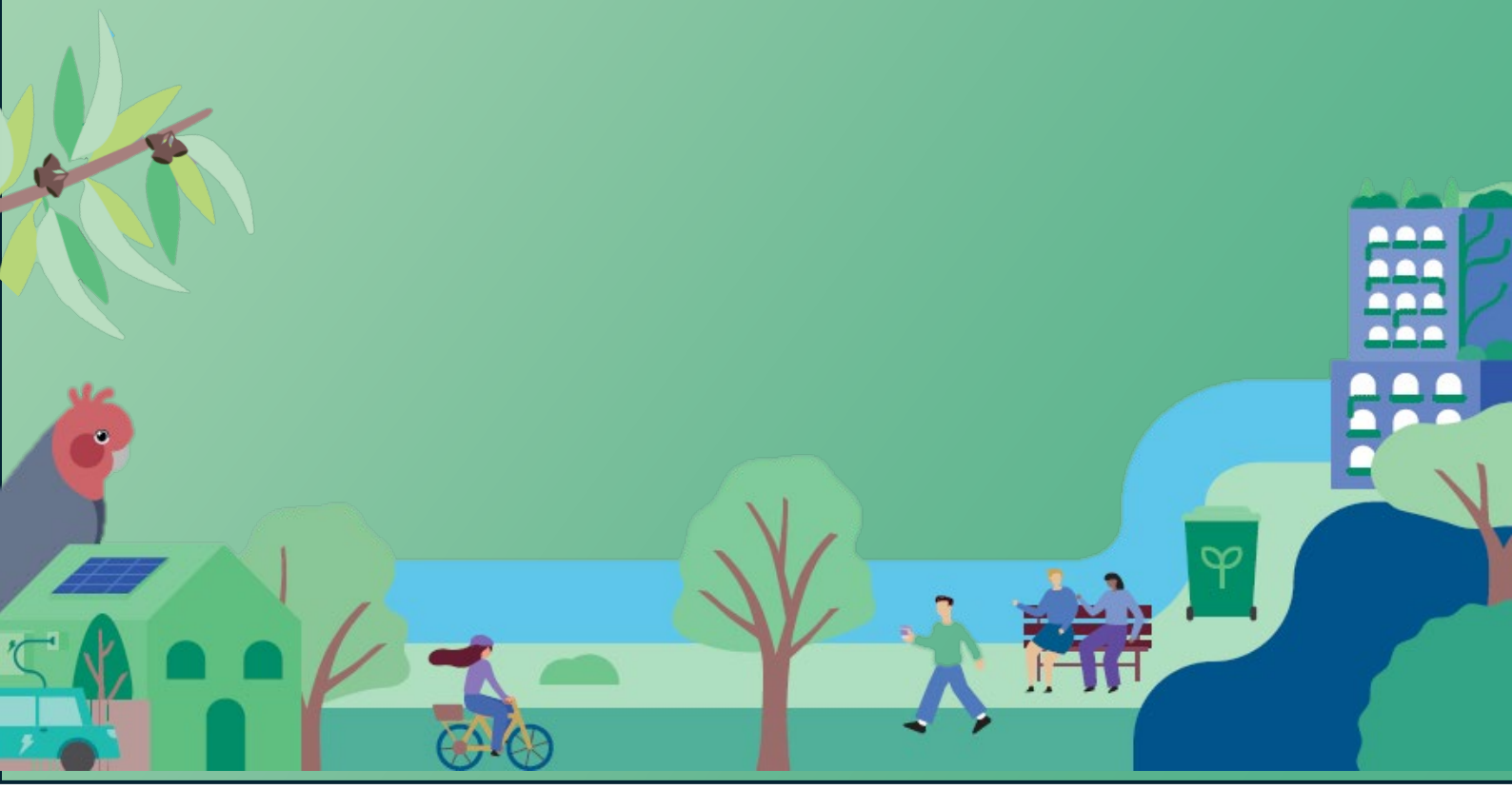
City of STONNINGTON

DRAFT

Sustainable Stonnington 2040

Our Integrated Environment Strategy



Statement of commitment to Australia's First Peoples

Council acknowledges that the people of the Kulin Nations are the Traditional Custodians of the land now known as Stonnington, and that they have strived to retain their identity and cultures through more than two hundred years of dispossession and colonisation.

We recognise and accept our responsibility to learn from, and promote the intrinsic value of, First Peoples cultural values, knowledges, heritage, and contemporary aspirations to the wider Stonnington community. We understand that doing so will enrich our shared heritage, culture, and the health of community and Country.

Council respects the special relationship the people of the Kulin Nations have to Country in Stonnington, and we recognise and commit to protecting sacred sites and significant places.

Caring for Country and reciprocity

Our local First Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of the land we now call Stonnington, the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and Bunurong peoples, have understood and embodied a sense of interdependence with the natural environment for tens of thousands of years. Through this living practice of Caring for Country, they demonstrate a deep, enduring reciprocity between people and nature.

If we pay attention to and know Country, relate to Country as family, and Care for Country with the knowledge and trust that it will care for us in return – by only taking what we need, and giving back to the land, waterways, and ecosystems that nourish us – we can maintain balance over time.

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong peoples consider Caring for Country to be an abiding duty and a privilege. This offers us a powerful framework for considering how we can and should live more sustainably and respectfully of Country and each other. Critically, it is not enough to adopt this framework superficially, or in isolation. We need a mindset change, and a cultural shift. We must walk alongside and learn from our First Peoples to heal Country and truly embody this way of being.

When we see ourselves as part of, rather than separate from nature, it becomes clear that the health of our environment and the wellbeing of our communities are inseparable. It also makes clear that we cannot continue to live in ways that deplete and harm the natural systems and resources that sustain us, and that we need to make a change.

First Peoples' Forewords

To be developed following exhibition.

Mayor's Message

To be developed following exhibition.

