



## *Sustainable Hepburn Discussion Guide*

### **Welcome**

Thank you for taking part in the Sustainable Hepburn project. We know that the natural environment is of value to all of us who live in Hepburn Shire and that we all have a role to play in creating a resilient, sustainable and protected environment. It is important that you add your voice to the development of Hepburn Shire Council's Sustainable Hepburn Strategy and action plans to have your say on our collective future.

The purpose of this Discussion Guide is to provide:

- An overview of the Sustainable Hepburn project
- Give context around the planning of the development of the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy
- Support an informed conversation to capture your views and ideas about sustainability and caring for our natural environment

### **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.

## What are we doing?

This project includes the development of:

- A shared integrated strategic narrative on environmental sustainability that acknowledges the interconnected nature of biodiversity, climate change and waste.
- A Beyond Zero Emissions Shire Action Plan
- A Natural Environment and Biodiversity Action Plan
- A Low Waste Shire Action Plan
- A Climate and Water Resilient Shire Action Plan

This strategy will replace three strategies expiring in 2021:

- [Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014–21](#)
- [Biodiversity Strategy 2018–21](#)
- [Towards Zero Emissions Roadmap 2017-21](#)

## Why are we doing it?

Council is committed to working diligently towards our community's shared Community Vision Statement. The Vision notes the importance of our environment to our Shire's identity:

*"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."*

We heard how important environmental sustainability is to our community during the Hepburn Together Community Visioning process. Environmental sustainability was the top priority area for the Hepburn Shire community to address over the next 10 years. You, the community, identified the beautiful natural environment that supports forests, bushlands, and rich agricultural land that is supported by a sustainable conscious and committed community as part of our identity.

Sustainable Hepburn is a new strategy referenced in Hepburn Shire's Council Plan 2021-2025 under **Focus Area 1 – A resilient, sustainable and protected environment. Priority Statement 1.5**, developed by community members as part of the deliberative engagement process, reads, *"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** commits to developing and implementing the 'Sustainable Hepburn Strategy' to align waste, sustainability, and biodiversity strategies. This project will provide an integrated approach to regenerating, protecting and improving our environmental sustainability across the Shire. This project will deliver on many of the identified community aspirations for life in our region.

We want to hear your thoughts, aspirations, ideas and stories. Your input about what you value, care about and what you want to change and take action on will guide Council's planning, activities and priorities for future projects.

## Themes for Sustainable Hepburn

Four strategic themes have been identified by reviewing our outgoing strategies, recognising our legislative responsibilities and reviewing past community engagement results. To fully understand the scope of this project please refer to the Community Engagement Plan.

The following are the themes that will form the basis of the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy:

- A Beyond Zero Net emissions Council
- Natural Environment and Biodiversity
- A Low Waste Shire
- A Climate and Water Resilient Shire

### **Theme One: A Beyond Zero Net emissions Shire**



This theme will focus on priorities and actions that will reduce Council's corporate emissions to net zero and beyond. We can make changes to the way we work and support others to do the same. Council plays a partnering role in working toward the reduction of community emissions by continuing to support the objectives of Hepburn Z-NET and Hepburn Wind through an official MOU, the provision of Towards Zero Community Grants Program and contributing to the implementation of the Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Strategy.

The specific focus of this theme is to create an action plan that will work towards achieving and maintaining a beyond zero net emissions from Council operational activities across the following areas:

- Installation and purchasing of renewable energy
- Increasing energy efficiency
- Designing for local climates
- Offsetting where appropriate and providing options for low fossil fuel-based activities.

Actions that could contribute to this theme may include reducing the environmental impact of Council's fleet, offsetting residual greenhouse gas emissions and reducing emissions associated with the services Council delivers, the goods Council procures, the assets we build and manage, and the way Council works.

### **Theme Two: Natural environment and biodiversity**



This theme will focus on priorities and actions that protect and enhance biodiversity values across the Shire. Council plays a partnering role in caring for our environment by supporting community groups and other land management agencies. Council provides a delivery role by controlling and managing planning policy, roadside vegetation and the provision of specific environmental programs.

The specific focus of this theme is to create an action plan that will work toward achieving:

- Restoration of the natural environment
- Balancing future growth with the preservation of our heritage and environment
- Supporting community action and awareness
- Knowledge sharing
- Improving the capacity of Council

Actions that could contribute to this theme may include habitat protection, community grants and education programs, and weed management projects.

### **Theme Three: A Low Waste Shire**



This theme will focus on the reduction of waste to landfill as a community.

