happening since we started using coal, oil, and gas for energy, and it's causing these gases in the air to go up.

If we want to tackle this issue in the Mallee, we need to be open-minded, sensible, and focused. It's about finding real solutions that help us manage energy use, the economy, and the environment. We know that decisions need to be based on solid evidence. That's why we're committed to having open conversations and working together to find strategies that help both people and the environment, while also supporting economic growth.

Why take action?

Our aim with this Community Climate Response Plan is to help everyone understand the current climate situation and offer practical steps that we can take to lessen our impact on the environment. To make this plan, we've looked at scientific data, reviewed current initiatives, and developed strategies that help people and the environment at the same time. We've done this in a fair, refreshing way that encourages everyone in local government and the community to work together.

By thinking this way, we give everyone the chance to make eco-friendly choices in their own homes, while local governments can put measures in place that meet community needs. If we all work together, we can lead healthier lives, use less energy, create more jobs, and be better prepared for the challenges climate change brings. This plan is just the start of getting everyone involved, steering our community towards a successful and green future.



Our District, Our Story

Our diverse agricultural landscape – from sun-kissed citrus orchards and lush table grape vines to wide, rolling fields of grains and legumes – is a testament to the tenacity and resilience of our people and communities. Beyond our irrigated crops, broad acre farming has helped carve the Mallee reputation as a leading agricultural hub, delivering bountiful yields of staple crops essential to both domestic and overseas markets.

Throughout the years, our community's unshakable spirit has seen us through varied challenges, including droughts, floods, and economic changes. These experiences have highlighted our shared adaptability and determination, with all sectors – from small family orchards to expansive grain farms – consistently discovering innovative solutions to prevail over adversity.

Now, as we address the pressing issue of climate change, The Mallee's rich history offers invaluable lessons on sustainable resource management and the transformative power of collective action. By building on our region's legacy of resilience and prosperity – visible in every field and farm – we confidently face the future. With concerted efforts, we can devise intelligent strategies to safeguard our environment, invigorate our economy, and enhance the well-being of our communities.

The big picture

The Mallee in North-West Victoria is special. We've got the combination of a dry climate, farming needs, and the effects of climate change. For us to thrive, we need to work together and tackle these issues head-on.

Our journey starts with getting everyone involved: families, businesses, schools, and more. It's about making sure everyone has the information and help they need to pitch in, because we all have a role to play in making our region green, our economy stable, and our people healthy.

Our long-term plan needs to look at everything that makes up our community. From our towns and natural spaces, our health, how we deal with rubbish, what we teach our kids, and how we farm our lands. When we consider all these parts together, we're setting ourselves up for a future that's stronger and greener.

One of the most important parts of our plan is education. We need to give our people, especially our kids, the knowledge and tools they need to make smart choices and make a difference. It's also about making sure our businesses and farms can adapt to a changing climate and market, while pushing for new, sustainable ways of doing things.

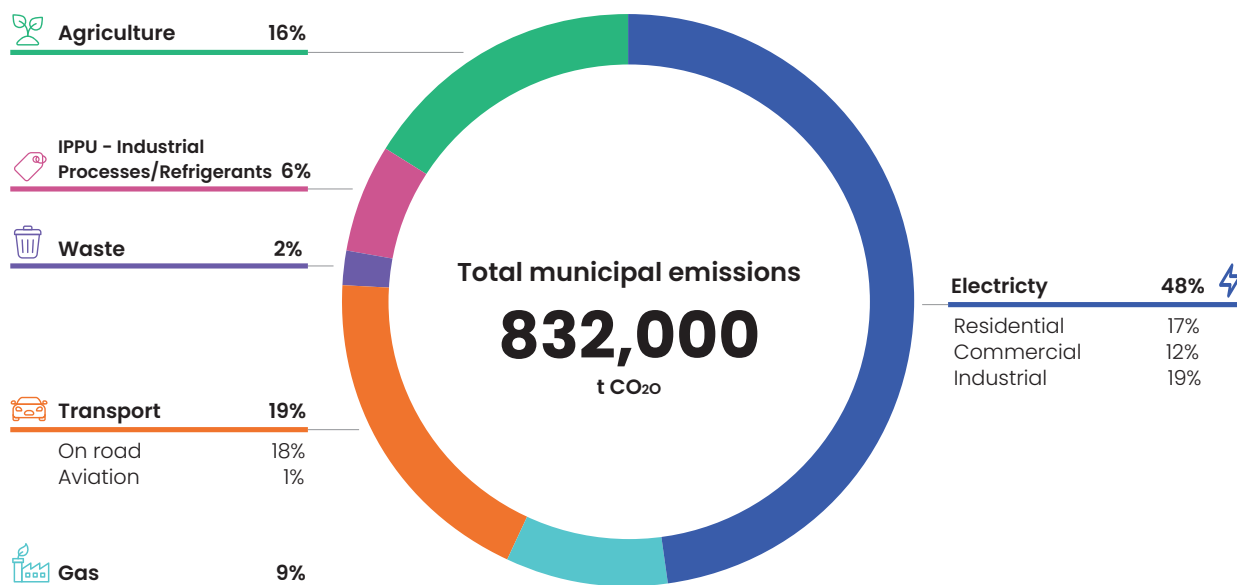
At the end of the day, it's all about teamwork. Even the smallest actions can add up to big change. When things get tough, it's our togetherness and shared goal that will help us build a successful and sustainable future.