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Strategy on a page

Sustainable Stonnington 2040

Interconnected challenges need integrated solutions

Resilient, adaptable and empowered



Understanding and planning for climate risks

Climate-ready infrastructure and services

Climate-ready community

Climate positive



Reducing emissions from Council operations

Supporting community emissions reduction

Preparing for a climate positive future

Water sensitive and flood ready



Water sensitive Stonnington

Flood ready Stonnington

Healthy, living waterways

Biodiverse, green and connected



Greener public places and stronger habitat

Protecting and growing nature on private land

Connecting with and caring for nature

Circular and resource-conscious



Circular operations and services

Circular assets and infrastructure

Sustainable and resource-conscious consumption

The principles that guide us

Leadership
Lead boldly and advocate for stronger action

Evidence
Use evidence to make informed decisions

Empowerment
Support communities to shape a sustainable future

Partnership
Collaborate to achieve shared goals

Care
Protect the systems that sustain us

Why an environment strategy?

We are part of nature

Our city is alive, and there is so much to love about Stonnington.

The trees that shade our streets, clean our air and absorb stormwater; the birds, wildlife and pollinators that thrive in our parks and gardens; the rain that falls on our roofs and flows into our waterways and reservoirs; the soil that nurtures our greenery and anchors our homes; and the parks and places where we gather and connect. These are far more than amenities or assets to be managed. Together, they form a living system of which we are a part. Our environment provides the clean air, water and shelter we rely on every day, and its health depends on how well we care for it in return.

This understanding is not new. Stonnington's community already cares for the environment in countless ways: citizen scientists monitoring birds and pollinators; neighbours sharing knowledge about growing food; Friends groups protecting habitat in our parks; volunteers caring for waterways and removing litter; and community gardens, repair cafés and nature-strip plantings that quietly enhance our neighbourhoods.

Our leafy boulevards and gardens, beautiful open spaces, and connections to the Yarra River (Birrarung) and Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) are just some of the reasons our community loves Stonnington and values its exceptional liveability.

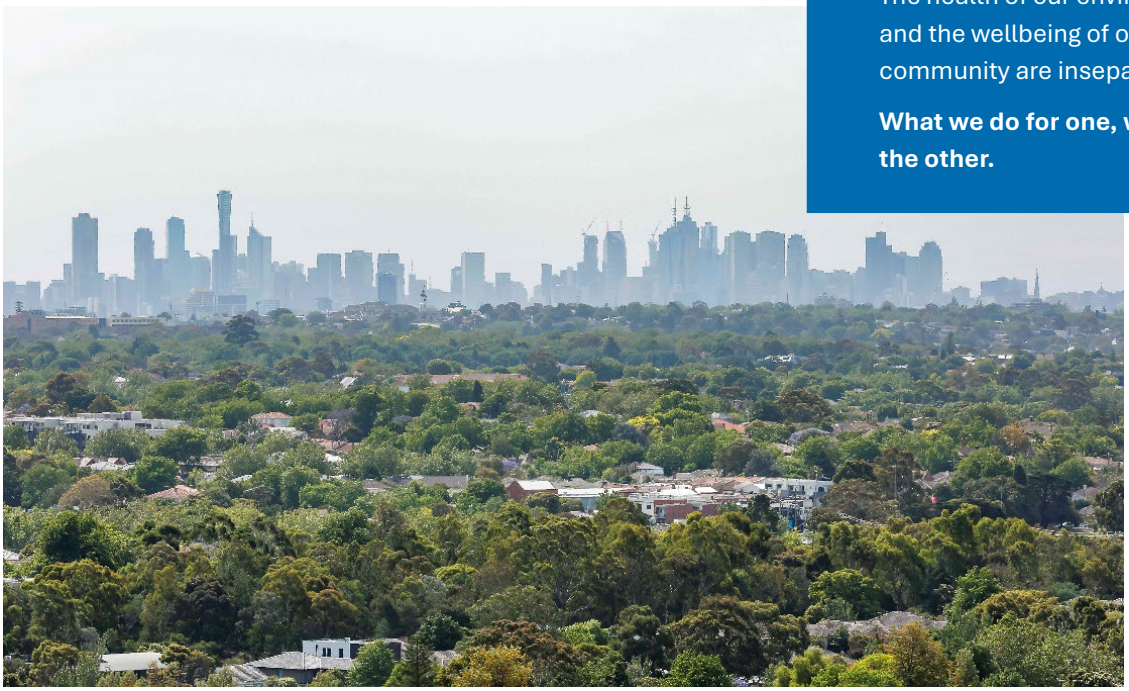
However, a changing climate and growing population are placing increasing pressure on our environment. Meeting these challenges requires a new approach -one that recognises the environment as an interconnected system and brings Council, community, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders together to protect and restore it.

The future of Stonnington will be shaped by the choices we make today. Every tree we plant, every habitat we protect, every litre of water we save, and every action we take to reduce waste and emissions, and every community connection we build will help create a cooler, greener and more resilient city.

This Strategy is our commitment to that future - a commitment to work together, care for Country and place, and leave Stonnington healthier and more resilient for generations to come.

The health of our environment and the wellbeing of our community are inseparable.

What we do for one, we do for the other.



Why now?

Stonnington is already experiencing the impacts of climate change and growing pressure on natural systems and resources.

Around the world, increasing greenhouse gas emissions are contributing to a warming climate and changing seasonal patterns. Temperatures are rising and heatwaves are becoming longer and more frequent, often with devastating consequences.

Locally, our overall rainfall is falling, yet storms and flash flooding are becoming more intense. Our waterways and water supplies are under growing strain as the city grows and hard surfaces spread, and our tree canopy and biodiversity are declining under the combined pressure of development, heat and invasive species.

At the same time, how much we consume and throw away is adding to pollution, landfill, and rising costs for our community.

While many environmental challenges are global in scale and may feel beyond our direct control or influence, many actions are within local reach.

Reducing emissions, using resources well, caring for nature and preparing for a changing climate are all things Council, community and businesses can act on and advocate for.

