



Environmental Sustainability Strategy Annual Report 2023-24

Progress to 30 June 2024



Table of Contents

Overview	3
Goal 1: Conservation of the natural environment and biodiversity	4
Key Achievements	4
Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 1	7
Results against targets set for Goal 1	9
Goal 2: Sustainable management of natural resources	10
Key Achievements	10
Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 2	13
Results against targets set for Goal 2	15
Goal 3: Community participation in the climate response	17
Key Achievements	18
Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 3	20
Results against targets set for Goal 3	22
Goal 4: Respect and alignment with the rights of Traditional Owner groups	23
Key Achievements	23
Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 4	25
Results against targets set for Goal 4	26
Goal 5: Environmental sustainability supports sustainable economic growth and new job opportunities	27
Key Achievements	27
Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 5	29
Results against targets set for Goal 5	30
Goal 6: Growth in the circular economy	31
Key Achievements	31
Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 6	33
Results against targets set for Goal 6	35
Goal 7: Community resilience to respond to increasing climate risk and natural disasters	37
Key Achievements	37
Projects and initiatives to support achieving Goal 7	39
Results against targets set for Goal 7	41

Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Gunaikurnai, Monero and Bidawel people and their enduring relationship to Country.

Council aspires to strengthen our partnerships and supports Aboriginal participation in management processes for land and natural resources. We recognise Australia's rich cultural heritage and aim to encourage integrated decision-making now and in the future.



Overview

About this Report

The Environmental Sustainability Annual Report is undertaken to monitor our progress towards achieving the East Gippsland Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-2032's seven goals and the actions from the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan. This report provides a snapshot of the various achievements made by Council and other partners, ensuring that these key achievements are acknowledged and celebrated.

The Annual Report demonstrates Council's commitment to environmental sustainability, highlights the significance of each goal from the strategy and demonstrates the progress we have made with our partners and community towards achieving our overall vision for sustainability in East Gippsland.

East Gippsland Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-32

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy is Council's key environmental policy document, guiding work across Council to achieve objectives for climate change, biodiversity, land and water management and resource efficiency.

This Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-2032 outlines East Gippsland Shire Council's role in maintaining, protecting and enhancing the region's natural environment over the coming decade.

Four-Year Action Plan 2022-26

The four-year action plan outlines how we will work to achieve the goals of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-32.

The actions under each goal represent the priorities that East Gippsland Shire Council will lead or work in partnership with various stakeholders and our community, to improve sustainability outcomes.

Each goal is further defined by targets that will help us move towards delivering the vision.



Our aspirations drive the focus:

“By 2032, sustainable behaviour and decision making will be embedded into all aspects of how East Gippslanders live and work. East Gippsland's natural environment will be enhanced, connected and resilient, and East Gippsland will be recognised as a leader in regional climate change mitigation and adaptation.”

Goal 1: Conservation of the natural environment and biodiversity

Why this goal is important

The first goal of the strategy focuses on the conservation of the natural environment and biodiversity. This is important to East Gippslanders as most of the land in the Shire is in public ownership.

East Gippsland's natural environment and biodiversity were severely impacted by major events over the past 10 years. From 2014 to 2019 East Gippsland experienced the worst drought on record. These conditions led to the Black Summer Bushfires that burnt more than 50 per cent of our shire. The extent of the biodiversity loss is not fully understood.

Key Achievements

National Tree Day planting event

Council partnered with Bairnsdale Secondary College and East Gippsland Specialist School to support running a tree planting event for National Tree Day. The planting took place at the shared area behind the Bairnsdale Aquatic and Recreation Centre and Bairnsdale Secondary College, close to the colourful murals.

The event was initiated by the Youth Ambassadors, who gathered support from the various organisations and schools. There were 200 seedlings planted on the day, supplied by Council along with the mulch.



National Tree Planting Day held behind the Bairnsdale Aquatic and Recreation Centre

Draft Coastal and Marine Management Plan

Council is developing a Coastal and Marine Management Plan (CMMP) for the coastal communities across East Gippsland. Led by Victorian Government legislation (the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*) and policy (Marine and Coastal Policy, 2020), the Plan will guide sustainable management of Council-managed coastal reserves.

The East Gippsland coastal and marine areas are special for many different reasons. The CMMP will provide a coordinated and integrated approach to balance the many environmental, cultural, economic and social values of these areas, particularly with a changing climate and developing communities.

Council has conducted community engagement with the CMMP with:

- pop-up information sessions;
- public exhibition for feedback; and
- community webinars.

This feedback is to ensure the plan reflects the interests of the community.

East Gippsland - Open Space Strategy

Council's Open Space Strategy seeks to establish a strategic vision and overarching long-term strategic direction to guide the future planning, development, provision, and management of open space within East Gippsland.

The initial stages completed of the strategy include:

- Background review of existing council reports/literature;
- An Issues Paper has been prepared;
- Engagement commenced for stakeholder and community feedback on the Issues and Engagement Paper; and
- A Project Reference Group has been formed

The stakeholders participating in the Project Reference Group includes East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA), Gippsland Ports, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Council's Roadside Weed and Pest Control Plan 2023-2026

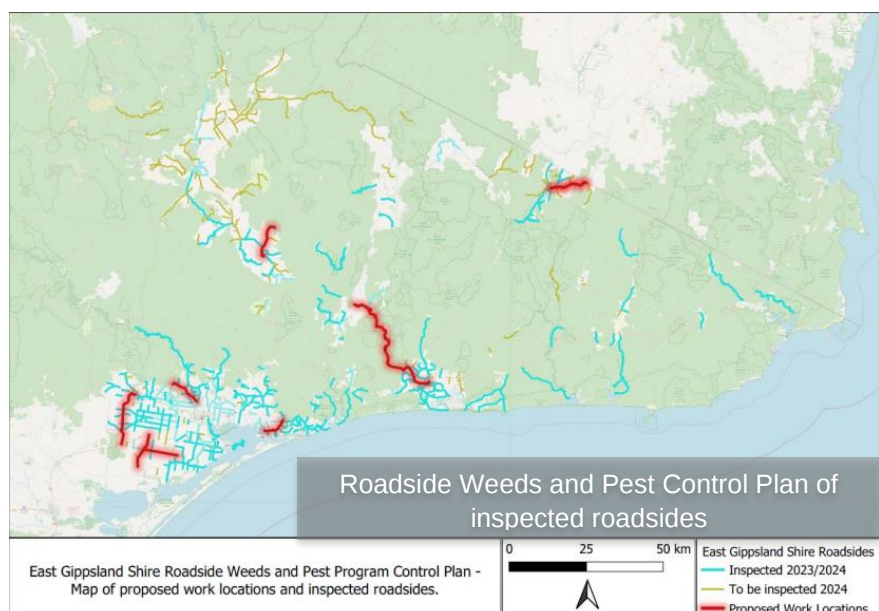
Council adopted a 'Weed and Pest Control Management Plan' for 2023-2026 as part of the Victorian Government's Roadside Weeds and Pests Program.

Council is responsible for the management of approximately 3,600 kilometres of roads and many of these roadsides have highly significant remnant vegetation that is protected under State and Federal legislation.

Under the plan Council prioritises weed control based on several sources, primarily the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act) definitions of Regionally Prohibited, Regionally Controlled and Regionally Restricted Weeds.

Roadside vegetation can include significant native species including rare, threatened or species endemic to East Gippsland.

Invasive weeds are a threat to biodiversity and productive farmlands. The following weeds have been prioritised in the past to target: English Broom, Serrated Tussock, Boneseed, Flax Leaf Broom, Pampas Lily of the Valley, African Love Grass and Blackberry.



Eagle Point - Foreshore Trail

A draft concept plan for the upgrade and extension of the Eagle Point Foreshore Trail has been developed, with the proposed trail located within the Eagle Point Foreshore Reserve.

The proposed project will enhance the Eagle Point foreshore trail by connecting existing fragmented sections of trail and improve accessibility to meet the needs of the Eagle Point community. In addition, the project will increase safety by reducing the number of pedestrians and cyclists on Bay Road through providing an active transport connection between Paynesville and Eagle Point.

The project proposal includes:

- Formalising a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Providing upgraded trail connections to the foreshore;
- Extending shared path connection with the existing Paynesville – Eagle Point trail; and
- Protecting fragile and sensitive environmental areas.

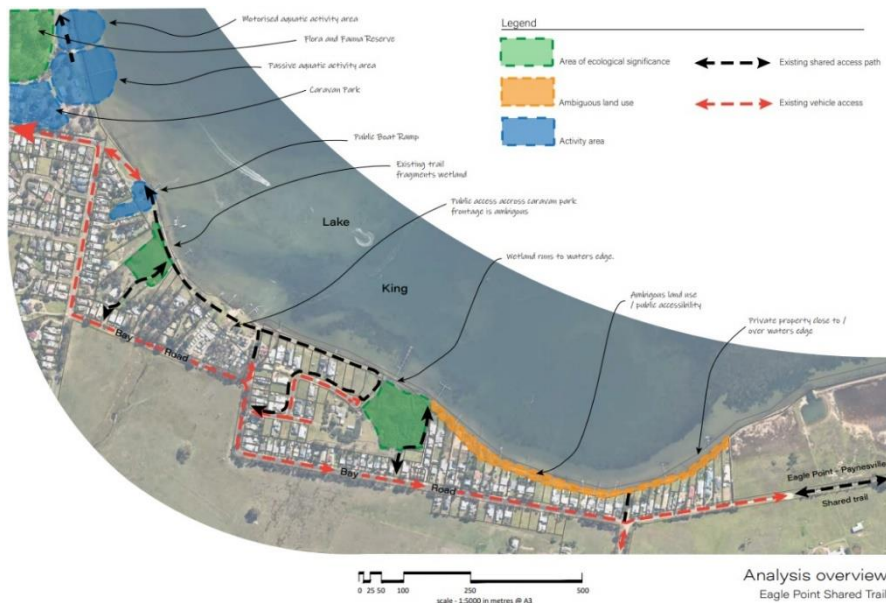
Fire Affected Roadside Weed Control 2023-2024

A total of \$48,720 (ex-GST) was spent as part of funding for Fire Affected Roadside Weed Control for 2023-2024. The program saw:

- 543 kilometres of roadsides have been treated;
- 408 kilometres of roadside were targeted for the Regionally Controlled *Rubus fruticosus*, Blackberry; and
- 135 kilometres of roadside were targeted for the Regionally Controlled *Eragrostis curvula*, African Love Grass.