Municipality Emissions Profile

Looking at our Municipality emission data between 2020 and 2021, we see that our community's emissions come from different places. Most of it comes from making electricity, followed by transport, farming, and gas. Other sources like industry processes, product use, and waste make up a smaller part of the total. Knowing where our emissions come from helps us focus our efforts on finding practical and useful solutions for each area.

Mildura 2020/2021 municipal emissions snapshot



Source: snapshotclimate.com.au

Understanding where the emissions come from lets us come up with new ways to develop our community that meet the needs of our varied economy, including our farming, manufacturing, and tourism sectors. If we all work together, we can come up with plans based on evidence that focus on energy efficiency, managing waste, and using sustainable practices in different industries.

Working together like this lets us deal with climate change in a balanced way while making sure our local economy keeps growing and developing. This will help us become a community that can adapt to the challenges climate change brings and continues to thrive in the future.

How we developed this plan

Our Community Climate Response Plan is the result of joint efforts by the Climate Emergency Community Action Group (CECAG). The group was formed in February 2020, right after Mildura Rural City Council declared a climate emergency. We are a group of volunteers chosen for our different skills and backgrounds. Together, we've created a detailed action plan that matches what the community wants and needs.

The CECAG is committed to giving the people of the Mallee important information and resources. We focus on offering practical ways to manage energy, grow our economy, and protect our environment.

We believe that working together is key. We aim to encourage open conversation and teamwork to create practical solutions that keep our economy, environment, and social needs in balance. We work to find a middle ground that lets us make steady progress without resorting to extreme actions or doing nothing at all. This balanced approach ensures that our community can keep thriving while adjusting to the challenges that come with climate policies. Our ultimate goal is to secure a brighter and stronger future for our community.





**Let's
take
action.**

Action for Residents

As people living in the Mallee, we're lucky to be part of a community that cares about both our local environment and our economy. We can make a positive change in our community by supporting local businesses and people who are also interested in saving energy, growing the economy, and protecting the environment. By talking with each other and looking for ways to work together, we can help our local economy grow and make our future more sustainable. Remember, it's the small steps we take together that can lead to lasting change and make our community a great place for everyone.

Activity

- Planting native trees and vegetation to improve air quality and create a natural habitat for local wildlife
- Upgrading to energy-efficient appliances to lower energy consumption and save on electricity bills
- Opting for walking, cycling, or carpooling for short trips to reduce traffic congestion and emissions
- Composting and recycling household waste to decrease landfill waste and promote a circular economy
- Supporting local businesses that prioritize eco-friendly practices and contribute to a sustainable community
- Grow your own food



Actions for Schools and Students

Our schools and young people are at the heart of our community here in the Mallee. They play a key role in shaping the future we all will share. If our schools create an environment that encourages curiosity, new ideas, and teamwork, they can help students become thoughtful and proactive community members. By letting students learn by doing, they can understand the importance of balancing energy saving, economic growth, and protecting the environment. If we encourage young minds to come up with creative solutions and make informed choices, they can help our community and the world around us. This is how we can make a more sustainable and successful future.