Today's pressures

Current environmental challenges in Stonnington and the local area:

- **Average temperatures have increased 1.2°C since 1901**
- **The number of very hot days has doubled over the past 20 years**
- **Cool season rainfall has decreased by more than 10% over the past 35 years**
- **Extreme rainfall events have almost doubled over the past 50 years**
- **18 hectares of canopy has been lost on private land since 2015**
- **2,018 (~1/3) indigenous flora and fauna species are threatened, vulnerable, or endangered**
- **~380 million pieces of microplastics enter Birrarung (Yarra River) each year**
- **Recycling bins had a contamination rate of almost 27% in 2024**

Future pressures

Projected impacts of climate change in Victoria:

- **Average temperatures**
  ▲ 1.5°C - 1.9°C by 2050
  ▲ 1.8°C -3.6°C by 2090
- **Average number of heatwave days per year**
  30-40 days by 2050
  60 days by 2090
- **Average number of months with below average rainfall**
  ▲ 40-60% by 2050
  ▲ 100% by 2090
- **More intense extreme rainfall events and storms,** leading to increased flood magnitude

Stonnington is preparing for significant population growth with up to 50,000 new homes by 2051, and our own Housing Strategy indicating capacity for as many as 67,000.

Denser neighbourhoods will increase pressure on our natural environment, infrastructure and services, particularly our trees and green spaces, water resources, drainage systems and local wildlife.

These challenges are not going away. Past emissions and resource depletion mean some impacts cannot be reversed, but how severe they become – and how well our community copes – still depends on the choices we make now. Acting early costs less, prevents harm, and gives us far more say over the kind of city we live in and pass on to future generation.

What is a sustainable Stonnington?

Put simply, living sustainably means meeting everyone's needs without taking more than nature can give.

A helpful way to picture this is the “doughnut”, developed by economist Kate Raworth.



Figure 1. *Our approach to a sustainable Stonnington. (Source: Adapted from Kate Raworth’s Doughnut Economics model)*

The inner ring shows the basics everyone needs for a good life. Falling short of this means people experience disadvantage and inequity. The outer ring shows the limits of the natural systems we rely on. Pushing past the outside would mean damaging the systems that sustain us. Globally, we're already pushing past the outer ring and the further out we go, the more difficult and costly it is to come back.

The space in between is where everyone can reach the services, opportunities and environments they need to thrive, while the natural systems around us are kept healthy – that's where we want Stonnington to be.

Why 2040?

2040 is the horizon set by our community through the Community Vision. Aligning this Strategy with that vision recognises that a healthy environment, a stable climate and resilient neighbourhoods are fundamental to the future our community wants. It also provides a clear timeframe for the sustained changes needed across our buildings, infrastructure, natural systems and everyday practices.

But 2040 is not a reason to wait. Scientific evidence shows that the choices and actions taken this decade will strongly influence future climate impacts and our ability to adapt to them. While Australia has committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2050, Stonnington recognises the need to act earlier and pursue greater ambition locally. This Strategy sets our direction to 2040, while the supporting Action Plans turn that ambition into practical, measurable action now.

Our approach

Interconnected challenges need integrated solutions

The City of Stonnington has a strong record of acting to protect and enhance our environment. In the past, we've pursued this through separate strategies and plans focused on climate change, waste and urban greening. That work has built strong foundations and delivered real and lasting results. But environmental challenges don't happen in isolation, and nor should our response. Sustainable Stonnington 2040 brings our environmental priorities together into one connected strategy.

Environmental systems are deeply connected. Climate change drives urban heat, affects our waterways, stresses our trees and reshapes how we use energy – all at once. Action in one area changes outcomes in another. Tackling each issue alone can mean fixing one problem while creating another or missing the chance to solve several together.

When we connect these efforts, the benefits multiply. Growing our tree canopy cools our streets, cleans our air, supports wildlife, soaks up stormwater, and makes neighbourhoods more pleasant to be in. Supporting repair, reuse and recycling cuts waste and emissions, keeps money in the local economy, and brings people together. Designed this way, every effort and every dollar goes further.

We are shifting our focus from single issue responses to integrated approaches that tackle more than one challenge and deliver more than one benefit for our community. This shift sits at the heart of Sustainable Stonnington 2040.

It means moving from delivering 'sustainability projects' to delivering all projects sustainably with environmental and climate considerations built in from the start, as a baseline rather than an add-on.

The principles that guide us

Creating a sustainable Stonnington for generations to come requires clear principles to guide decisions, priorities and ways of working.

Leadership

We'll lead boldly to create positive change, and advocate strongly for action across all levels of government.

Evidence

We'll base our decisions on sound data and evidence, balancing current needs and resources with what's needed long term.

Empowerment

We'll support our community to shape their own sustainable futures, especially young people, First Peoples, and others most affected by climate change.

Partnership

We'll work with community, business, and other partners to make progress on what we can't achieve alone.

Care

We'll act with care, for Country and each other, and protect the natural systems that sustain life.

