

Sustainable Hepburn Community Engagement Plan



Acknowledgement of Country

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work. On these lands, Djaara have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We recognize their resilience through dispossession, and it is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving.

We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to the South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore. We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.

Working with our Traditional Owners

Dja Dja Wurrung Country covers a large proportion of the Shire's land area, with small portions of both Wurundjeri to the South East and Wadawurrung to our South West. Hepburn Shire Council recognises the importance of a meaningful strategic partnership with our Traditional Owners. This commitment is recognised in our Council Plan at strategy 1.4.4 "Develop a meaningful and strategic partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung to identify and collaborate on our shared environmental priorities."

This commitment will act as our guiding principle as we partner with and strive to enable Traditional Owners to lead and manage Country within Hepburn Shire both during the development and the implementation of the Sustainable Hepburn strategy.

Introduction

Hepburn Shire is a small rural Shire, located on Dja Dja Wurrung country, the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land, with a population of 16,157. The Shire's population is projected to reach 17,700 by 2036. The Shire covers an area of 1,473 square kilometres which includes Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, and Trentham, and the villages of Glenlyon, Allendale, Kingston, Leonard's Hill, Lyonville, Newlyn, Denver, and Smeaton, and other smaller settlements, each with their own unique identity and character.

Hepburn Shire has a strong track record of being a forward thinking and innovative community with respect to environmental sustainability. During the Hepburn Together project the community nominated the natural environment as being closely linked to our identity as a community and something that they valued and wanted to see protected. These sentiments are reflected both in our shared Community Vision statement and Focus Area 1 of the Council Plan.

Hepburn Shire - an inclusive rural community located in Dja Dja Wurrung country where all people are valued, partnerships are fostered, environment is protected, diversity supported, and innovation embraced.

Community Vision 2021-2031

Acknowledging community sentiment during the Hepburn Together consultation process, Council wishes to build a comprehensive understanding of community aspirations, values, challenges and ideas relating to environmental action through the delivery of an extensive engagement process. Together we will create a shared sustainability vision and investigate innovative and practical ways to take action both as a Council and together, as a community.

There are three Hepburn Shire environmental sustainability strategies requiring updating during 2021 including the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014–21, the Biodiversity Strategy 2018–21 and the Towards Zero Emissions Roadmap 2017-21. The **Sustainable Hepburn** project strives to develop an integrated strategy linking key sustainability themes in the strategic narrative, highlighting the interconnection between climate change (emissions reduction, adaptation and resilience), managing waste, and biodiversity. By acknowledging the interconnection between these sustainability themes, we can build capacity within Council as an organisation and together as a community to understand how we fit into the sustainability picture and take meaningful action together.

Hepburn Shire Community Vision 2021 - 2031 & Council Plan 2021-2025 including Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan







Focus Area One

A resilient, sustainable and protected environment – A responsive, adaptive, and resilient community that addresses changes to our climate and biodiversity.

Priority Statement 1.5: Protect and regenerate the natural resources of the Shire including soils, water and ecological systems, from both current and future threats.

Strategy 1.5.1: Develop and implement the ‘Sustainable Hepburn Strategy’ to align waste, sustainability, and biodiversity strategies.

Sustainable Hepburn’s Key Strategic Themes

	<i>A beyond zero emissions Shire</i>	Achieve and maintain beyond zero net emissions from Council activities by installing and purchasing renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency, designing for local climates, offsetting where appropriate and providing options for low fossil fuel-based activities.
	<i>Natural environment and biodiversity</i>	Protect and enhance biodiversity values across the Shire through restoration of natural environmental values, appropriate land use, knowledge sharing, and improved capacity of Council.
	<i>A low waste Shire</i>	Reduce waste to landfill, increase and improve recycling and extend services across the Shire for reuse of materials and develop circular economy opportunities.
	<i>A climate and water resilient Shire</i>	Council’s infrastructure, services and the community can adapt to the impacts of a changing climate, know what actions to take in extreme weather, are more informed about climate risk and water is valued as a vital natural resource.

Purpose

The purpose of this engagement is to develop the following strategic documents:

- A shared integrated strategic narrative on environmental sustainability that acknowledges the interconnected nature of biodiversity, sustainability, climate change and waste.
- Individual action plans for key sustainability themes below that can be implemented by Council and the community:
 - A beyond zero net emissions Shire
 - Natural environment and biodiversity

- A low waste Shire
- A climate and water resilient Shire

Timeline

The following provides a high-level overview of the project timing. A more detailed timeline is on page 9.



Level of Influence

Given the demonstrated high level of community sentiment during past community engagement projects including Hepburn Together, and the expectation for Council to act on environmental issues, it is important that Council engage with community members in the development of future sustainability strategies.