Weed control works were undertaken in the fire affected communities of Clifton Creek, Sarsfield, Bruthen, Wiseleigh, Nicholson, Orbost, Bemm River, Cann River, Gelantipy, Wangarabell and Club Terrace.

These weeds had been identified as a high priority for control post-fire, and their control will assist with building resilience within East Gippsland's environmental and agricultural systems. This funding is not on-going.



Eagle Point Foreshore Trail Concept Design Plan

Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 1

Action	Status	Comment
Conduct a gap analysis of existing datasets to understand key habitat areas and biodiversity values on Council and private land	On schedule	A draft analysis has been prepared and submitted for internal feedback before finalising. The initial focus of this draft has been specific to Council based work systems.
Development Management Plans to protect key habitat areas and other biodiversity values on Council land	On schedule	The draft Management Plan for a section of Raymond Island has been prepared with the environmental assessment provided to stakeholders. Consultants continued the development of the Management Plan for Lighthouse Reserve, Marlo and internal works have commenced for plan development for View Street, and Fort King Foreshore Paynesville. More broadly, the Coastal and Marine Management Plan and Open Space Strategy are in development, which provide strong context for the management of key sites.
Continue to manage fire affected Council land to protect biodiversity and ensure public safety	Ongoing	Weed control works in fire affected communities were conducted in Clifton Creek, Sarsfield, Bruthen, Wiseleigh, Nicholson, Orbost, Bemm River, Cann River, Gelantipy, Wangarabell and Club Terrace.
Review and update planning overlays with a lens to preserving and connecting important habitat and natural environment values	Not commenced	This multi-year project is yet to commence.
Develop an Encroachment Policy and supporting processes to protect and preserve the open space values of Council land	Behind schedule – <i>Was due to be completed in 2023-24</i>	Finalisation of the Draft Encroachment Policy is on hold as the focus shifted to the aligned strategies Coastal and Marine Management Plan and Public Open Space Strategy. These supporting processes have progressed well and will provide strong guidance for the preservation of open space values moving forward.
Audit and review instances of permitted and illegal native vegetation removal on Council and private land to inform future actions	Ongoing	There were seven reported instances of illegal removal of native vegetation on Council managed land that were investigated. One was a significant issue at Bemm River. There were another 13 reports investigated on vegetation removal from private land. The reporting process has been assessed and these are now subject to increased investigation resources.
Work with partner agencies to ensure compliance of approved Vegetation Management Plans, Landscape Plans and native vegetation offsets	Ongoing	Ongoing liaison with partner agencies in ongoing. Vegetation Management Plans and Landscape Plans are reviewed as part of secondary consents for planning permits.
Pursue opportunities with partners to promote and support preservation of local biodiversity values	Ongoing	Council works closely with community members and groups such as Landcare to preserve local biodiversity values. A Partnerships Facilitator role has been approved for the Natural Environment team and will commence in 2024-25.

Action	Status	Comment
Develop and provide regular natural environment training for field officers	Behind schedule	A draft outline of a training program was developed and delivered for Road Maintenance staff relating to legislation and vegetation management.
Develop the first State of Environment review	Not commenced	Yet to commence. This project was delayed commencing, although will be a focus in 2024-25.
Ensure project developments with a land-use impact undertake an environmental analysis prior to planning	Not commenced	This is a multi-year action that will commence in detail in 2024-25.
Undertake community education to promote the need to protect the natural environment and actions community members can undertake to support this	Ongoing	Council worked closely with community members and groups, such as Landcare, however the development of a formal education program is resource dependent. Council is partnering with Federation University to support a Citizen Science Project on the value of urban wetlands, specifically in Bairnsdale. This project will include a community engagement component to work with community on protecting the natural environment.
Update the Roadside Vegetation Strategy	Not commenced	This is a multiyear action that is yet to commence. Council is seeking potential external funding sources to assist progressing this project further in 2024-25.
Recognise and protect important habitat, biodiversity and climate risks during the preparation of the Municipal Planning Strategy and review planning controls	Ongoing	Relevant changes to the Municipal Planning Strategy have been proposed through the Planning Scheme Amendment C169. Further review of planning controls has yet to be undertaken and will be scoped further to pick up the wide-ranging nature of the action.
Expand annual revegetation programs to support biodiversity, liveability and contribute to the offsetting of Council emissions	Ongoing	Work was completed with partner agencies to ensure compliance of approved Vegetation Management Plans, Landscape Plans and native vegetation offsets.
Work with relevant land managers to provide litter collection services and infrastructure across rest areas, parks, bushland reserves and informal camping areas	Ongoing	A review of waste and recycling services was undertaken across Council managed camping grounds and caravan parks to increase recycling and adequate waste disposal is in place during busy periods. Council worked with Tambo Waste and Regional Roads Victoria to increase the servicing and collection of waste from roadside stops along major highways. This has reduced the potential for overfull bins contaminating surrounding reserves. Council's rural waste trailer services continued to be provided to provide access to responsible waste disposal in rural and remote areas.
Work with key stakeholders to develop and deliver education programs, initiatives and targeted enforcement investigation to better address illegal rubbish dumping and littering	Ongoing	Investigations and follow-up enforcement action has been taken where possible. Council Officers received training from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) about providing a better service around vegetation removal management.

Results against targets set for goal 1

Measure	Target	Result		Progress to date
		2023-24	2022-23	
Reduce the decline in biodiversity loss	< previous year's result	No data available	No data available	Baseline data being developed to report on activity.
Increase in the quantity and quality of vulnerable land, habitat and biodiversity on Council and private land	> previous year's result	No data available	No data available	This KPI hasn't commenced reporting. Preplanning work has commenced, which includes assessment of previous datasets and the gap analysis on key habitat areas.
Illegal clearing of significant native vegetation will be enforced	Target to be developed in 2024-25	13 investigations on private land; seven on public land	37 investigations on private land	The reporting process has been assessed and these are now subject to increased investigation resources.
By 2032 the community are more engaged in conservation efforts and have a greater awareness of our ecological values	To be confirmed	691 people accessed Environment Connect newsletter	660 people accessed Environment Connect newsletter	This is an increase of 31 additional opens of the newsletter. The results will be assessed to determine an annual target.
By 2032 community appreciation of the natural environment measures will have all increased	> in community appreciation	No data available	No data available	Baseline reporting is being developed. An initial report will be due by 2024-25.



Councillors with the Eastwood Landcare Group in the planted sheoak trees

Goal 2: Sustainable management of natural resources

Why this goal is important

This goal refers to the sustainable management of natural resources, such as more efficient use of water, energy and fuel for transport as well as sustainable use of land, soil and raw materials.

Efficiently managing our use of natural resources can have two effects:

- Reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere (mitigation)
- Lower the risk of the impacts from change (adaptation)

Key Achievements

Council's direct energy usage and emissions

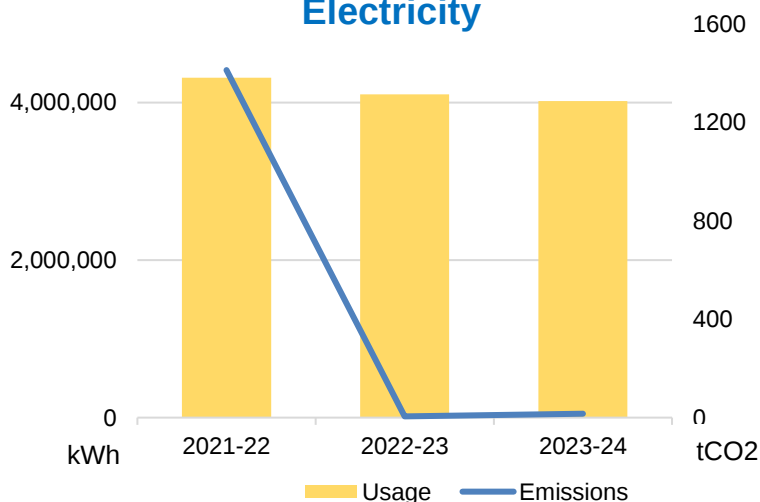
						
	Natural Gas	Bottled Gas	Fuel	Landfill gas	Electricity	Total
Baseline (2022)	416	181	1,568	15,029	1,412	18,606
2022-23	450	138	1,586	13,648	5	15,854
2023-24	451	131	1,591	12,899	16	15,088
Percentage change: (2021-22 to 2023-24)	+8%	-25%	+1%	-14%	-99%	-19%