Our community

Demographic profile

114,038
Residents

4,449
People per km²

37
Median age

$2,310
Median weekly household income

37.3%
Single-person households

25.3%
Couples without children

5.9%
Single parent families

Diversity

22.2%
Speak a language other than English at home

2.7%
People who have difficulty speaking English

31.5%
People born overseas

0.4%
People who identify as First Peoples

14.5%
People who identify as LGBTQIA+

12.8%
People living with a disability or chronic health condition

Home ownership and housing type

26.8%
Fully own

23.4%
Mortgage

40.5%
Private rental

2.6%
Social housing

25.4%
Low density housing

74.6%
Medium and high-density housing

Fast facts

16%
Households without a car

15.8%
Solar installation rate

~11m²
Open space per resident

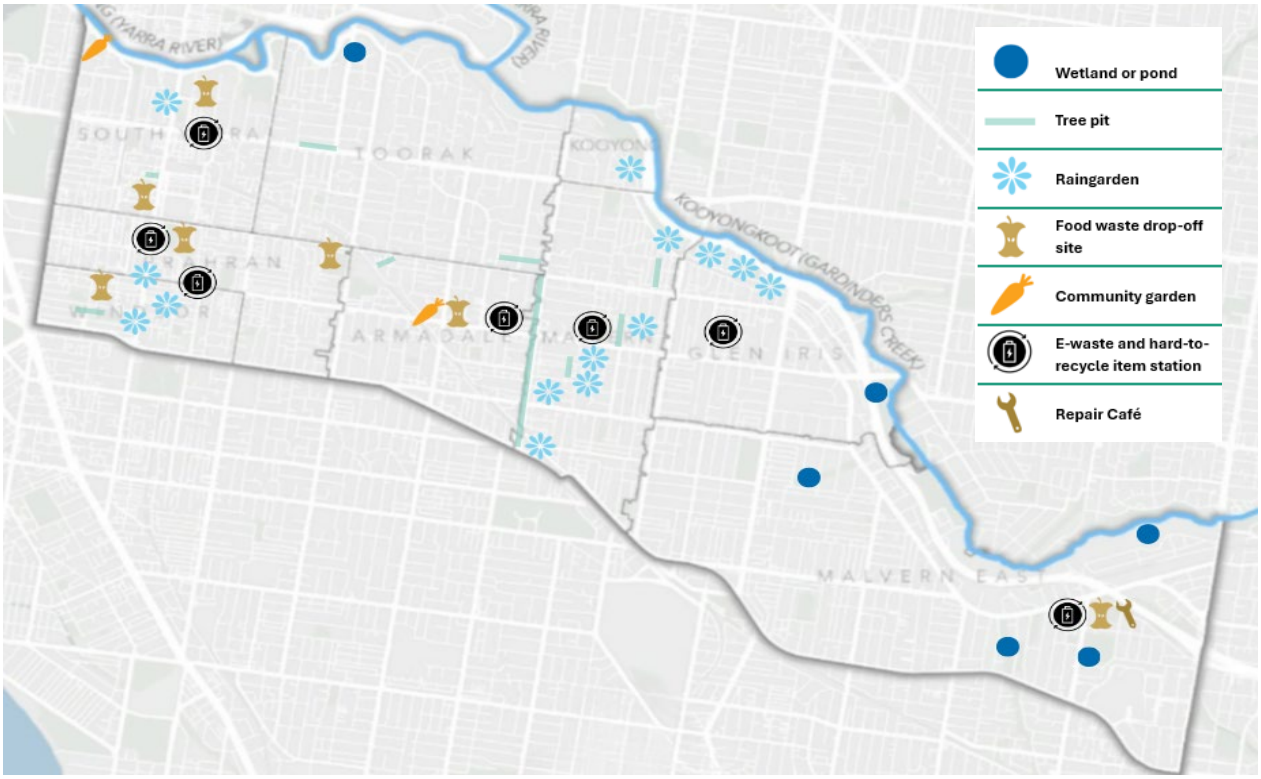
63,000
Council managed trees

21.5%
Canopy cover

3
Constructed wetlands

2
Waterways

Sustainable Stonnington at a glance



How Sustainable Stonnington 2040 was developed

This Strategy builds on previous work and achievements, evidence and data analysis, and community engagement. It was developed in four stages.

01 Review

We reviewed existing strategies, action plans, evidence, community feedback, and progress to understand what's working and where change is needed.

02 Analysis

We identified our strengths, gaps and opportunities, compared our approach against leading councils, and considered upcoming policy and legislative changes.

03 Engage

We gathered input an extensive internal and external engagement, capturing diverse perspectives and understand different priorities and hear ideas.

04 Prioritisation

We brought the evidence, insights and engagement together to shape the Strategy's direction and priorities and tested and refined it internally.



Our progress so far

We have been actively working with our community to protect and manage our environment for many years. Our review found that previous strategies, including the *Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021-2024*, the *Sustainable Environment Strategy 2018-2023*, the *Urban Forest Strategy 2017-2022* and our *Waste Strategy 2022-2025* have established strong foundations with significant achievements made since 2018.

81% Reduction in corporate emissions from 2005 baseline	**1,171kW** Solar installed on Council buildings	**200+** Home Energy Efficiency Kits borrowed from Stonnington libraries
9% Average annual reduction in corporate water use	**211** New water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) assets delivered	**$1 Million +** Grant funding achieved for environmental projects
10,000+ Trees planted in Stonnington open spaces and streetscapes	**77,000+** Native plants planted in Stonnington parks and gardens	**7,000+** Native and indigenous plants given to residents at six Native Plant Giveaway events
34,199m^2 Degraded land restored through the Yarra River Biodiversity Project (2021)	**6,811** Resident-recorded biodiversity observations via iNaturalist	**75** Graduates of the Environmental Champions and Nature Stewards programs
313,000 t Organic waste diverted from landfill (since 2019)	**12,000+** Bins checked through our Bin Feedback Program	**180+** Sustainability and waste education events and webinars reaching 18,000+ participants

In addition to all this, we have assessed climate vulnerability in the Chapel Street precinct, restored wetlands across Stonnington and the ponds at the Urban Forest Reserve, strengthened regional collaboration for Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot), expanded food-waste services, and introduced new policies and community programs, including our Nature Strip Planting Policy in 2024. More than 3,000 people now subscribe to the Sustainable Stonnington e-newsletter, reflecting growing community interest and participation.

Engagement insights

How we engaged

Between January and March 2026, we spoke with community members, Traditional Custodians, local organisations, regional partners and government agencies about the environmental future they want for Stonnington.

We wanted to hear from people with different experiences and perspectives. This included children and young people, older people, homeowners and renters, people living in apartments, households more exposed to climate impacts, and people already involved in local environmental action.

Engagement combined an online survey and interactive activities with pop-ups held at community spaces across Stonnington. We also met with both Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation to seek their input and ensure cultural knowledge, perspectives and aspirations informed the Strategy.

130	**194**	**320+**	**19**
Survey responses	**Online contributions**	**People engaged at 12 community pop-ups**	**Stakeholder representatives interviewed**

Internal workshops and a staff survey also helped identify opportunities to better connect environmental action across Council's services, assets and decision-making.

What we asked

We asked people about the environmental issues that matter most to them, their priorities for Stonnington and where they think Council should focus our efforts. We also explored what people are already doing or would like to do, to live more sustainably, the barriers they face, and what would make environmental action easier and more accessible. These insights shaped this Strategy and helped us understand how we can better support and enable local action.