Activity

- Creating school gardens and green spaces to provide hands-on learning experiences and enhance school aesthetics
- Implementing energy-saving measures such as LED lighting and smart thermostats in school facilities
- Encouraging environmentally-focused student projects to raise awareness and inspire eco-friendly actions
- Promoting sustainable transport options, like biking or walking, for students and staff to reduce emissions
- Organising educational events and workshops on waste management, recycling, and composting

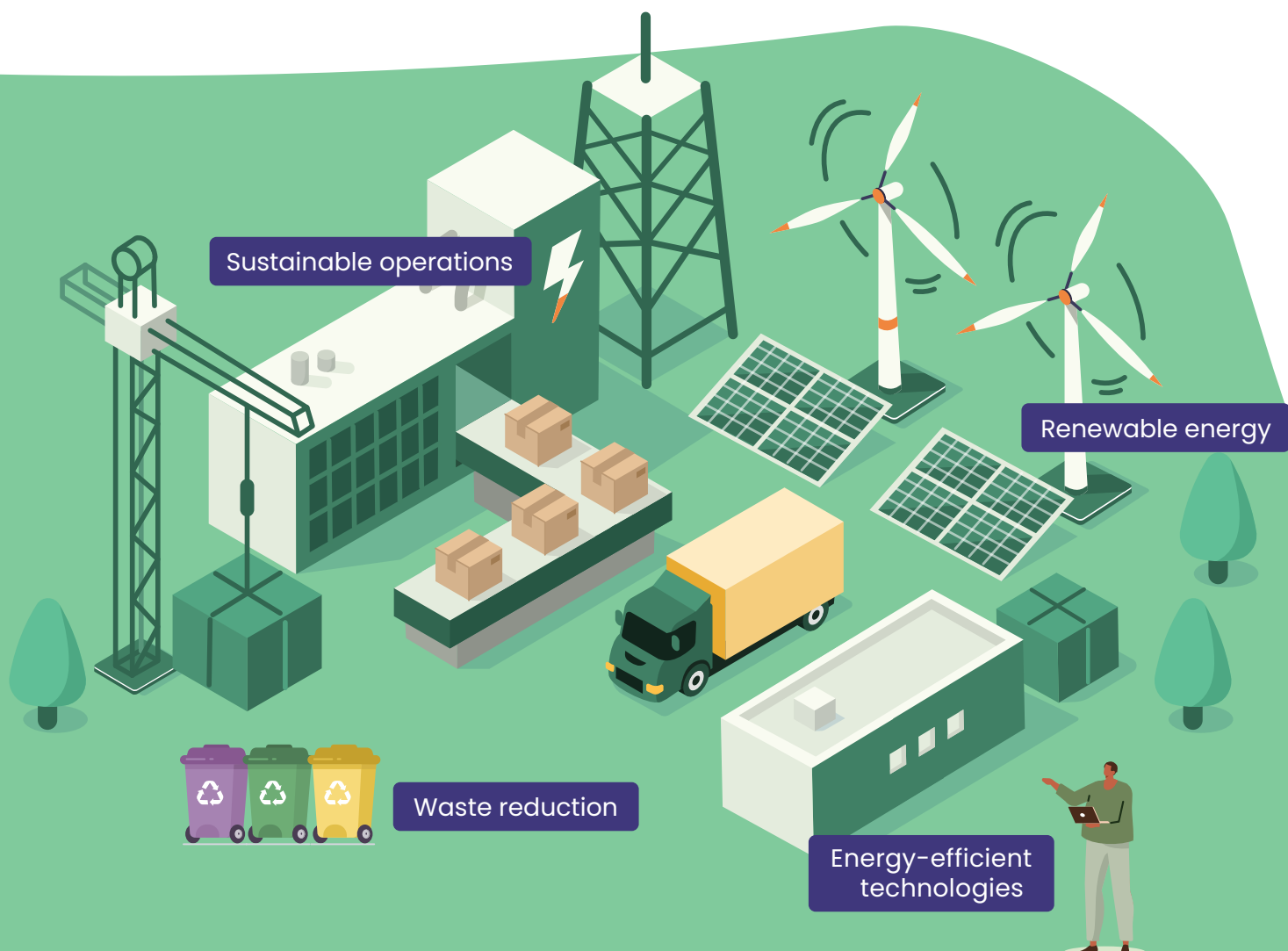


Actions for Diverse Business Sectors

Our diverse businesses, industries, and farms drive our community's economic growth and well-being. As we look ahead, we need to embrace new ideas that take into account energy use, the economy, and the environment. This will help make our community sustainable and successful. By sharing knowledge and working together, we can improve efficiency, reduce waste, and help our local economy grow. At the same time, we're protecting the natural resources that make our region unique. As we move forward, finding the right balance between progress and conservation will pave the way for a bright future that benefits everyone in our community and future generations too

Activity

- Adopting energy-efficient technologies to reduce operating costs and lower greenhouse gas emissions
- Implementing waste reduction strategies, such as recycling and composting, to minimise environmental impact
- Sharing best practices for sustainable operations with other businesses and organisations
- Exploring renewable energy sources, like solar or wind, for powering facilities and reducing emissions
- Employing environmentally-friendly land management techniques, such as crop rotation and no-till farming, to protect soil health and conserve resources





**It starts
with a
plan.**

Priority Areas

Time frame key

Short term – 1-2 year

Medium term – 2-4 year

Long term – 5 years+

Health

Climate change can affect the health of everyone in our community – physically, mentally, and emotionally. Our Action Plan wants to make our community healthier. We'll do this by working with local residents and businesses, teaching and helping people who need it most, and pushing for solutions that are good for the environment and won't break the bank. Through actions that lead to real results, we want to make sure that everyone in our community is safe, healthy, and can handle the changes that climate change can bring.

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|--|--|--------------------------------|------------|---|
| Climate/heat health awareness events | Organize annual climate/heat health awareness events in collaboration with local agencies. | Long-term, Ongoing | \$\$ | Mildura Regional Development, Local Health Networks |