Values in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent

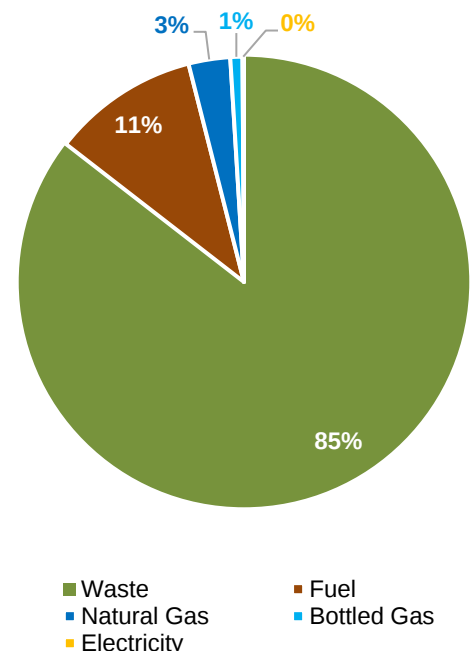
Electricity consumption

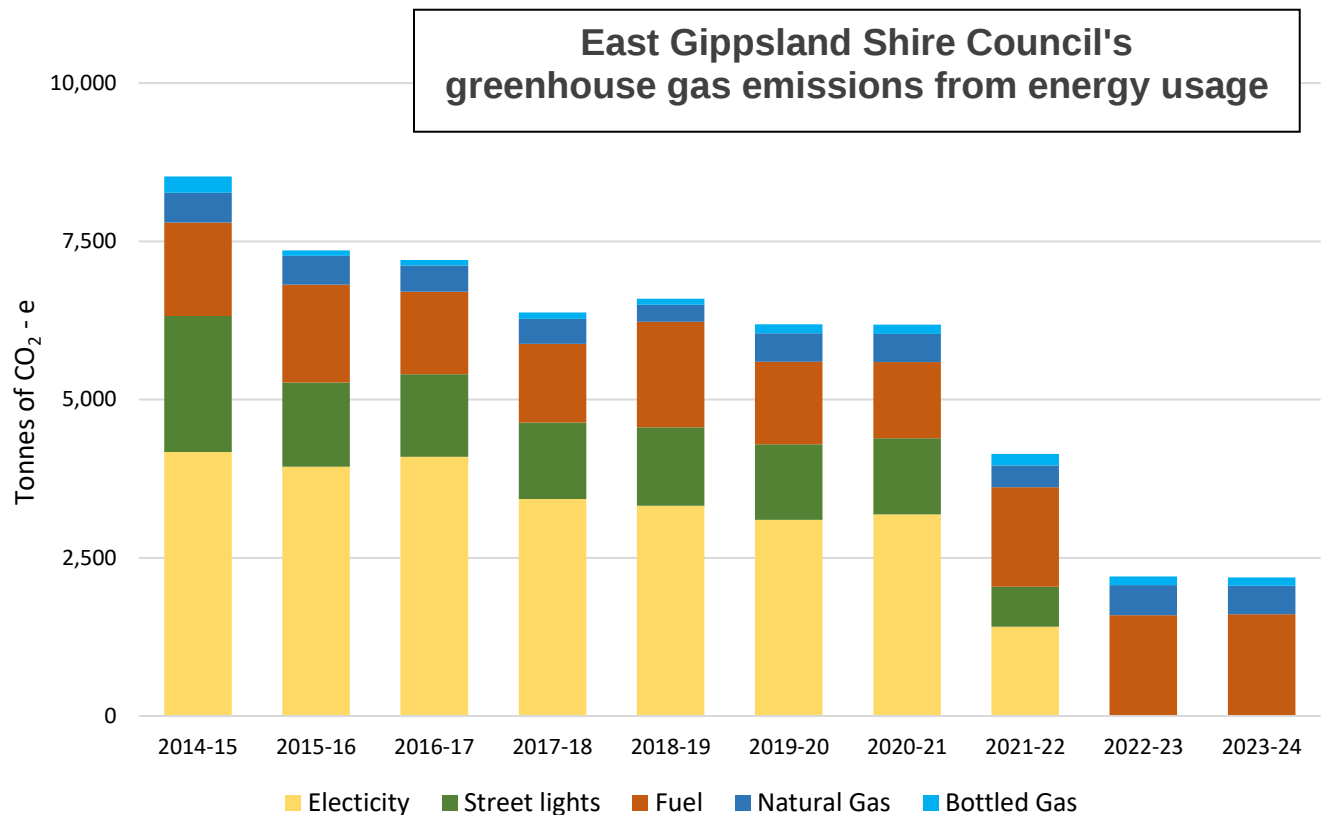
Year	Consumption
2021-22	4,314,735 kWh
2022-23	4,104,915 kWh
2023-24	4,017,543 kWh

Electricity



Council's direct emissions





Council's emissions profile

The breakdown provided above illustrates the annual generation of greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations, facilities, and services. This profile gives an understanding of the volume and sources of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from Council operations and enables the identification of emission reduction opportunities in specific areas.

The main factors behind the significant decline in emissions between 2020-21 and 2022-23 is from the following projects:

As of January 1, 2022, Council transitioned its electricity accounts to 100% renewable energy through the Victorian Energy Collaboration Organisation (VECO) agreement. This switch has resulted in a notable reduction of Council's carbon emissions, slashing them by over 3,000 tonnes per year.

Additionally, Council replaced 1,593 residential streetlights with energy-efficient LED lights. This transition not only contributes to an annual estimated savings of \$228,000 in electricity costs but also leads to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, amounting to over 1,200 tonnes annually.

Council's draft Greenhouse Gas Emissions plan

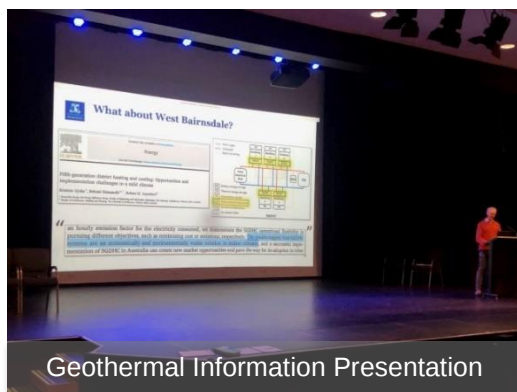
The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan is on hold while an economic analysis for delivering the plan is developed. This additional piece of work will identify associated costs of projects, return on investment opportunities and the cost of carbon into the future. A consultant has been engaged to deliver this project.

Explore feasibility of using geothermal technology in West Bairnsdale

Preliminary findings of the geothermal feasibility study for the West Bairnsdale precinct have been presented on-line, and Council is now waiting for the final report.

The expected scope of the findings will show the costings from the energy models, and the energy production predictions for calculating value compared to natural gas.

Council held a community engagement session on Geothermal Energy, which was hosted by University of Melbourne, who are conducting the feasibility study. 40 people attended and heard case studies of successful use of geothermal in Gippsland.



Geothermal Information Presentation

Council's transition plan for vehicle fleet to electric vehicles

Council purchased its first fully electric vehicle, the Hyundai Ioniq. Planning is underway for how Council will transition the remaining fleet to electric vehicles. Funding will be sought next year for additional EV charging infrastructure, electrical upgrades and solar systems.



Council's first electric vehicle

Renewable energy projects

Solar lighting on Bullock Island

New solar LED lighting on Bullock Island in Lakes Entrance is not connected to the grid and ensures consistent illumination even during power outages.



Solar lighting on Bullock Island

Off-grid solar LED lights in Orbost laneways

Three new off-grid solar LED lights have been installed in the walk-through laneways of Lawson Street and Lind Lane in Orbost.

Solar barbecue installed

In a first for East Gippsland, a standalone solar barbecue was installed and has replaced a grid connected barbecue within Mick Baum Park, Cann River.

The free public barbecue uses 100 per cent renewable energy. A solar array converts sunlight collected during the day and charges a battery bank to power the hotplate.



Solar powered BBO at Cann River

Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 2

Action	Status	Comment
Continue to implement sustainable water practices, including implementation of Integrated Water Management (IWM) and application of water sensitive urban design principles, within new urban development and existing drainage assets	Ongoing	Council partnered with other agencies to achieve integrated water management solutions for the following projects: - Supporting an urban wetland citizen science project with Federation University, which includes engagement the community about the important role that urban wetlands play in supporting biodiversity outcomes. - Planning upgrades at the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange to improve the management of on-site water management and improve quality of water entering the morass. - The Crooke Street Wetland project construction recommenced following the need to adapt the design to site conditions. - The Toonalook Waters Wetland Action Plan was prepared to guide future revegetation and related works at the site.
Complete the Bairnsdale Alternative Water Project	On schedule – <i>Due to be completed by 2024-25</i>	Preliminary data collection is complete and conceptual design recommendations have been carried out by East Gippsland Water. A Request for Quotation for consultancy services for the water management study has been advertised. A time extension for the project completion has been granted by the funding body, with the revised date now December 2024.
Audit organisational greenhouse gas emissions to establish forecast benchmarks for electricity, gas and fossil fuels	Ongoing	The Draft Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan is in development, which includes an audit of Council emissions and identifies forecast benchmarks to understand progression to overall reductions. Trellis (emissions monitoring software) is being setup to manage greenhouse gas usage, reporting and projections. This system is being updated with historical data and mapping usage through invoices.
Deliver key projects and programs to reduce Council's greenhouse gas emissions	Ongoing	Key projects include: - Progressed geothermal feasibility study; - Supported the integration of Council's first full electric vehicle into the fleet; - Undertook electrification feasibility options for Council buildings (sites were Eagle Point Recreation Reserve, Swan Reach Recreation Reserve and Paynesville Service Centre); and - Continued with the public electric vehicle charging station roll out.

Action	Status	Comment
Develop and enact a transition plan for Council's vehicle fleet to electric vehicles	Behind schedule – <i>Transition Plan due to be completed by 2023-24</i>	The EV Fleet Transition Plan was initially delayed as it's a collaborative project with the other Gippsland Council's and was reprioritised amongst other projects. Budget will be carried forward into 2024-25, where it will be progressed.
Proactively manage trees and native vegetation assets across East Gippsland Shire Council's urban areas, open spaces and bushland settings	Ongoing	Tree inspections were undertaken in accordance with Council's Urban Tree Management Procedure, as well as responses to customer requests. Significant storm events across the year, including the major storm event in February 2024 required urgent and high-level response.
Deliver projects that provide active transport opportunities	Ongoing	There are four projects either under construction or complete that improve opportunities for active transport. The completed projects are the footpath connections at Lindenow South and the footpath at Wallace Street Bairnsdale. The two projects under construction are the shared pathways at Bullock Island and the footpath connections at Bemm River.
Explore feasibility of using geothermal technology in West Bairnsdale	On schedule – <i>Due to be completed by 2024-25</i>	Preliminary findings of the geothermal feasibility study for the West Bairnsdale precinct have been presented on-line, and Council is now waiting for the final report. The expected scope of the findings will show the costings from the energy models, and the energy production predictions for calculating value compared to natural gas. Council hosted a community engagement session on Geothermal Energy, which was hosted by University of Melbourne, who are conducting the feasibility study. 40 people attended and heard case studies of successful use of geothermal in Gippsland