What we heard

We heard strong support for continued environmental action in Stonnington. Participants wanted greener, cooler and more biodiverse neighbourhoods, practical ways to reduce emissions, waste and resource use, and stronger preparation for climate and flood risks. They also emphasised that people's ability to act is shaped by cost, housing type, tenure, access to information and the choices available to them.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Top Ranked Concerns

1. **Canopy and tree loss and lack of green spaces**
2. **Climate change and extreme weather**
3. **Loss of biodiversity and habitat**
4. **Water quality and waterway health**
5. **Reducing emissions**

A GREEN CITY IS A RESILIENT CITY

Canopy, green space and biodiversity was consistently raised as the highest priority across our community engagement activities.

Through open-text responses and in-person conversations, it became clear that participants saw greener neighbourhoods as not only beneficial for environmental and community wellbeing outcomes, but also as the most tangible local solution to building local resilience and adapting to a changing climate.

This finding reinforces that environmental priorities are interconnected, and that the community values practical solutions that deliver benefits across more than one area.

What is already happening

Many participants told us they were already taking practical action to reduce waste, save energy and water, travel more sustainably and care for nature. More than half of survey respondents said they:

74% Keep up with the latest environment and climate science research and news	**54%** Have either fully or partially electrified their homes	**77%** Have researched how to stay safe and healthy during heatwaves and floods	**51%** Have planted trees to shade their homes	**64%** Have reduced their meat intake
54% Plant native trees and plants in their gardens	**74%** Have checked if their home is in a flood-prone area	**53%** Report illegal dumping or pollution in waterways	**91%** Reduce energy use at home	**79%** Avoid using chemicals that can wash into waterways
68% Use a FOGO bin or Council food waste drop-off for food scraps	**82%** Reduce single-use plastics and packaging, or buy products in bulk	**70%** Buy locally made, ethically produced and second-hand items	**87%** Drop off e-waste, soft plastics and clothing at collection points	**57%** Plant pollinator and bird friendly trees at plants in your gardens

Where people want to do more

Survey respondents were also interested in taking further action. More than one third of respondents said they wanted to:

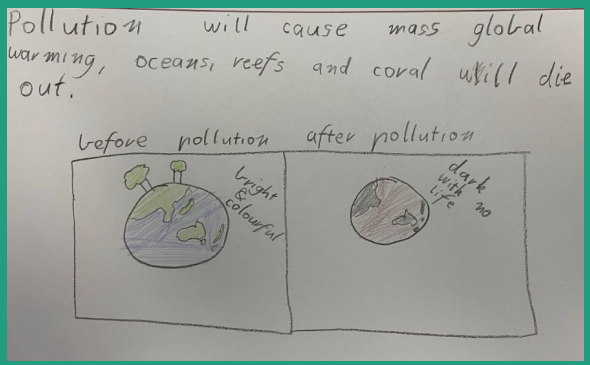
- **Install back-up battery power at home**
- **Join waterway clean-up and revegetation events**
- **Electrify their homes**
- **Volunteer with a local environmental group**
- **Learn about Caring for Country**
- **Support businesses with emissions reduction targets**

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Young people picture the future

At the Prahran Child and Youth Community Wellbeing Hub at Horace Petty Estate in Prahran, 20 young people aged 5 to 14 shared their priorities and drew what could happen if people don't care for the Earth, and what they already do to look after it.

Their drawings showed how pollution harms people, plants and animals, while caring for nature, collecting rubbish, recycling and composting help keep the Earth green and full of life.



Hub participant, age 10

Engagement themes

Participants also told us what made environmental action difficult and how Council could better support them. Five consistent themes emerged:

01

Information and support need to be clear and targeted

Participants wanted practical, locally relevant information that makes it easy to understand what they can do and where to start. Guidance and programs need to be tailored to different audiences and delivered through trusted channels, services and community places people already use. Clear links to suitable programs, incentives and services can help people turn interest into action.

02

Better systems and infrastructure make sustainable choices easier

Many ideas focused on making sustainable choices more convenient through better services, infrastructure and urban design. Participants called for easier recycling and food-waste systems (particularly in apartments) alongside improved walking, cycling and public transport, renewable-energy infrastructure, better drainage and water management, and greener streets and public spaces. They also wanted environmental outcomes to be more strongly considered in development and infrastructure decisions.

03

Not everyone has the same ability to act

Cost, time, competing priorities and uncertainty about where to start can prevent people from taking action. Renters and apartment residents face additional constraints because decisions about solar, electrification, gardens, composting and waste services may rest with landlords, owners corporations or other residents. Age, health and personal circumstances can also affect what is practical. Participants wanted support that recognises these differences and makes environmental action more affordable and accessible.

04

People want to learn, connect and contribute

Participants valued opportunities to take part in local action through environmental groups, waterway clean-ups, revegetation, citizen science, workshops and community-led projects. They supported more opportunities for children and young people to participate, and for the community to learn from Traditional Custodians about Caring for Country. Local groups, schools and community organisations were seen as important partners in building knowledge, connection and shared responsibility for the environment.

05

Council is expected to lead, enable and advocate

Participants wanted Council to demonstrate leadership through its own operations, assets, procurement and services. They also saw a role for Council in strengthening environmental outcomes through planning and investment decisions, supporting community action, and advocating to the Victorian and Australian governments on issues beyond Council's direct control. Transparent, evidence-based decision-making and continued community involvement were also important expectations.

How we'll deliver Sustainable Stonnington 2040

This Strategy sets out Council's long-term direction for how we will care for our environment and support a sustainable, resilient Stonnington. Achieving this over time requires clear priorities, coordinated action and the ability to adapt as circumstances change.