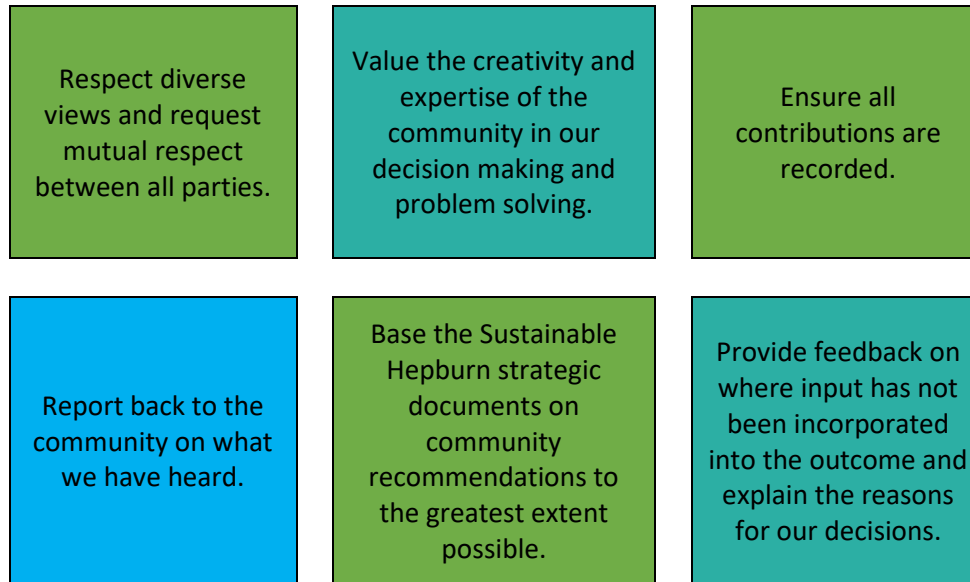
We will be using a number of engagement activities throughout the Sustainable Hepburn project that have different levels of influence. The level of influence will range from ‘*involve*’ to ‘*collaborate*’ on the International Association of Public Participation spectrum. At its highest level we will partner with you to develop alternatives and identify preferred solutions for our shared priorities. We will consider your advice and recommendations to the maximum extent possible.

People can influence (negotiables)	People can't influence (non-negotiables)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The articulation of key aspirations and themes that guide the vision for a sustainable Hepburn • Council's priorities relating to the four key sustainability areas • The contents of the Sustainable Hepburn integrated strategy • The strategic outcomes, priorities and content of the Council action plans for each key sustainability theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with legislative and legal requirements • Resources available to undertake community engagement • Council's role and responsibilities for the delivery of services and activities (deliver, partner or advocate) • Operational requirements and administrative arrangements (e.g. staffing) • Commitments as set out in the Council Plan • Parts of Council's operating budget • Related priority statements from Council Plan 2021-25

Promise

Hepburn Shire Council promises to:





Engagement Objectives

Engagement Objectives	Measures of Success
To provide an open, transparent engagement process that builds trust and understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An engagement plan is developed and made public. • Regular communication with the community. • Respond to participant's questions and queries in a timely manner. • Summary of engagement findings provided to the community after each engagement phase. • Participants surveyed feel that the engagement process was genuine and meaningful.
To ensure that a diverse range of voices from across the Shire participate in the development of the strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective and wide-reaching communications plan is rolled out. • At least 50% of community groups are engaged in the project. • The CRG have representation from across the Shire (age, gender and location). • Use of multiple engagement tools and techniques undertaken.

To build on the existing capability, capacity and connections of the community and Council to work more closely together to encourage learning, sharing of knowledge, co-creation of projects and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement phase allows for opportunities for other stakeholders to connect and share knowledge with each other. • Participants learn new things from each other or create new connections
Provide a genuine level of influence over the final strategy and action plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make level of influence clear to all participants • Participants surveyed are satisfied that their input was considered when developing the final strategic documents and action plans.
Understand the views and priorities of our community and stakeholders that support the aspirations that align with the Community Vision and Council Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An open and transparent engagement process is conducted • Community express interest to participate on the Sustainable Hepburn CRG and provide input • Community input is valued and respected • Level of positive feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders
Build and maintain trusted community relationships that supports the implementation of the shared sustainability vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of community groups working in partnership with each other and Council • Increase in number of community groups accessing Council grants • Level of positive feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders on the draft strategy and action plans • Regular communications with stakeholders

People

A stakeholder analysis has been undertaken in preparation for this engagement process. This analysis has informed the below assessment of key groups of community member and stakeholders within the Hepburn Shire area. Please note that this stakeholder list is provided in no particular order (based on influence or interest).