Results against targets set for Goal 2

Measure	Target	2023-24	Result 2022-23	Progress to date
Water use supports necessary environmental flow and best practice measures	Determined by individual projects	Four projects	Reporting being developed for future years	Water use projects that will reduce nutrient loads, litter and suspended solids in waterways include: - Urban wetland citizen science project with Federation University; - Upgrades at the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange; - The Crooke Street Wetland project construction; and - The Toonalook Waters Wetland Action Plan.
Council invests in stormwater assets using water sensitive urban design (WSUD) and Integrated Water Management (IWM) principles	Target to be developed by 2024-25	\$1.16 million	\$170,000	Total spend on drainage projects this year is \$1.16 million. There has been construction works at Crooke Street Wetlands and Stirling Drive in Metung. Planning work on Marlo Town Drainage, Robin Street Lakes Entrance and Tambo Boulevard Stormwater improvements.
East Gippsland Shire Council's greenhouse gas emissions from energy use (electricity and gas) are reduced by 100%	100% by 2032	Reduced by 76.75%	Reduced by 74.82%	Greenhouse gas emissions from electricity and gas for 2023-24 were 598 tonnes (CO ₂ equivalent). This result is compared to our baseline year of 2021-22, which had 2,573 tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent.
All electricity used in council operations is from 100% renewable sources	100% by 2032	99.16%	99.87%	The majority of Council's electricity accounts are on the VECO agreement and use 100% renewable energy. The result slightly decreased from the previous year as more accounts have been included in the reporting through the new emissions management system Trellis. These additional accounts are not included in VECO agreement.
Greenhouse gas emissions from light vehicle fleet transport will decrease by 50% (Council fleet and community)	50% by 2032	Council increased by 0.3%; Community increased by 12.7%	Increased by 1.1% (Council) Reduced by 8.3% (community)	Council purchased its first electric vehicle in the vehicle fleet. Each passenger vehicle is expected to remove around 2.6 tonnes of CO ₂ each year. <i>Community data is sourced from Snapshot and is a comparison between 2019-20, to 2021-22 years.</i>

Measure	Target	Result		Progress to date
		2023-24	2022-23	
Increased active transport opportunities (e.g., cycling infrastructure, shared pathways)	Target to be developed by 2024-25	Four projects	One project	Lindenow South Footpath connections – (complete) Wallace Street, Bairnsdale, Footpath Construction – (complete) Bullock Island Masterplan Implementation, shared pathways – (under construction) Bemm River Footpath Connections – (under construction)
All service towns and prominent localities have access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure	Eight towns	Five towns	Five towns	Electric vehicle charging stations are already in place at Bairnsdale, Orbost, Omeo, Paynesville and Cann River. Council is progressing installation of further charging stations at Buchan and Mallacoota.
New and existing land use development incorporates Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) principles	Target to be developed by 2024-25	Reporting is being developed for future years	Reporting is being developed for future years	Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) has been further elevated in Council's Draft Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework documents. This will provide Council the ability to incorporate ESD in the future through new and existing land use developments.



Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Station in Nicholson Street Carpark in Bairnsdale

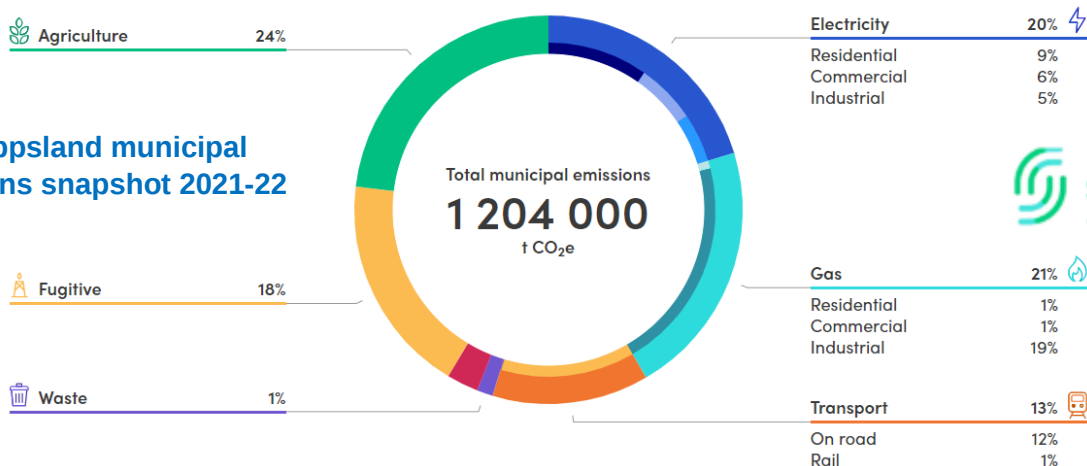
Goal 3: Community participation in the climate response

Why this goal is important

This goal specifically focuses on the extent to which the whole community (local businesses, community organisations, individuals, and Traditional Owners) undertake and participate in the climate response.

This includes considering their awareness, the tools they need for action, and the level of ownership and leadership they demonstrate to drive change. As the impact of a changing climate emerges, there is an urgent call for both individual and collective efforts to prioritise the sustainability of our environment.

East Gippsland municipal emissions snapshot 2021-22



The emissions data here is sourced from SnapShot, a website developed by Ironbark Sustainability and Beyond Zero Emissions. SnapShot is underpinned by a common international framework, the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC Protocol). SnapShot data, methodology and calculations have been independently verified as aligned with the GPC and with best practice industry standards for community emissions profile development in Australia.

Source	Sector	Emissions (tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent)	
		2018-19	2021-22
Electricity	Residential	141,000	117,000
	Commercial	96,000	70,000
	Industrial	60,000	57,000
Gas	Residential	8,000	8,000
	Commercial	1,000	1,000
	Industrial	5,000	248,000
Transport	On road	169,000	156,000
Waste		16,000	16,000
IPPU (Refrigerants)		31,000	32,000
Fugitive		0	220,000
Agriculture		276,000	278,000
Land Use		2,000	2,000
Total emissions		804,000	1,204,000

Key Achievements

Environmental Sustainability summary videos

Two short videos were created to improve engagement of the strategy. These two-minute videos highlighted the achievements over the previous 12-months and the other promoting the goals of the strategy.

The videos were uploaded to Council's YouTube channel ([EastGippyTV](#)) and shared through social media platforms.

[East Gippsland Shire environmental sustainability achievements](#)

[East Gippsland Shire Council Sustainability Strategy 2022-2032](#)

New environment grants up to \$20,000

Council released a new Community Grants Program with an aim to provide financial grants to support and enhance the East Gippsland community's social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being.

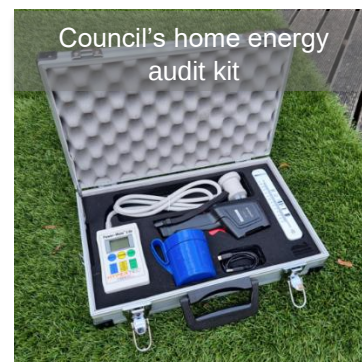
Both categories include a dedicated Environment Stream, aligned to support the delivery of Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-2032.

Specifically, grants will be awarded to eligible projects which align with the goals of the environment strategy.

Home energy audit kits coming to Council libraries

New home energy auditing kits have been purchased and will soon be available in each library for residents to borrow. Each kit includes a:

- Household energy monitor - to measure the cost, energy and emissions from any plug-in appliance
- Handheld thermal imaging camera - to check for gaps in insulation or draughts
- Energy efficiency indicator thermometer
- Water-flow measuring cup - to check water efficiency and identify waste



Waste education at the Omeo and District Show

Thanks to the local community and visitors for a fantastic Omeo and District Show in November 2023.

Community members were involved with things like recycling activities with kids, and information provided on general waste and recycling.



Citizen science project for urban wetlands in partnership with Federation University

Partnering with Federation University, Council is supporting a student to undertake research into how community members relate to the wetlands in Bairnsdale. This project includes engaging with the community on perceptions of the local wetlands, including usage and potential improvements in these spaces.

Benefits of constructed wetlands include habitat provision for plants and animals, and use natural processes to improve urban water runoff. This project is funded through the Gippsland Lakes Co-ordinating Committee and supported by Council.

Seed Library

The Bairnsdale Library has a Seed Library that lets community members cultivate food and plants at home, share seeds, and build gardening knowledge. Library members can borrow up to three seed packets at any one time to plant and grow in their home gardens.

U3A Cut Your Energy Bills workshop

An informative 'Cut Your Energy Bills' workshop was held as part of East Gippsland Seniors Festival. The session was hosted by the U3A to assist residents with rising energy costs.

The talk was held at U3A in Bairnsdale and was live streamed to Mallacoota residents online. The keynote speaker was Mike Hinchey from Bairnsdale, who presented on simple energy efficiency and house design concepts for everyone to take away and consider. Over a dozen residents attended in person or on-line.



Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 3

Action	Status	Comment
Develop a net zero emissions plan to achieve our 2032 emissions target	Behind schedule – <i>Was due to be completed by 2023-24</i>	The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan is on hold while an economic analysis for delivering the plan is developed. This additional piece of work will identify associated costs of projects, return on investment opportunities and the cost of carbon into the future.
Coordinate the installation of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure across East Gippsland, by installing Council owned stations and assisting third parties to install their own	Ongoing	Council is currently progressing three new electric vehicle charging stations: Buchan - This project has been tied in with the Buchan streetscape upgrades. The charger is close to being installed, with the concrete footings ready to be poured. Mallacoota - Charger artwork has been completed, with the request for quotations for civil and electrical work currently being sought. The charger installation and completion of the electrical connection target date is 1 December 2024. Lakes Entrance - Is on hold until the final preferred location by NRMA for their charging station is determined.
Establish a community greenhouse gas emission profile and support actions to reduce emissions	On schedule	Ironbark Sustainability have supplied Council with a detailed community emissions profile by sector. This data will be used as a basis for establishing emissions baselines and projecting future targets. The data will also be used as part of a comprehensive communication plan, which will align with the Disaster Ready Fund project.
Coordinate and support community events that support people and community to take leadership on sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions	Ongoing	A community Geothermal Information Session was held at the Forge Theatre. The 40 community members in attendance watched the presentation from Melbourne University which was around the technology and benefits of geothermal as a near zero emissions fuel source. Through the U3A Mike Hinchey delivered a community session on ways to reduce household energy use and emissions reduction. This session was part of the Seniors Festival of events.
Update and distribute community information packages on sustainability initiatives (Smart Living Booklet)	Ongoing	The Smart Living Booklet is being reviewed and will include recommendations to remove gas appliances and a new chapter on charging electric vehicles, electric scooters and e-bikes. Six energy audit kits for public to assess their home energy usage have been ordered and will be available from each library and service centre. A user-guide has been developed and demonstrations are being planned for the public. This project will carry over into 2024-25.