Sustainable Stonnington 2040 focuses on five priorities that reflect the most significant environmental challenges and opportunities facing Stonnington over the next 15 years:



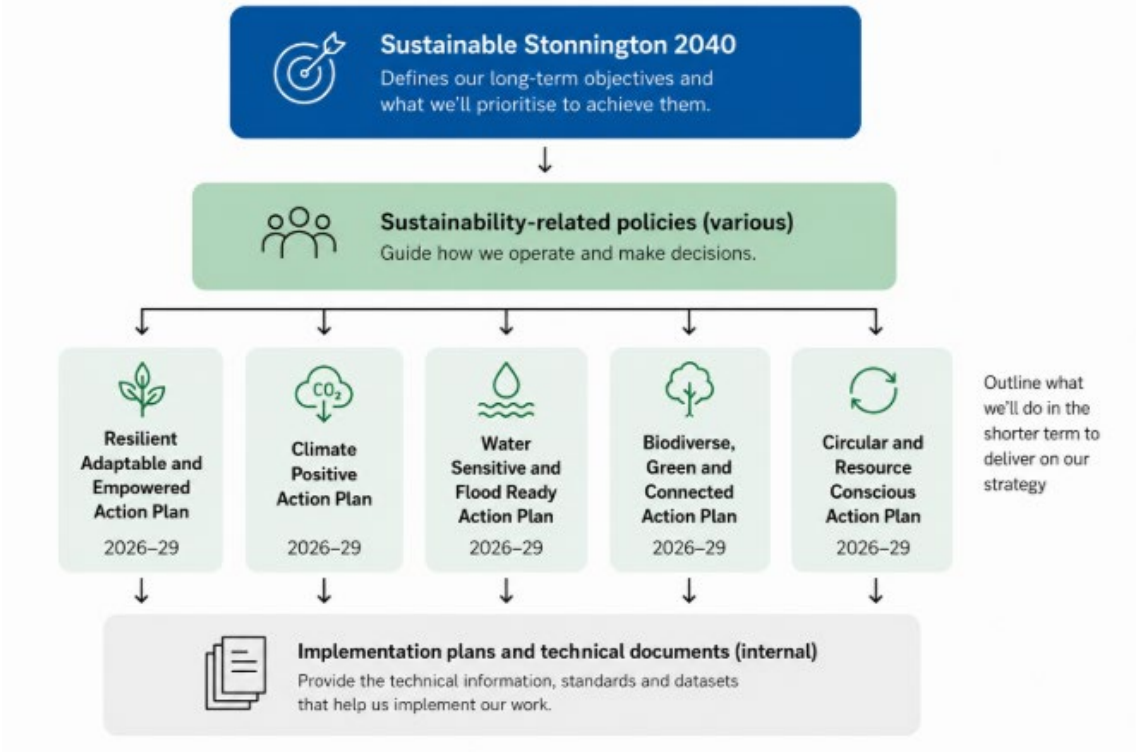
For each Priority Area, this following chapters explain where we're headed, why it matters, what is shaping our approach, and where we'll focus our efforts.

The detailed actions sit in supporting Action Plans, which we'll refresh every three years so delivery can adapt as conditions, funding and community needs change.

Supporting Action Plans

This Strategy will be delivered through five supporting Action Plans aligned with our five priorities. These will outline the projects, programs, partnerships and advocacy needed over a three-year period to make measurable progress toward our longer-term direction.

Each Action Plan will include the actions Council will take, when they are expected to be delivered, the anticipated level of investment, and how progress will be measured. They will be renewed every three years so we can build on what has been delivered, apply new evidence and learning, and respond to changing conditions, community needs and opportunities.



Actions will be incorporated into Council's annual planning, budgeting, capital works, asset management and service-planning processes. Delivery will draw on a combination of existing budgets and staff resources, future Council budget decisions, grants and partner investment. The sequencing and scope of actions may need to be adjusted over time as conditions, evidence, costs and available resources change.

Progress will be reported regularly and used to inform each new generation of Action Plans. Further detail is provided in the *Monitoring and evaluation* section.

INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS IN PRACTICE

Although the Action Plans are organised around five priorities, they will not be delivered separately from one another. Many actions will contribute to multiple priorities – for example, greener streets can reduce urban heat, improve air quality, help manage stormwater, and provide habitat. These co-benefits are identified throughout the Action Plans.

In practice, actions which may appear separate on paper will often be delivered together through coordinated projects, programs, partnerships and events that address multiple challenges at once. This approach allows us to make the most of available resources, reduce duplication, and create more meaningful outcomes for the community.

Priority 01: Resilient, Adaptable and Empowered Stonnington

Where we are headed

Even as we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, climate change will continue to affect how we live. Heatwaves, storms, flooding and other climate impacts will increasingly shape our environment, economy and daily lives.

By 2040, we aspire to be a city where people, places and systems are prepared for change and able to adapt as conditions evolve. We want Stonnington to be resilient not only to climate impacts, but also to the social, economic and environmental changes that accompany them.

Climate resilience is embedded in the places we create and care for

The decisions we make today about our built and natural environment will shape how well Stonnington responds to future climate challenges. Our goal is to embed climate resilience into the planning, design and management of our buildings, public spaces, assets, infrastructure and services, and into how we care for our natural environment. As our city changes and grows, we aim to create places that are safer, more comfortable and better able to withstand future climate impacts.

Strong communities are resilient communities

Climate resilience relies on so much more than just infrastructure. We want Stonnington to be a place where strong social connections, community networks and local leadership help people support one another through times of change and uncertainty. We hope to create a community that is informed, empowered and equipped to respond to changing conditions, with the knowledge, resources and support needed to adapt and recover.

Everyone has a role to play

Adapting to climate change and building local resilience is a shared responsibility. We want to be part of creating a future where governments, businesses, community organisations, Traditional Custodians and residents work together to prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change. Through strong partnerships, collaboration and collective action, we can build a Stonnington that is not only able to withstand and recover from shocks and changes, but one that can continue to thrive in the face of them.



Why it matters

Climate change is already affecting Stonnington today. Its impacts are only expected to intensify over time. Locally, warmer temperatures, more frequent and extreme heatwaves, changing rainfall patterns and increasingly severe storm events and floods will place growing pressure on our community's health and wellbeing, infrastructure, services and natural environment.

These impacts aren't and won't be felt equally. Certain people and places will be more impacted than others.