We can all make changes to lessen our impact on the environment by designing products and services that generate less waste, use products to create more value and supporting the reuse economy, by recycling more resources and by managing our waste more appropriately and protecting our environment from harm and pollution.

The specific focus of this theme is to create an action plan that will work towards achieving and maintaining:

- A reduction of waste to landfill
- Increase and improve recycling and extend services across the Shire for the reuse of materials
- Develop circular economy opportunities
- Implement the Recycling Victoria policy requirements suitable for the local context.

Actions that could contribute to this theme may be improvement to community education programs, setting criteria for curb side collection, reducing contamination of recyclables and working to find local solutions to both reuse and minimise waste.

### **Theme Four: A Climate and Water Resilient Shire**



This theme will focus on priorities and actions that will prepare Council's services and infrastructure to the impacts of a changing climate. The climate predictions for the Victorian Central Highlands include a very high confidence of increased maximum and minimum temperatures, high confidence in increased number of fire weather days and high confidence in extreme rainfall events and including frequency of storms.

The specific focus of this theme is to create an action plan that will work towards achieving and maintaining:

- Greater understanding of the risk and vulnerability of council assets and service delivered to the community as a result of extreme weather events
- Climate proof future residential developments from avoidable emissions, extreme heat, flooding and fire
- Water resilience and integrated water management
- Build disaster and community resilience to connect, inform and prepare communities to know what action to take in the event of extreme weather and related disasters.

Actions that could contribute to this theme may be the development of climate resilience guidelines for future land use and building design, vulnerability assessments on the risks to council's assets and services to the community as a result of local climate change impacts and improved community information on preparedness to climate change impacts.

## Timeframes

The timeline for engagement on the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy is:

- An online survey and this discussion paper will be available on Participate Hepburn on **20 December 2021**
- Broad community engagement will be open from **20 December 2021 to 30 January 2022**
- Following the engagement period, we will analyse your input and present this information to the community and the Sustainable Hepburn Community Reference Group for further consideration.
- The Community Reference Group will meet during February / March over three workshops providing their advice, expertise and guidance informing the development of the draft Strategy.
- A draft Strategy will be developed and provided to the community for feedback.
- The Strategy is scheduled to be listed for adoption at the Ordinary Council Meeting on the 21 June 2022.

## Community Engagement Policy

Council values the creativity and expertise of its community. Council's Community Engagement Policy 2021 confirms Council's commitment to community engagement, outlines how Council will engage with the community and provides the framework for the planning and review of engagement projects that promotes continuous improvements and engagement.

One of the important elements of the Community Engagement Policy is Council's commitment to community engagement. Council's commitment includes:

- Ensure community access to engagement processes is as broad as possible.
- Use simple and clear language when we communicate.
- Actively listen without judgement to what people say.
- Respect diverse views and request mutual respect between all parties.
- Value the creativity and expertise of the community in our decision making and problem solving.
- Ensure all contributions are recorded.
- Report back to the community on what we have heard.
- Base the engagement framework on community recommendations to the greatest extent possible.
- Provide feedback on where input has not been incorporated into the outcome and explain the reasons for our decision.
- Measure and assess the effectiveness of our community engagement practices and commit to ongoing continuous improvement and innovation.

Our Community Engagement Policy was adopted at a special Council meeting on 23 February 2021. You can find a copy of the Policy at: [Community Engagement Policy | Hepburn Together | Participate Hepburn](#)

## How to have your say

This Discussion Guide and other engagement methods, both online and off-line, give you the opportunity to have your input into the future direction and activities of the Hepburn Shire Council.

We have provided further information on the Participate Hepburn website about each of the key sustainability themes and information to help you consider some of these questions.

There are many ways you can share your ideas and join our community conversation about sustainability. You can:

- Go Online – Read this Discussion Guide on the Sustainable Hepburn project page on the Participate Hepburn engagement platform and complete the activities and survey.
- Pick up a printed copy – Visit our libraries or Customer Service Hubs and ask for a copy of the Discussion Guide and Community Survey. Take it home with you and fill in your answers by hand. You can return it to either our Libraries or Customer Service Hubs or by post to:

Sustainable Hepburn Project Officer  
Hepburn Shire Council  
PO Box 21  
Daylesford 3461

- Come and visit us in person at any of the community conversation sessions being held throughout the community toward the end of January 2022
- During the public exhibition of the draft document by making a formal submission.

If you would like any further information or have any questions about the Sustainable Hepburn project please contact Maree Grenfell Sustainability Officer at [hepburnsustainable@hepburn.vic.gov.au](mailto:hepburnsustainable@hepburn.vic.gov.au) or call 5321 6495