Action	Status	Comment
Work with the alliance of Gippsland Council (GACA) in delivering priority actions of the Strategic and Action Plan 2023-24	Ongoing	The collaborative work completed with GACA that supports Councils' outcomes include: - Emissions Monitoring – Council participated in a joint tender with the other Councils for new Trellis emissions monitoring software. This project is complete. - Electrification of Council buildings - A grant project assessing the electrification of Council buildings across Gippsland. In East Gippsland the Paynesville Service Centre complex building was assessed. The report for this project was received in June.
Support business (including the agriculture sector) to optimise opportunities to benefit from renewable energy transition and circular economy opportunities	Ongoing	Final Draft of the New Energy Opportunities study pending to inform the opportunities for Council to support businesses to benefit from the energy transition. Council continued engagement with external stakeholders to understand practices and opportunities within the circular economy, including delivery of internal circular economy workshops delivered in partnership with Sustainability Victoria. Council continues to support businesses to navigate process and supports through the business concierge service.
Explore opportunities to provide support for community and businesses to reduce reliance on gas	Ongoing	Rebates and grant information for electrification opportunities (transition away from gas) were developed for promotion. This information was featured and shared with the community through Council's quarterly newsletter, Environment Connect.
Support Council's contractors to reduce their emissions and achieve savings	On schedule	Work commenced with reporting fuel use emissions from one of Council's largest contractors. Additionally, work is progressing to develop internal processes to collect contractor data to start discussions about emissions and usage.
Support programs that incentivise farming practices which reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enable participation in carbon markets, whilst improving productivity.	Ongoing	Council, in conjunction with Southern Farming Systems and Gippsland Agriculture Group, delivered 12 'know your number' workshops to farmers as part of the Social Wellbeing events. These events incorporated a farm walk, looking at pastures, growth and practices which reduce emissions and can contribute to carbon counting, with opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

Results against targets set for goal 3

Measure	Target	Result		Progress to date
		2023-24	2022-23	
Council will set a corporate net zero emissions target for 2032	0 tonnes of CO ₂ -e by 2032	15,088 tonnes	15,854 tonnes	Council reduced its emissions by 5 per cent from the previous year. Council is drafting a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan to further drive emissions reduction actions.
The proportion of community members who report satisfaction with Council's environmental action will increase	> 37%	36%	35%	While the result was an increase of 1% from last year, the target was not met. <i>Source: East Gippsland Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey</i>
Support a community emissions target	Achieved by 2032	Yet to commence	Yet to commence	A dataset on East Gippsland's community emissions has been received from Ironbark, which will assist in the development of community targets.
By 2032 East Gippsland's community emissions will have reduced	< 1,167,000 tonnes of CO ₂ -e by 2032 (Baseline year 2020-21)	1,204,000 tonnes of CO ₂ -e	1,167,000 tonnes of CO ₂ -e	The increase in community emissions is from increases to industrial gas use, on road transport and fugitive emissions from gas production in the region. <i>Sourced from Snapshot, with most recent data available is for the year 2021-22.</i>



Geothermal Information Presentation held for community at the Forge Theatre

Goal 4: Respect and alignment with the rights of Traditional Owner Groups

Why this goal is important

East Gippsland Shire Council recognises the importance of Traditional Owners in delivering sustainability outcomes for the community and important biodiversity values.

Traditional Owner groups as custodians of traditional customs and land management techniques are interlinked with every other goal within this Strategy.

Key Achievements

Krauatungalung Walk – Lakes Entrance

Krauatungalung Walk project, named after the traditional landowners, will tell stories of the local Indigenous community, while providing an opportunity to develop an active community and help provide improved all abilities access within Lakes Entrance.



Borun & Tuk seat on the Krauatungalung Walk

Construction of Stage 1 of the project is progressing, which is a pedestrian walkway between the Lakes Entrance Footbridge and Hammocks bridge at the eastern end of Cunninghame Arm. Detailed planning design is underway for stages 2 – 4, which is the southern side of Cunninghame Arm and links around to Hammocks Bridge.

Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) have been involved in delivery of the Borun & Tuk seat and shields at start of the footbridge in Lakes Entrance.

Aboriginal Cultural Healing Project

A contractor has been engaged and commenced working with six aboriginal communities across East Gippsland to develop their self-determined emergency management needs and ambitions.

Initial meetings held to identify lessons learnt or acknowledged. During caretaker period evaluation of data and preparation of plans for each community will take place.

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan

A report was presented to Council setting the context for development of a new relationship with Aboriginal community, which involved the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan. This report noting progress was slower than desirable for a range of internal and external reasons including the focus on the Voice referendum.

Raymond Island Koala Trail

The proposed project will see the extension and enhancement of the koala trail with environmental improvements to enhance habitat and support sustainability. Additional features include Indigenous interpretation, and cultural education.

GLaWAC have been contracted in to undertake the works and will complete the Abbey Loop.

Improve work are underway to the management of koala habitat, koala care, research and rehabilitation to ensure sustainable environmental outcomes for the experience.



Aboriginal Recovery and Resilience Program

Council established a project control group East Gippsland Shire Council Recovery and Resilience Grant Program Aboriginal and Cultural Recovery and Resilience Strengthening projects with Emergency Recovery Victoria Manager of Coordination Aboriginal Culture and Healing Southeast Regions, Aboriginal Engagement team and Emergency Management for ongoing coordination.

Council also advocated and established a recovery and strategic alliance group with the Department Health, Department of Education (Federal and State Rep), Emergency Recovery Victoria, Lake Tyers Aboriginal Health and the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust to re-establish childcare services after the February storm event.



Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 4

Action	Status	Comment
Collaborate with Traditional Owners to support environmental and sustainable initiatives and outcomes	Ongoing	Council has collaborated Traditional Owners on environmental projects and sought assistance in delivery of projects. The two projects that Council collaborated with GLaWAC on were: - Krauatungalung Walk – GLaWAC partnered with the delivery of Borun & Tuk seat and shields at start of the footbridge in Lakes Entrance; - Bruthen Streetscape – GLaWAC designed and installed a yarning circle in the centre median in the town centre.
Engage with traditional owners to ensure the impacts of climate change are identified and addressed through the delivery of joint projects and programs	Not commenced	Council is developing an updated Reconciliation Action Plan that will drive the future engagement with traditional owners.
Include Aboriginal communities in Council decision-making processes around natural resource management, land-use and preservation of biodiversity	Ongoing	Undertaking a Cultural Heritage Assessment is required for each project undertaken by Council. Outcomes of these assessments contribute to the level of Council's engagement with Traditional Owners. 52 current projects require Cultural Heritage Assessment, with Council actively seeking engagement with Traditional Owners regarding many of these projects, including; - Omeo Mountain Bike Trails; - Orbost Forest Park Upgrade; and - Krauatungalung Walk.
Engage with Aboriginal communities in Council operations to: - Access traditional land management knowledge to help build awareness and capacity across Council and the community; - Improve the way Council interact with Aboriginal communities on sustainability outcomes; and - Celebrate natural environment cultural values through delivery of arts, events and festivals	Ongoing	Council hosted a Victorian Youth Treaty event at The Forge Theatre, including smoking ceremony and traditional dance on the lawns. A component of this event was discussion on Aboriginal people being involved in decisions affecting country.

Results against targets set for goal 4

Measure	Target	Result		Progress to date
		2023-24	2022-23	
Traditional Owners are fully involved in decision-making around management and use of natural resources including climate change	Target to be developed by 2024-25	No data available	No data available	To be explored further with the development of the new Reconciliation Action Plan.
Relevant agreements between Council and Traditional Owner groups are in place for the use and management of land under Council management	Target to be developed by 2024-25	Two projects	Four projects	The two projects were: Krauatungalung Walk – GLaWAC – delivery of Borun & Tuk seat and shields at start of the footbridge in Lakes Entrance; Bruthen Streetscape – yarning circle.
Relevant targets set in collaboration with traditional owners are met	Target to be developed by 2024-25	No data available	No data available	The targets will be developed further through the creation of a new Reconciliation Action Plan.



Gunaikurnai clan shield installed as part of the Krauatungalung Walk

Goal 5: Environmental sustainability supports sustainable economic growth and new job opportunities

Why this goal is important

East Gippsland is recognised as an important agricultural district of state and national importance. Both socially and economically, East Gippsland recognises itself as a region that produces high-quality produce or 'food and fibre'.

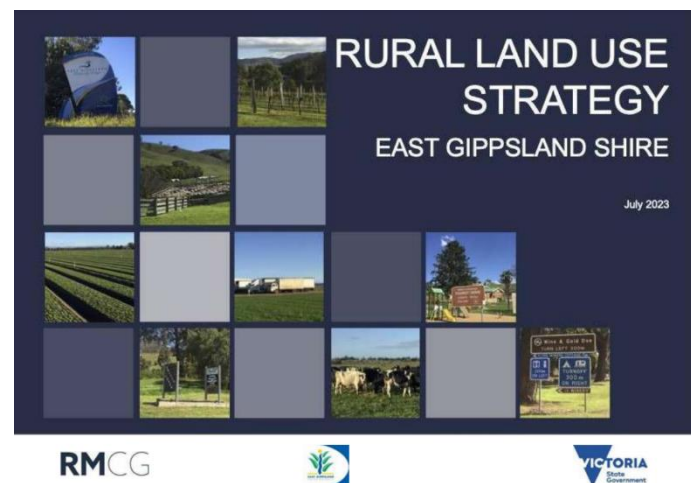
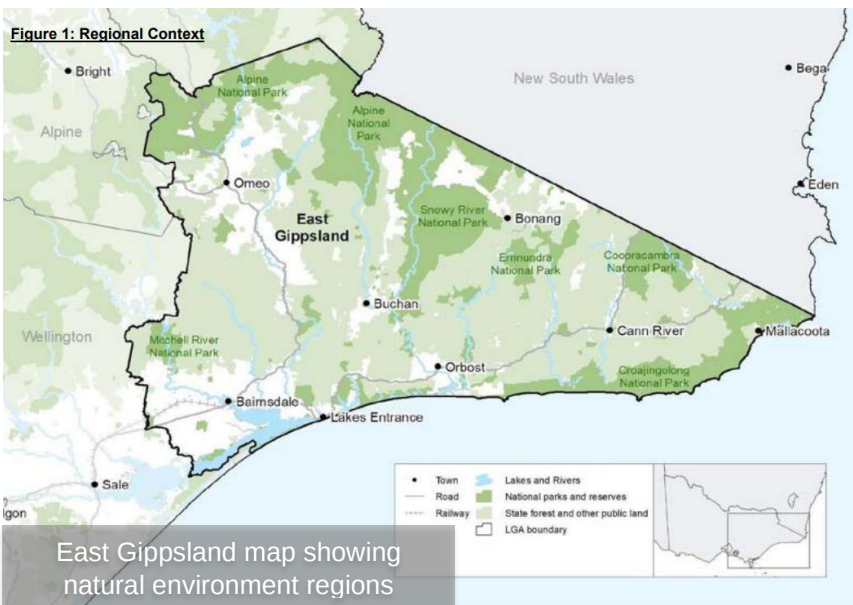
An integral aspect of achieving this objective involves the expansion of sustainability services to enhance the existing industries' capacity for sustainability. The evolving climate and shifting policies and guidelines also present new opportunities for businesses to either relocate to or develop within East Gippsland.