Some members of our community are more exposed to climate risks than others, including older people, people with disabilities or health conditions, renters, people experiencing financial disadvantage and those who are socially isolated.

The places people live, work and spend time also influence their exposure to risk. Precincts like Chapel Street that are denser, with less trees for shade and more hard surfaces, heat up faster and drain more slowly than the leafier parts of Stonnington.

How well a community gets through an extreme event also comes down to the strength of its local connections. The neighbour who checks on an older resident during a heatwave, the networks that help people find support after a flood – these are as much a part of resilience as drains and shade trees. Where those connections are weaker, people are more exposed, and recovery takes longer.

Building resilience in a changing climate is therefore both an environmental and social challenge, which requires us to understand how climate risks interact with existing inequalities, infrastructure, public health and community wellbeing.

THE COST OF INACTION

The costs of climate change are already being felt through damage to homes, businesses, infrastructure and the natural environment.

According to the Victorian Government, extreme weather events already cost an estimated $2.7 billion per year in recovery costs.

As extreme heat, storms and flooding become more frequent and severe, the costs of emergency response, recovery, insurance, repairs and maintenance, and service disruption are expected to increase significantly.

Although climate adaptation and resilience measures can seem expensive, investing in them now can help avoid much higher costs in the future. Actions such as preparing buildings and infrastructure for extreme weather, reducing urban heat, managing flood risk and supporting community preparedness can protect lives and property while delivering broader benefits for health, liveability and wellbeing.

The cost of adaptation is often far less than the cost of recovery.

The strength of our response will influence whether future generations inherit a city that is connected, adaptable and prepared for change, or one that becomes increasingly vulnerable to climate, economic and social pressures.



What is shaping our approach?

Uncertainty and risk

Even with strong global action to reduce emissions, further warming and climate-related impacts are already locked in. Although the climate will continue to change, there is still uncertainty about how quickly impacts will emerge, how they will interact, and what effects they will have on communities, infrastructure and ecosystems.

We need to regularly monitor changing conditions, improve our understanding of emerging risks, and review our responses over time to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

Uneven impacts

Climate impacts do not affect everyone equally. Factors such as age, health, housing type, income, social connection and access to resources all influence a person's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from climate impacts. Some places are also more exposed than others, depending on the features of buildings, infrastructure and neighbourhoods.

We need to understand where exposure and vulnerability occur, and prioritise supporting people, places and systems most at risk.

Future generations

The decisions we make today about planning, infrastructure, services, open space, housing and community development will shape resilience outcomes for decades to come. Future generations deserve to have the same, if not better opportunities to thrive in a world that inherits the consequences of past decisions.

We need to embed climate risk and adaptation into everyday decision making now to reduce future impacts, avoid locking in vulnerability, and ensure we are prepared for changing conditions.

Community

Resilience depends on more than physical infrastructure. Social connection, trust, local knowledge and community networks all influence how we respond to climate events. Strong local connections and support networks and opportunities for participation help people prepare for change, support one another during difficult times, and recover more quickly when disruptions occur.

We need to invest in both physical and social systems to build resilience in Stonnington.

Adaptation planning

Building a resilient, adaptable and empowered Stonnington requires more than responding to climate impacts as they occur. We need to understand risks and vulnerabilities, prepare for both emergencies and day to day changes as we work to adapt to a new normal, and make sure we track what works and where our time and resources are needed most.

The Australian Government's **National Adaptation Plan** describes climate adaptation as an ongoing cycle of understanding and assessing risks, prioritising and planning responses, taking action, and monitoring change over time.

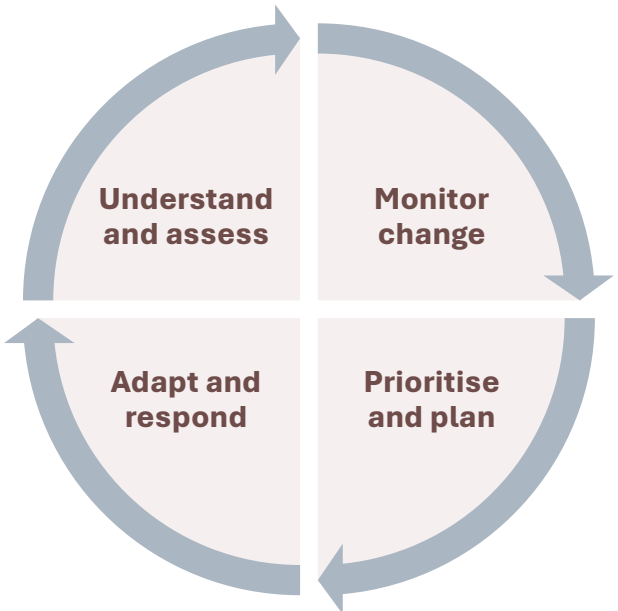


Figure 3. *Adaptation planning cycle (Source: National Adaptation Plan, 2025)*

This approach recognises that adaptation is not a one-off activity, but a continuous process that evolves as our understanding of climate risks, community needs and local conditions changes over time, that climate risks are complex, interconnected and uncertain, and that resilience is strongest when adaptation is embedded into everyday decision-making. It also highlights the importance of collaboration across governments, businesses, community organisations, Traditional Custodians and the community.

We will be guided by the adaptation planning cycle in how we deliver against this Strategy and our Resilient, Adaptable & Empowered Action Plan.

What we'll focus on

To build a resilient, adaptable and empowered Stonnington, we will focus our efforts in three areas.