| Climate change health education sessions | Provide information sessions on coping with extreme weather conditions, targeting vulnerable residents. | Long-term, Reoccurring, Online | \$ | Local Schools, Community Centres |
| Affordable eco-friendly solutions | Advocate for affordable heating/cooling solutions and solar power. | Long-term | \$\$\$ | Local Government, Energy Companies |
| Business partnerships for refuge spaces | Collaborate with businesses offering extended hours or refuge spaces during extreme weather. | Long-term | \$ | Local Businesses, Community Centres |
| Promote green spaces | Advocate for green open spaces with shade, water taps, bike/walking paths, and rest stops in new developments. | Long-term | \$\$\$ | Local Government, Community Groups |

Waste

Managing waste is an important part of how our community affects the environment. By managing waste properly, we can lower greenhouse gas emissions, save resources, and promote a circular economy where we reuse and recycle more. By encouraging people to throw away things responsibly, recycle more, and create less waste, we support a cleaner and more sustainable community. In our Action Plan, we aim to come up with new ways to manage waste and involve residents, businesses, and organizations in addressing this important issue together.

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------|--|
| Community waste education | Provide educational sessions on waste impact, reduction strategies, and responsible waste management. | Long-term, Ongoing, Online | \$ | Local Schools, Community Centres |
| Repair Café initiative | Establish a Repair Café where volunteers help repair items, reducing landfill waste. | Long-term | \$ | Local Businesses, Community Volunteers |
| Behaviour change program | Promote waste reduction, proper recycling, and zero-carbon transportation (biking, walking). | Long-term | \$\$ | Local Government, Schools |
| Support local businesses | Help businesses understand recycling, waste reduction responsibilities, and sustainable practices. | Long-term, Ongoing | \$ | Business Associations |
| Community compost programs | Promote and support community compost programs to convert green waste into compost. | Long-term | \$ | Community Centres, Local Government |

Farming

Farming plays a crucial role in our region. It doesn't just provide us with food, it also supports jobs and drives our local economy. However, unexpected changes in weather and shifting market conditions can make farming more challenging. Efficient farms are essential for ensuring we have enough food and supporting our economy. Our farmers are ready to adapt and succeed in the ever-changing world of agriculture.