Key Achievements

Adopted the Rural Land Use Strategy

Council adopted a Rural Land Use Strategy (RLUS) at the July 2023 Council Meeting. The strategy will support farming communities and protect agricultural land into the future.

This RLUS is the first of its kind for East Gippsland. The Strategy supports a diversity of agricultural enterprises of various scales, promotes emerging opportunities for rural industries, boutique farming, rural tourism, and recognises and protects important environmental and landscape values.



New Energy Supply Chain workshop

East Gippsland Shire Council supported the delivery of a new energy supply chain workshop in Sale. Participants were able to hear about new energy projects planned in Gippsland over the coming years, which can offer a lot of opportunities for local businesses.

The session had local business present how they were successful in winning new energy contracts, and procurement team delivered a major new energy project about what types of local suppliers are needed, what they look for in suppliers and how to set a business up for success.

Gippsland New Energy Conference

The Gippsland New Energy Conference 23, held in Sale was Australia's largest regional-led New Energy Conference.

East Gippsland Shire Council was a sponsor of the conference and Rebecca Lamb from the Sustainability team presented on Council's VECO project. This was an opportunity for Council to participate in the event and engage with industry leaders, experts and community ambassadors to engage on the latest advancements, challenges, and opportunities in renewable energy.



Gippsland New Energy Conference 2023



Cr Mark Reeves with the Rural Aid Coordinator, a volunteer and a local farmer

Rural Aid supporting local farmers after emergency event

Council was able to support Rural Aid volunteers to travel to Orbost and support farming businesses still feeling the impact of the extensive floods along the Snowy River.

The 18 volunteers from Rural Aid undertook a week of manual labour, which included tasks such as general maintenance, fencing, clearing and tree planting.

New Energy Opportunities Night

Council joint hosted the New Energy Opportunities Night that provided insight into new energy opportunities for East Gippsland businesses and the emerging skills and workforce needs.

The panelists for the event were:

- Darren McCubbin (CEO - Gippsland Climate Change Network)
- Stella Bodman (Co-founder and acting president of Gippsland Women in New Energy and Communications Officer at Star of the South)
- Paul Boys (Director at Gippsland Tech School)
- Ben Gebert (CEO at Food & Fibre Gippsland).

Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 5

Action	Status	Comment
Develop the Rural Land Use Strategy to support sustainable agricultural land use and investment	Completed	The Rural Land Use Strategy was adopted and included in draft Planning Scheme Amendment C170.
Support organisations to adopt and adhere to Environmental Social Governance (ESG) principles	Not commenced	Council is yet to commence work on what supports can be developed for local businesses and how this can be distributed.
Integrate Sustainable Events (from ISO 20121) into the planning and delivery of local events	Ongoing	Council introduced a new Event Waste Management Guide at the Event Masterclass in May. This guide is designed to assist event organisers reduce the production of waste and manage the waste and resources in a sustainable manner and circularity of materials. This guide is available on Councils website. Responsible Event Plan Template uploaded to events Tool Kit to Council website.
Advocate for funding of programs and initiatives that create jobs and support climate resilience	Ongoing	Council advocated and received funding through bushfire programs for the delivery of a business disaster preparedness and risk mitigation program, a business and emergency events - planning for crisis program, Agribusiness resilience programs.
Review Council's procurement policies to further elevate support of businesses with demonstrated environmental sustainability credentials	Completed	The Procurement Policy was updated and adopted, setting up greater detail for suppliers for sustainable procurement. The updated policy includes changes to the tender mandatory weighting for sustainable procurement, which can now be increased from five to 10 per cent if a focus on sustainability is necessary for the project. The revised policy aims to offer clearer guidance to businesses regarding expectations surrounding sustainable work practices.
Expand and promote access to an Environmental Upgrade Financing Scheme (Better Building Finance) and leverage for local employment	Withdrawn	Better Building Finance (BBF) was forced to cease trading in December 2023 due to the closure of the Sustainable Australia Fund's loan facility, which was dedicated to funding Environmental Upgrade Agreement projects. As a result of BBF no longer being available, the opportunity to expand the scheme is not viable. As Council has a previously signed a two-year trial agreement with Patties and Charter-hall (to undertake an LED lighting upgrade at the Lucknow site) Council will facilitate the payments to continue supporting this project.
Achieve and maintain Global Eco Destination Certification and grow the number of Eco-accredited operators across the region	On schedule	Currently undertaking an assessment of barriers for operators in attaining Eco-accreditation to tailor mentoring and business support efforts to increase uptake.

Action	Status	Comment
Consider opportunities to build tourism experiences within Council planning, asset creation and operations	Ongoing	This work is ongoing as Council looks to align the Eco Destinations accreditation with local businesses and explores mutual opportunities to grow tourism locally.
Represent Council and community interests in the advancement of offshore renewable energy	Ongoing	A New Energy Opportunity Study is being finalised, which unpacks the opportunities for East Gippsland. This work has included a New Energy networking function and engagement with key stakeholders in the offshore wind industry.
Support business transition toward greater resilience and adoption of environmentally sustainable initiatives, practices and fostering of the circular economy	Ongoing	Council continued to engage with external stakeholders to understand practices and opportunities within the circular economy. There was an internal circular economy workshop, delivered in partnership with Sustainability Victoria. Businesses were supported with navigating the business concierge service.

Results against targets set for goal 5

Measure	Target	Result		Progress to date
		2023-24	2022-23	
An increase in external funding flowing to local businesses and initiatives that align to the Economic Development Strategy	Target to be developed by 2024-25	Reporting being developed for future years	Reporting being developed for future years	Reviewing data sources that can be used to highlight how the funding leads to outcomes for local businesses.
Environmental Upgrade Agreement scheme expanded and applications increasing year on year	Not applicable	One	One	The Environmental Upgrade Agreement scheme is no longer supported. East Gippsland Shire Council will not be able to expand this program past its current agreement already in place.

Goal 6: Growth in the circular economy

Why this goal is important

Goal 6 is about fostering the growth of the circular economy. The circular economy replaces the traditional make, use, and dispose of philosophy of consumption with the idea of recycle and reuse.

In a circular economy, natural resources are kept in circulation to create new economic opportunities and help conserve natural resources, reducing emissions and waste.

Reducing overall waste is the first step in establishing a circular economy, and growing it is based on introducing technologies that will allow for materials and products to be reused or repurposed.

Key Achievements

Capital projects that include recycled materials

In 2023-24, 41 capital projects included recycled materials, all at various stages of design or construction.

Some of the biggest projects that use recycled material include:

- Krauatungalung Walk, Lakes Entrance, (40% of the boardwalk's decking consists of recycled plastic and timber);
- Bullock Island Masterplan Implementation (recycled materials in the park benches and repurposed buoys as art pieces); and
- Orbest Forest Park upgrade (recycled rubber used in asphalt pavements and under surfacing, and repurposed old timber shelter to cover barbeque area).

Textile recycling program

Council is partnering with UpCycle4Better to run a textile recycling program. The textiles and accessories collection points have been set up at Bairnsdale, Metung, Lakes Entrance and Orbost.

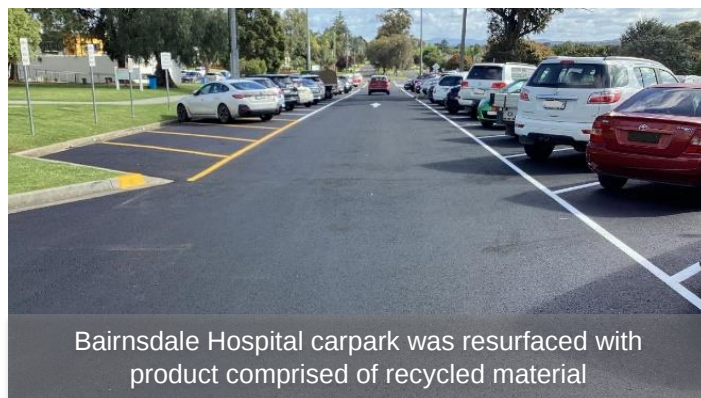
Textile materials account for approximately seven per cent of the content found in kerbside general-waste wheelie bins. This means about 1,300 tonnes of textile waste goes into landfill every year. An additional 330 tonnes is disposed of by opportunity shops and charities, who sell the used clothing.



Recycled road material

The Bairnsdale Hospital carpark in Day Street was resurfaced with product predominantly comprised of recycled materials. The product 'Reconophalt' is derived from waste streams, such as soft plastics, glass and toner, which would otherwise be bound for landfill or stockpiled.

This project is Council's first use of this product and demonstrates commitment to increasing the use of recycled materials in new ways.



Bairnsdale Hospital carpark was resurfaced with product comprised of recycled material

Waste wise events masterclass

Two waste wise masterclass events for event organisers were held in Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance.

The sessions presented how to develop effective waste management plans and strategies to promote recycling and sustainability initiatives at events.

These masterclasses were supported by the new Waste Wise Management Plan, which is aimed at helping event organisers reduce the volume of landfill.