Category	Stakeholders
Decision makers	Councillors
Important stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hepburn Shire residents and ratepayers • Dja Dja Wurrung and other Traditional Owner groups • Business groups and industry sectors • Community groups (broad) especially those with concerns and interests that relate to the key strategic sustainability themes • Victorian State Government departments (various) • Non-government bodies • Project Control Group members • Schools and education institutions • Council executive and staff • Community Reference Group members • Media

Staged Approach

	November to December 2021	December 2021	December 2021 to January 2022	February 2021	March to June 2022
	Stage 1: Engagement Planning	Stage 2: Community Activation	Stage 3: Broad engagement	Stage 4: Community Reference Group	Stage 5: Sustainable Hepburn strategy development
Objectives	Build commitment of decision makers to create organizational readiness for engagement. Design the Engagement Plan to guide a community engagement process for Council's future planning.	Build ownership and raise awareness of the Sustainable Hepburn project. Use a range of communication methods to reach and inform stakeholders about the Sustainable Hepburn project and engagement opportunities.	Engage widely to capture broad views and perspectives of community on sustainability vision and generate innovation ideas and actions over the four key sustainability areas. Analyse and consolidate broad engagement inputs to inform Community Reference Group activities.	Design and deliver a collaborate co-design process that will provide technical and localised input informing the draft Sustainable Hepburn strategy.	Develop the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy to be adopted by 30 June 2022. Close the loop with community, staff and other stakeholders how their input has influenced the final strategy, to ensure an open and transparent engagement process.

Sustainable Hepburn Community Engagement Plan

Activities	Stakeholder analysis and mapping. Councillor briefings and Project Control group meetings to develop and validate engagement approach. Desktop review of previous engagements. Project Control Group meetings.	Communicate launch of Sustainable Hepburn . Activate Participate Hepburn website. Develop community and stakeholder Survey. Sustainable Hepburn discussion paper.	Sustainable Hepburn survey Discussion paper Participate Hepburn content Stakeholder emails, workshops and interviews Community pop-up events x 10. Youth activity. Staff activation – survey, workshop and meetings.	Create Sustainable Hepburn Community Reference Group Discussion Guide. Series of three facilitated workshops. Presentation to Councillors. Report back on the Community Reference Group activities to the wider community.	Draft Sustainable Hepburn strategy and associated Action Plans presented to decision makers and stakeholders. Public exhibition of draft documents. Community Information sessions. Participate Hepburn feedback process. Final adoption of Sustainable Hepburn strategy and associated Action Plans. Communicate outcomes to the community.
Outputs	Sustainable Hepburn Engagement Plan. Communications Plan. Stakeholder Analysis.	Strategy Discussion Paper. An informed community who is ready to engage.	Data analysis to inform the Community Reference Group activities.	Sustainable Hepburn recommendations.	Final Sustainable Hepburn strategy and associated Action Plans.

Key Questions for each output

Sustainable Hepburn Strategic Narrative	Action Plans			
	A Beyond Zero Net Emissions Shire	Natural Environment and Biodiversity	A Low Waste Shire	A Climate and Water Resilient Shire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographics of participants <p>Strategic Narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you love about Hepburn Shire's natural environment and what do you want to protect and improve for future generations? What vision do you have for a sustainable Hepburn? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we move beyond zero net emissions for Council's operations? What criteria should Council use to prioritise actions to reduce future emissions? Once Council has achieved zero net emissions how do we move beyond zero and decide on an updated corporate emissions reduction target? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What issues or locations for biodiversity conservation in the Shire do you regard as most important? Why is this issue or location important? What do you need to make a difference to a more protected and enhanced natural environment/biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we work together to identify local options for meeting the Victorian Government's Recycling Victoria 10-year policy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal 1 - Design to last, repair and recycle Goal 2 - Use products to create more value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your key climate change concerns and which issues are most important to you? What would make our community more resilient and adaptive to local climate change impacts? What would stop you from acting? What would you like Council to do so that we are better prepared for

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the biggest challenge that faces us as a community? • What do you need (skills, knowledge, resources, services, connections) to play your part in achieving your vision for a sustainable Hepburn? • What needs to change to achieve your vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What projects are happening in our community that you would like to see replicated, repeated or expanded across the Shire? 	<p>in your backyard or neighbourhood?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we support each other and work together as a community to protect and enhance the natural environment while minimising our impact? • What projects are happening in our community that you would like to see replicated, repeated or expanded across the Shire? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 3 - Recycle more resources • Goal 4 - Reduce harm from waste and pollution • How should Council decide on the geographical boundaries of waste collection service in rural areas? • What criteria should Council use to determine future curb side collection services? • How can Council and community work together to reduce contamination in recycling so it doesn't end up in landfill? • What projects are happening in our community that you would like to see replicated, repeated or expanded across the Shire? 	<p>and resilient in the face of the impacts of climate change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we better value and protect our local water resources from the impacts of climate change? • What projects are happening in our community that you would like to see replicated, repeated or expanded across the Shire?
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