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------|------------|--|
| Alternative fuel sources advocacy | Promote the need for alternative fuel sources (e.g., green hydrogen) and pursue funding for transitioning in agriculture and transport. | Long-term | \$\$ | Farmers' Associations, Energy Companies |
| Efficient freight logistics review | Investigate opportunities for more efficient rail and road freight logistics, ensuring direct routes are serviceable. | Medium-term | \$\$ | Transport Companies, Local Government |
| Farming Technology Innovation | Advocate for the implementation of innovative technologies to improve efficiency and reduce waste in farming operations. | Long-term | \$\$ | Farmers' Associations, Research Institutes |
| Strengthen social license | Improve communication and engagement between farmers and the community to increase social license. | Long-term | \$ | Community Groups, Local Media |
| Farm electrification | Encourage farm electrification through Environmental Upgrade Finance for irrigation pumps or processing facilities. | Medium-term | \$\$ | Local Government, Energy Companies |

Education

Education and engagement are key to reducing emissions impacts and making our community sustainable for the future. By offering high-quality education across the region, we can help people make smart decisions and bring about change. We can use both direct teaching and indirect ways to teach about climate change, which will give people the knowledge and skills they need to help create a greener future. By working with local groups and schools, we can help everyone understand and agree on how to deal with climate change and how it affects our community. We can use both direct teaching and indirect ways to teach about climate change to equip our community with the skills needed to move towards a greener future.

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|--|---|--------------------|------------|--|
| Professional development for educators | Offer quality training for teachers and educators to integrate sustainability into their practices. | Long-term, Ongoing | \$\$ | Local Schools, Tertiary Education Institutes |
| Renewable energy public transport | Promote solar-powered buses with educational materials at stops and onboard. Connect key locations. | Long-term | \$\$\$ | Local Government, Transport Companies |
| Sustainability resources and promotion | Create and display resources on MRCC website, social media, and promote sustainability-supporting businesses. | Long-term | \$ | Local Media, Community Organisations |
| Indirect climate change education | Provide indirect educational opportunities through public art, murals, and labelled bins at events. | Short-term | \$ | Arts Mildura, Community Groups |
| Consistent climate change messaging | Deliver constant and consistent information on climate change effects from various sources. | Long-term | Existing | Local Media, Schools, Government |

Natural Environment

Our region is home to a variety of unique plants, animals, and important water sources. These natural wonders are at risk due to changes in our climate, such as increased droughts and floods. By working together, we can ensure that the natural treasures of our region are protected for everyone to enjoy now and in the future.

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|---|--|--|------------|---|
| Plant-A-Tree Fundraiser / Community Greening | Organize self-funding events for the community to donate and plant trees and shrubs in public spaces. | Long-term, Repeat-able (Autumn and Spring) | \$ | Community Groups, Local Businesses |
| Community-Supported Agriculture and Public Garden Co-operatives | Host fundraising events to support local CSA and public garden projects, promoting fresh local produce. | Long-term, Repeatable | \$ | Local Farmers, Community Groups |
| Citizen Science: Water Monitoring | Establish a citizen science water monitoring group to regularly test and report local water quality, identifying and addressing pollution sources. | Long-term, Ongoing Every 2 Weeks | \$ | Mallee Catchment Management Authority, Schools |
| Habitat Restoration Projects | Implement projects aimed at restoring and preserving native habitats, such as wetlands and forests, to support local biodiversity. | Long-term | \$\$ | Mallee Catchment Management Authority, Environment Groups |
| Invasive Species Management | Develop and promote community-led initiatives to control and manage invasive species, protecting native ecosystems. | Long-term, Ongoing | \$\$ | Parks Victoria, Local Schools |

Urban Environment

Our city environment plays a big role in how well people. The Council has taken steps like planting trees, installing electric vehicle charging stations, and using streetlights that save energy to lower emissions. But air pollution and extreme weather still happen, so we need more actions and strategies to deal with energy use, the economy, and environmental issues. These might include better public transport, more parks, and helping low-income households. By investing in education and working with local groups, we can make our city environment more sustainable and able to handle change.