The Wild Harvest Seafood Festival in Mallacoota showcased these learnings with using 'bin fairies' to help the community correctly separate waste into recycling, food organics, container deposit scheme items and general waste.

Recycling Awareness Programs

Council released an updated recycling awareness campaign aimed at promoting correct recycling practices.

The campaign's mission is to reduce contamination in the household commingled recycling bin from both locals and holiday makers staying in holiday homes or Airbnb's with a household waste collection service.

A set of tools and resources were developed which include a 'Waste Wise' booklet. This is a guide to recycling and waste services offered by Council – from all libraries and customer service centres. The educational material will be distributed at local markets and community events.



Mayor Cr Tom Crook with a 'Bin Fairy' at the Wild Harvest Seafood Festival



Council's updated recycling awareness materials

Projects and initiatives that support the achievement of Goal 6

Action	Status	Comment
Develop circular economies in East Gippsland by supporting and influencing local businesses to increase their use of recycled raw materials	Ongoing	Over 20 local businesses have been consulted regarding recyclable items that can be deposited for low to no cost. A particular focus has been working with local business and construction companies to increase recycling and reduce costs. Further engagement is planned with Master Builders Association members to promote utilisation of recycled products in the design and construction of buildings. Support is provided to Gippsland Circular Economy Hub, where Gippsland Council's come together to progress a range of initiatives to support industry and business participation in the circular economy.
Develop and implement waste education programs and events to focus on key areas of waste reduction, increase re-use and recycling and reduce litter across East Gippsland Shire	Ongoing	A key highlight has been the rollout of the household education campaign created awareness around better household recycling and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. This included a new Waste Wise household recycling manual, radio advertisements, website updates, fridge magnets and informative bin stickers. Pop- up information stands was held across towns to share recycling information. Rebooting the school-based education programs in primary schools, kindergartens, and childcare centres across East Gippsland was another initiative.
Design and construct the Bairnsdale Recycling Centre at the Bairnsdale Landfill	On schedule – <i>due to be completed by 2024-25</i>	The design of the Bairnsdale Recycling Center is complete, and construction commenced on site in April. To support the operation of the facility, new recycling crates and pallet jacks were purchased. A plastic shredding machine and baler have also been purchased to support the processing of new recyclable materials and transport for re-processing.
Support community and not-for-profit groups to deliver programs that support reusing items, including the Repair Café at the HUB Bairnsdale and 'Tip Shop' at the Bairnsdale Regional Landfill	Ongoing	Support has been provided through concessions to community-based opportunity shops for the disposal of materials that cannot be repurposed. Council has renewed processes in place with the Bairnsdale Recycling Enterprise as part of the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding. Contributions to the Repair Cafe were also made to assist the delivery of workshops for community members along with promotional videos planned for the coming year.
Deliver initiatives and projects to reduce Council's generated waste	Ongoing	A range of internal programs and initiatives include; • A survey was undertaken with staff to better understand waste generation and processing for all Council facilities; • Removal of desk waste bins and placing new recycling bins to reduce waste; and • New educational signage has also been put up across workplaces.

Action	Status	Comment
Support the establishment of a local solar panel recycling program	Ongoing	Solar panels are accepted at Bairnsdale Landfill in anticipation of future recycling option being established. Local options for disposal are being explored. An agreement for recycling of solar panels is anticipated to be finalised late 2024.
Increase the use of recycled materials in Council's infrastructure and maintenance program, including roads, pavements and other construction products	Ongoing	Climate friendly products have been incorporated into Council's road maintenance program. Recycled rubber bitumen is one along, with a "Green Emulsion", with road repairs. Council is using more recycled concrete for crushed rock where applicable and will continue to source more eco-friendly options in the future.
Embed requirements for the utilisation of recycled materials in Council policies and practices and support reuse initiatives by businesses and the broader community	Ongoing	Council renewed its procurement policy to increase focus on circular economy and sustainability, including a revision of tender evaluation criteria to focus on the use of recycled materials. Council's Waste Action Plan has set a target to save recyclable material going to landfill by as much as 90% by 2032.
Develop Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) waste infrastructure to support repurposing and recycling	On schedule	Final designs and background reports for the facility are being finalised. A development license application for submission to Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) will now progress along with the preparation of a planning permit application. Community engagement and notification will take place as part as part of the planning permit application process.
Complete a transition plan and service modelling to guide the provision of future waste management, recycling services and education programs in accordance with Recycling Victoria Policy regulations	On schedule	The review of waste and recycling services commenced in January 2024 to better meet the evolving needs of the community and respond to changing regulations. This review will provide recommendations that will ensure waste and recycling services remain accessible, cost-effective and sustainable with a goal to reduce waste to landfill. This project will continue in 2024-25 with extensive community consultation planned from July to September 2024.
Reduce and report landfill greenhouse gas emissions	Ongoing	Landfill emissions data has been collected for four sites; Bairnsdale; Lakes Entrance; Orbost and Cann River. This data includes historical data and future projections. A total of 417,652 cubic meters of methane gas were captured and flared. Actions to reduce landfill gas are ongoing, with planning underway to increase methane capture and removal/reuse.
Support the roll out of Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme and ban on single use plastics across Council facilities, community and local business	Ongoing	Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) began in November and was initially available at six locations across East Gippsland. At the end of the June 2024 there were a total of 11 CDS locations, including Bairnsdale, Paynesville, Metung, Lakes Entrance, Bruthen, Orbost, Cann River, Mallacoota and Swifts Creek.

Results against targets set for goal 6

Measure	Target	2023-24	Result 2022-23	Progress to date
Facilitate industry co-operation for a transition to a circular economy	Target to be developed by 2024-25	Data being collated	Data being collated	Council's focus was to improve internal capacity to assist industry facilitation. To do so, Council hosted a workshop, facilitated by Sustainability Victoria, for internal staff across a range of teams. Council also participated in the monthly Gippsland Circular Economy Hub meetings, which were facilitated through Latrobe Valley Authority.
Growth in the number of businesses participating in the circular economy	> previous year's result	Data being collated	Data being collated	The 2024 event masterclass included information about waste avoidance, recycling and circular economy and was attended by 116 participants. Two videos were produced with the Mayor for Bairnsdale Recycling Enterprise Inc to promote a local circular economy.
Council has embedded re-use of materials in all policies and practices and supports reuse by businesses and the broader community	Achieved by 2025-26	Progressing	Progressing	To embed using recycled materials in Council practices, a workshop hosted by Sustainability Victoria was run to upskill Council staff to support increased reuse of materials by the community.
Council's procurement will comprise 10% of recycled material	10% by 2032	39% of capital projects	22% of capital projects	Council has improved project reporting to include noting if projects use recycled material. 39 percent of capital works projects have a component of recycled material included. Further reporting is required for operational procurement.
Volume of waste going to landfill is reduced by: • organic waste to landfill by 90% • textile waste to landfill by 50% • recyclable materials going to landfill by 90%	> 90% reduction in organic waste > 50% reduction in textile waste > 90% reduction in recyclable waste	Data being collated	Data being collated	The most recent data is from the baseline data gathered through the waste audit in 2020. The results of the next audit are still in progress, which will then be assessed against the baseline data.

Measure	Target	Result		Progress to date
		2023-24	2022-23	
Greenhouse gas emissions from landfill will be reduced and reported	Target to be developed by 2024-25	12,899 tonnes of CO ₂ -e	Data being collected	The landfill gas emissions data has been collected and assessed as part of the emissions reduction plan that is in development. The targets associated with reductions are being further investigated into viable opportunities and associated timing.
Food Organics & Garden Organics (FOGO) will be repurposed to produce organic based products	Achieved by 2025-26	Progressing	Progressing	A Development License application for submission to EPA will now progress along with the preparation of a planning permit application.



The methane gas flare at the Bairnsdale Landfill

Goal 7: Community resilience to respond to increasing climate risk and natural disasters

Why this goal is important

Goal 7 focuses on the resilience of East Gippsland communities and how they respond to their surrounding natural environment and bounce back from disruptive or extreme events caused by climate change.

Given the vulnerability of East Gippsland to climate change and natural disasters, preparing for climate change now is critical to reduce the impacts on our people, infrastructure, economy and natural environment. This will allow our communities and visitors to continue to live, visit and work in East Gippsland into the future.

Key Achievements

Microgrids in Omeo and Mallacoota

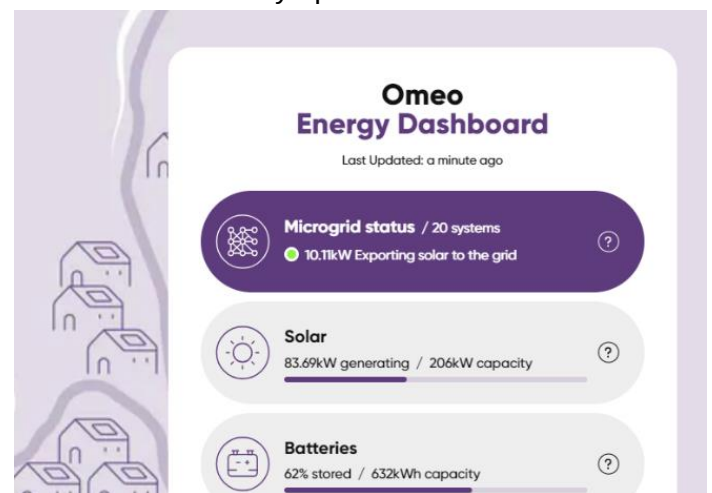
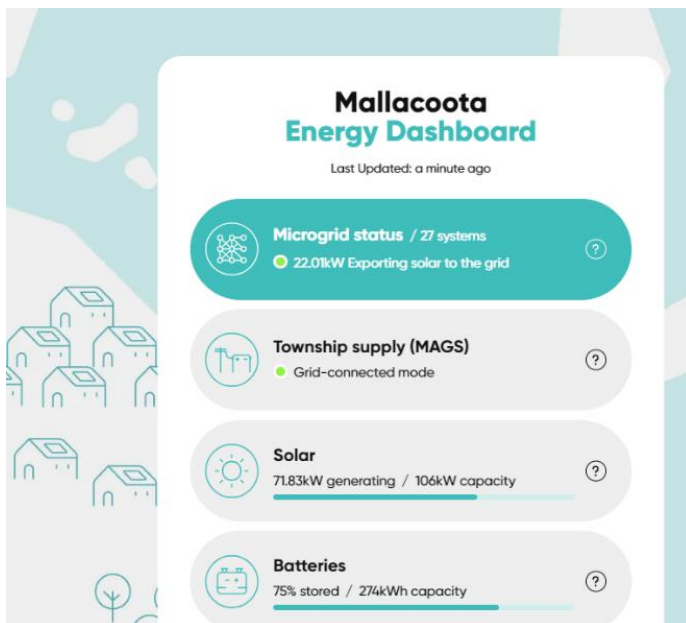
Reliable power supply during extreme weather events was raised as an issue of concern following the Black Summer bushfires.