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|------------------------------------|---|------------|-------------|--|
| Promote sustainable transportation | Encourage residents to choose public transport, biking, or walking for short trips. | Short-term | \$ | Local Government, Public Transport Providers |
| Support energy-efficient upgrades | Encourage home and business owners to install LED lighting and energy-efficient appliances. | Short-term | \$ | Local Businesses, Energy Companies |
| Tree planting initiative | Plant trees in public parks and green spaces to mitigate the heat island effect. | Short-term | \$\$ | Community Groups, Schools |
| Sustainable business practices | Advocate for businesses to use eco-friendly materials and minimize waste. | Short-term | \$ | Business Associations |
| Urban gardens | Establish community urban gardens to cultivate vegetables and herbs. | Short-term | \$\$-\$\$\$ | Community Centres, Local Schools |



**It's
our
future.**

Uniting for a Future-Conscious Community

The Mallee community believes in working together. Understanding each other and being committed to everyone's well-being is at the heart of what we do. Handling the complex issue of climate change requires open communication, respect for each other, and teamwork. The solutions we're looking for are practical and cover many areas. We want to balance the needs of our economy, environment, and society.

Our strength comes from our diversity and the unique viewpoints and experiences of each person in our community. We're all in this together to create a sustainable future. Instead of using language that divides us, we believe in using our shared power. We want to make changes that are deep and long-lasting, to make a better future for everyone.



Glossary

Carbon emissions:

Carbon neutral – You are carbon neutral if the amount of carbon emissions in your home, business or community puts into the atmosphere (through energy use or agricultural for example) is the same amount that you remove from the atmosphere (through trees and soils or producing renewable energy) your impact is neutral.

Zero Carbon – is broadly the same as being carbon neutral.

Circular Economy – A process that allows us to avoid waste through good design and effective recovery of material that can be reused. It seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of production and consumption and encourage intense and efficient product use.

Climate Change – Changes to the Earth's climate caused by human activity including burning fossil fuel (coal, gas, petrol, and diesel) and clearing vegetation. These changes in weather patterns increase the occurrence, severity, and distribution of events such as drought, flooding, heatwaves, extreme rainfall, bushfires, and rising sea levels.

Emissions – The production and discharge of something, especially gas or radiation

Energy efficient – An appliance or vehicle that is energy efficient, reducing the amount of energy required to provide products or services.

Greenhouse Gases – Carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and other gases that build up in our atmosphere.

Mitigation – Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases that cause climate change.

Renewable Energy – Energy generated by renewable sources such as the sun, wind, and movement of water.



Appendices

Appendix A. Community Action Plan: Summary Actions

Health

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Climate/ heat health awareness events | Organize annual climate/ heat health awareness events in collaboration with local agencies. | Long-term, Ongoing | \$\$ | Mildura Regional Development, Local Health Networks |
| Climate change health education sessions | Provide information sessions on coping with extreme weather conditions, targeting vulnerable residents. | Long-term, Reoccurring, Online | \$ | Local Schools, Community Centres |
| Affordable eco-friendly solutions | Advocate for affordable heating/cooling solutions and solar power. | Long-term | \$\$\$ | Local Government, Energy Companies |
| Business partnerships for refuge spaces | Collaborate with businesses offering extended hours or refuge spaces during extreme weather. | Long-term | \$ | Local Businesses, Community Centres |
| Promote green spaces | Advocate for green open spaces with shade, water taps, bike/walking paths, and rest stops in new developments. | Long-term | \$\$\$ | Local Government, Community Groups |



Waste

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------|--|
| Community waste education | Provide educational sessions on waste impact, reduction strategies, and responsible waste management. | Long-term, Ongoing, Online | \$ | Local Schools, Community Centres |
| Repair Café initiative | Establish a Repair Café where volunteers help repair items, reducing landfill waste. | Long-term | \$ | Local Businesses, Community Volunteers |
| Behaviour change program | Promote waste reduction, proper recycling, and zero-carbon transportation (biking, walking). | Long-term | \$\$ | Local Government, Schools |
| Support local businesses | Help businesses understand recycling, waste reduction responsibilities, and sustainable practices. | Long-term, Ongoing | \$ | Business Associations |
| Community compost programs | Promote and support community compost programs to convert green waste into compost. | Long-term | \$ | Community Centres, Local Government |