Council is working with the Victorian Government, AusNet and communities in Mallacoota, Omeo and Corryong to increase their bushfire and energy resilience through a Community Microgrids and Sustainable Energy Program.

The program is bringing solar power, batteries, diesel generators, advanced microgrids and other energy infrastructure to increase access to locally generated energy and storage.

It will deliver a cluster of subsidised energy systems to provide increased energy security during network outages and emergencies like storms, heatwaves, or bushfire.

Installations are underway in a range of buildings. Included are Council's service centres and recreation reserves, which will be able to play a greater role during emergencies. These systems have been installed and are fully operational.



The emergency dashboards for Mallacoota and Omeo microgrids

Lakes Entrance - Eastern Beach Road Drainage Improvements

Localised flood investigations and drainage improvements will be conducted near the intersection of Eastern Beach Road and Cunningham Street in Lakes Entrance following concerns raised by local residents.

Investigations to understand the flood behaviour along Eastern Beach Road, Cunningham Street, and surrounding open drains will be used to design the best value upgrade to achieve resilient infrastructure and minimise future flood damage occurring.

Council commenced this project by seeking to understand why the flooding is occurring through flood mapping and investigating the capacity of the existing drainage infrastructure throughout the area.

Relief centre upgrade

Council has upgraded designated emergency relief centre facilities so they are better prepared for future extreme events. Latest updates across the shire ensured the facilities had;

- Ember-proofed community infrastructure;
- Upgraded facility switchboards to run a generator;
- Installed STAND (Satellite Telecommunications Against Natural Disaster);
- Installed large screen TVs at 37 sites;
- Rolled out two types of satellite communication systems (large and small) as part of pilot stage; and
- Over 60 concrete static water tanks (47,000 litre) now in place for fireguards' use.

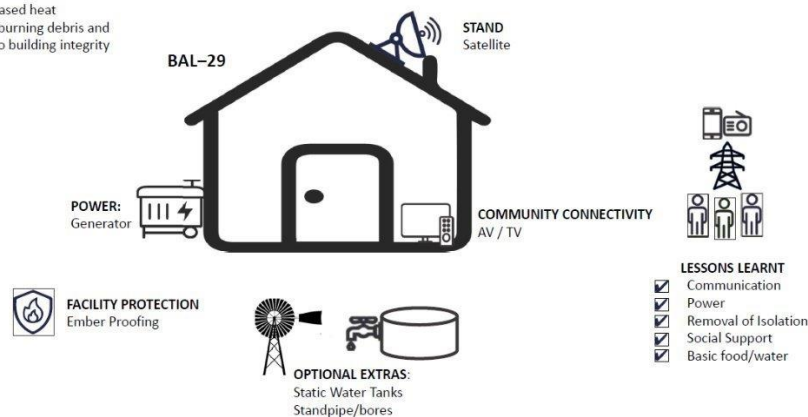
Disaster Ready Project for East Gippsland

Council successfully secured a competitive Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) grant to the value of \$1.2 million from the Australian Government in late 2023. This funding will allow the delivery of the project - 'Increasing understanding of risk and extending resilience and adaptability building across East Gippsland'. Council's successful funding application has enabled to test the market for suitable tenderers to undertake climate risk assessment on infrastructure.

The tendering process for this project closed early June with evaluations and presentations conducted in late June. The successful tenderer is expected to be announced early in 2024-25.



BAL-29 RATING
Increased heat flux, burning debris and risk to building integrity



Council's updated community building resilience planning

Projects and initiatives to support achieving goal 7

Action	Status	Comment
Strengthen municipal emergency planning arrangements to improve community resilience and preparedness	Ongoing	Collaborative projects with active community participation highlights Council's commitment to enhancing resilience and preparedness for future shocks and stressors. These include: • The Rising Strong Community Resilience Forum (March, Lakes Entrance); • Community-led Relief Centre training and volunteer onboarding; • Contractor engaged for the Aboriginal Cultural Healing project, enabling communities to self-determine their emergency preparedness, response, relief, and recovery needs; and • Staff facilitated preparedness strengthening activities through meetings and events including the Buchan Valley Emergency Management Agency Network, Mallacoota Community-Led Emergency Relief Centre Action Group, Cabbage Tree Creek Community Fire Guard, and the Fire to Flourish initiative at Bemm River. Council also made significant progress on its emergency dashboard, updating current pages to be more accessible ahead of the 2024-25 summer.
Work with community to ensure they have the knowledge, understanding and resources required to ensure their long-term self-reliance	Ongoing	Engagement was held with communities to progress emergency planning for associated action plans or strategies that can be utilised during emergency events. These plans will sit alongside community recovery and agency action plans so that a Community Emergency Management Plan become a combination of plans and strategies to be acted upon. This planning is ongoing and revised every two to three years or after an event has occurred. These plans are aimed at moving communities away from reliant on agencies to become more resilient.
Support the establishment of local community energy generation to improve resilience of communities vulnerable to power outages and natural disasters	Ongoing	Council partnered with DEECA, Ausnet and RACV Solar to install solar PV systems at Omeo Recreation Reserve, Omeo Business Centre, Mallacoota Hall, Mallacoota Community Centre and Mallacoota Business Centre. These sites were also upgraded with battery storage or will utilise generators already in place to provide greater power availability to communities during times of emergency. These systems can operate 365 days a year and provide cheaper power to Council. These systems have been installed and are fully operational.
Work with industry sectors and businesses to ensure better natural disaster preparedness	Ongoing	Funding has been sought through Recovery and Resilience Grant and the Council Support Fund to progress disaster preparedness and risk mitigation programs into future years. Engagement with industry sectors and business will be undertaken to inform program design.

Action	Status	Comment
Ensure the Lakes Entrance Northern Growth Area development project applies sustainable development and urban storm water management principles	On schedule - <i>due to be completed by 2025-26</i>	There is still considerable work required to implement the plans for growth areas over a further two-year period, but significant progress has been made in completing complex technical assessments and documentation in preparation for the next stages of work.
Implement a detailed climate risk analysis to identify the likely impact of extreme weather and climate events on Council's infrastructure assets, and the ability to provide community services	On schedule - <i>due to be completed by 2025-26</i>	This work is ongoing. The tender for works was issued and an evaluation to award the tender is now progressing. It is anticipated that consultants will be appointed with stage one of the project, including establishing methodology to progress the analysis commencing in August 2024. The funding is contributed by Commonwealth and State emergency management panels.
Work with community to build on their Local Incident Management Plans and prepare Community Emergency Management Plans to reduce the risk and impact of natural hazards on highest disaster risk communities	Ongoing	Local Incident Management Plans (LIMPs) and booklets were updated upon community request. These collective efforts underscore a commitment to enhancing place-based preparedness and resilience through active community engagement and collaboration. Extensive work has taken place in the Community Emergency Management Planning, with Council supporting Disaster Relief Australia's "Big Map" exercises at Genoa, Cann River, Cabbage Tree Creek and Twin Rivers at the Johnsonville Hall. There are currently 46 LIMPs in place, of these four are new, another four are under review and eight are in draft.
Install battery storage and generators at selected Council facilities to safeguard emergency response capabilities	On schedule - <i>due to be completed by 2024-25</i>	Council installed Satellite Telecommunications Against Natural Disaster (STAND) systems and generators at community sites, which will ensure communities can access information if power and mobile communications are offline during events. Part of Phase 1 of the Disaster Recovery Funding was received by Council to support generator installations at the following community assembly area locations: • Club Terrace Community Facility • Combienbar Hall • Cann River Hall • Cabbage Tree Creek Hall • Bendoc Hall • Tubbut Hall • Bonang Hall • Wulgulmerang Hall The communities of Wairewa and Buchan have sourced their own funding and installed generators at their assembly area locations.

Results against targets set for goal 7

Measure	Target	2023-24	Result 2022-23	Progress to date
Reliable Climate modelling exists for East Gippsland by 2023	Achieved by 2023	Achieved	In progress	The CSIRO created data climate modelling for East Gippsland has been prepared and potentially used in the Climate Risk Assessment Project. This project will seek to engage community on the findings.
Proportion of residential, commercial, public and agriculture infrastructure that is insurable for natural disasters	Target to be developed by 2025-26	No data available	No data available	This data will be available following the climate modelling risk analysis being undertaken.
East Gippsland Planning Scheme reflects existing and future predicted climate risk	Achieved by 2025-26	In progress	In progress	Relevant changes to the Municipal Planning Strategy have been proposed through the Planning Scheme Amendment C169. Model ESD provisions have been reviewed and included in the draft Planning Policy Framework amendment. Additional detail on climate risks will be incorporated when the climate risk analysis project is finalised.
Council has implemented a detailed climate risk analysis to identify the likely impact of extreme weather and climate events on Council's infrastructure assets, and the ability to provide community services	Achieved by 2025-26	In progress	In progress	This multi-year project is due to be finalised by 2025-26.

Contact us

Residents' Information Line: 1300 555 886

Contact Centre: (03) 5153 9500

National Relay Service: 133 677

East Gippsland Shire Council, PO Box 1618
Bairnsdale 3875 Australia

Web eastgippsland.vic.gov.au

Email feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au

Fax (03) 5153 9576

In person

Bairnsdale: 273 Main Street

Lakes Entrance: 18 Mechanics Street

Mallacoota: 70 Maurice Avenue

Omeo: 179 Day Avenue

Orbost: 1 Ruskin Street

Paynesville: 55 The Esplanade

Outreach Centres

Bendoc Outreach Centre - 18 Dowling Street

Buchan Resource Centre - 6 Centre Road

Cann River Community Centre - Princes Highway