Farming

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------|------------|--|
| Alternative fuel sources advocacy | Promote the need for alternative fuel sources (e.g., green hydrogen) and pursue funding for transitioning in agriculture and transport. | Long-term | \$\$ | Farmers' Associations, Energy Companies |
| Efficient freight logistics review | Investigate opportunities for more efficient rail and road freight logistics, ensuring direct routes are serviceable. | Medium-term | \$\$ | Transport Companies, Local Government |
| Farming Technology Innovation | Advocate for the implementation of innovative technologies to improve efficiency and reduce waste in farming operations. | Long-term | \$\$ | Farmers' Associations, Research Institutes |
| Strengthen social license | Improve communication and engagement between farmers and the community to increase social license. | Long-term | \$ | Community Groups, Local Media |
| Farm electrification | Encourage farm electrification through Environmental Upgrade Finance for irrigation pumps or processing facilities. | Medium-term | \$\$ | Local Government, Energy Companies |



Education

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|--|---|--------------------|------------|--|
| Professional development for educators | Offer quality training for teachers and educators to integrate sustainability into their practices. | Long-term, Ongoing | \$\$ | Local Schools, Tertiary Education Institutes |
| Renewable energy public transport | Promote solar-powered buses with educational materials at stops and onboard. Connect key locations. | Long-term | \$\$\$ | Local Government, Transport Companies |
| Sustainability resources and promotion | Create and display resources on MRCC website, social media, and promote sustainability-supporting businesses. | Long-term | \$ | Local Media, Community Organisations |
| Indirect climate change education | Provide indirect educational opportunities through public art, murals, and labelled bins at events. | Short-term | \$ | Arts Mildura, Community Groups |
| Consistent climate change messaging | Deliver constant and consistent information on climate change effects from various sources. | Long-term | Existing | Local Media, Schools, Government |

Natural Environment

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|---|--|---|------------|---|
| Plant-A-Tree Fundraiser / Community Greening | Organize self-funding events for the community to donate and plant trees and shrubs in public spaces. | Long-term, Repeatable (Autumn and Spring) | \$ | Community Groups, Local Businesses |
| Community-Supported Agriculture and Public Garden Co-operatives | Host fundraising events to support local CSA and public garden projects, promoting fresh local produce. | Long-term, Repeatable | \$ | Local Farmers, Community Groups |
| Citizen Science: Water Monitoring | Establish a citizen science water monitoring group to regularly test and report local water quality, identifying and addressing pollution sources. | Long-term, Ongoing Every 2 Weeks | \$ | Mallee Catchment Management Authority, Schools |
| Habitat Restoration Projects | Implement projects aimed at restoring and preserving native habitats, such as wetlands and forests, to support local biodiversity. | Long-term | \$\$ | Mallee Catchment Management Authority, Environment Groups |
| Invasive Species Management | Develop and promote community-led initiatives to control and manage invasive species, protecting native ecosystems. | Long-term, Ongoing | \$\$ | Parks Victoria, Local Schools |



Urban Environment

| Action | Description | Time frame | Investment | Partners |
|------------------------------------|---|------------|-------------|--|
| Promote sustainable transportation | Encourage residents to choose public transport, biking, or walking for short trips. | Short-term | \$ | Local Government, Public Transport Providers |
| Support energy-efficient upgrades | Encourage home and business owners to install LED lighting and energy-efficient appliances. | Short-term | \$ | Local Businesses, Energy Companies |
| Tree planting initiative | Plant trees in public parks and green spaces to mitigate the heat island effect. | Short-term | \$\$ | Community Groups, Schools |
| Sustainable business practices | Advocate for businesses to use eco-friendly materials and minimize waste. | Short-term | \$ | Business Associations |
| Urban gardens | Establish community urban gardens to cultivate vegetables and herbs. | Short-term | \$\$-\$\$\$ | Community Centres, Local Schools |

**Disclaimer**

Information contained in this publication was correct at the time of printing. Every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, however no liability is accepted for any inclusions, advice given or omissions.