Focus area	What this could look like
1.1 Understanding and planning for climate risks *Building the knowledge and capability needed to respond to climate impacts.*	▶ Assessing and regularly updating our picture of local climate risks – including who and where is most exposed and where ▶ Embedding climate risk into Council's planning, investment and everyday decisions, and setting clear priorities for where we act first ▶ Collaborating with other councils, government agencies and research organisations on shared risks and evidence
1.2 Climate ready infrastructure and services *Preparing the assets and services our community relies on for changing climate conditions.*	▶ Designing and maintaining Council buildings, facilities and open spaces to perform under future climate conditions ▶ Upgrading and retrofitting existing assets to better withstand heat, storms and flooding ▶ Providing cool, safe public places for people to use during extreme heat ▶ Ensuring systems and processes are in place to keep Council services running before, during and after extreme events
1.3 Climate ready community *Supporting people, households, organisations and businesses to prepare for climate impacts and take practical action.*	▶ Helping residents prepare for and respond to extreme heat, storms and flooding, with practical and accessible information ▶ Supporting people to make their homes cooler, safer and more resilient – with a focus on renters, apartment residents and those most exposed or vulnerable ▶ Strengthening the neighbourhood networks and local connections that help people support each other through extreme events ▶ Working with Traditional Custodians, government agencies, regional networks, local groups, schools, businesses, and residents to build long-term capacity, confidence and resilience ▶ Empowering and facilitating community involvement in environmental advocacy

Detailed actions and delivery timeframes will be set out in our **Resilient, Adaptable and Empowered Stonnington Action Plan**, which will be renewed every three years.

Our advocacy priorities

Many of the changes needed for a more resilient Stonnington, particularly in relation to adaptation, housing, infrastructure and policy, rest with other levels of government. We seek and support government action on:

- **Climate resilient development**
  Strengthened planning controls and building standards to improve the climate resilience of private developments, and to reduce climate risks for existing homes and commercial buildings.
- **Adaptation investment and support for priority communities**
  Increased long-term funding and resourcing for climate adaptation and resilience-building across all levels of government, including for communities to prepare for and adapt to climate impacts through education, capacity-building, minimum standards and targeted assistance programs.
- **Consistent adaptation planning**
  Development of a standardised, legislated approach to climate vulnerability assessment, adaptation planning and climate risk management
- **Regional preparedness**
  Support for collaborative regional approaches to emergency management, preparedness, response and recovery.
- **Resilient infrastructure**
  Strengthened resilience of energy systems, critical infrastructure and supply chains to shocks and disruptions.

Priority 02: Climate positive Stonnington

Where we are headed

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing current and future generations. The greenhouse gases released through the way we generate energy, move around, construct buildings, consume, and manage waste are causing changes in our planet's atmosphere, ocean, and natural systems, contributing to more frequent and severe extreme weather events such as heatwaves, storms and flooding, drought and bushfires. Climate change is also affecting our health and wellbeing, increasing the cost of living, placing pressure on ecosystems and infrastructure, and changing the way we experience everyday life.

By 2040, we aspire to be a climate positive city that is contributing more to climate solutions than to climate change. We aim go beyond net zero by removing more greenhouse gases from the atmosphere than we generate, and for the broader Stonnington community to achieve the same.



The clean energy transition

Shifting away from fossil fuels is one of the most critical changes in how we live that is required to address climate change.

We want to electrify Council facilities and fleet, and to accelerate the clean energy transition in Stonnington by supporting our community to decarbonise through improving energy efficiency, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, encouraging take-up of clean energy, and generating and storing energy locally.

Beyond emissions reduction

Council declared a climate emergency in 2020 and set a net zero target year of 2030 in acknowledgement of the urgency and scale of the challenge we are facing. However, we recognise that climate change is a global challenge, and achieving net zero at the local level is not enough to avoid devastating climate change and irreversible damage.

We seek to foster a shift beyond simply reducing Stonnington's emissions and towards actively contributing to climate solutions as a community. We aim to deliver and support actions that restore and strengthen the natural systems that store carbon and enable the responsible uptake of emerging low-carbon technologies and innovation. We aim to play a positive role in accelerating both emissions reduction and carbon drawdown, so that we meet our duty to create to a safer climate and healthier environment for future generations.

Broader benefits

Climate action has the potential to improve much more than just emissions outcomes alone.

We want the choices and changes we make as a community to reduce emissions should also support a more liveable and resilient city where energy costs are lower, public health is improved, our homes and buildings are more comfortable, and where we have stronger local economies and greener neighbourhoods. We also want the benefits of the transition to be shared fairly, with all members of our community able to access more sustainable, affordable and healthier ways of living.

Why it matters

Climate change is already affecting communities across Victoria and around the world – including Stonnington. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, more frequent extreme weather events and increasing pressure on natural systems are affecting the communities, places, natural systems, and resources that we live, work and depend upon.

While building local resilience and adapting to these impacts is essential, it is still critical that we reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible, as fast as possible to protect the wellbeing and resilience of our community, economy, and environment - the extent to which current and future generations will experience a hotter, more volatile climate will depend on the choices we make today.

Every tonne of greenhouse gas emissions avoided contributes to reducing future climate risks and impacts.

Australia is already undergoing a major shift away from fossil fuels such as coal, petrol and diesel fuels, and natural gas. This shift is increasingly visible through the growing uptake of electric vehicles, the electrification of homes and businesses, and greater investment in renewable energy and battery storage. These changes are reshaping the way we power our homes, travel, and deliver services, while creating opportunities for cleaner, more efficient and affordable energy use.

LIFECYCLE CARBON

When we think about reducing emissions, we need to think about more than just energy and fuel use. It is important to consider the entire lifecycle of products, materials, buildings, vehicles and infrastructure we use and rely on.

The materials used, the manufacturing process, transport, construction methods, operation and maintenance, and disposal choices all generate greenhouse gases.

This might seem overwhelming, but it means we have countless opportunities to contribute to a climate positive future every day in what we buy, build, repair, reuse and throw away.



However, the pace of change is limited by barriers such as upfront costs, access to information, ageing and constrained infrastructure, regulatory settings, and challenges faced by renters, apartment residents and lower income households. We need to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the energy transition and that vulnerable households and priority communities are not left behind.

Addressing emissions also creates broader benefits for our community. Cleaner energy, more efficient buildings, active and sustainable travel, urban greening, resource-conscious and circular consumption initiatives can reduce household costs, improve public health, strengthen energy security, improve the performance and resilience of our energy network, support local jobs and make our neighbourhoods more liveable.

How we respond will shape whether future generations inherit a city powered by fossil fuels and vulnerable to rising energy costs and climate impacts, or one powered by clean energy, efficient buildings, sustainable transport and a modern, resilient electricity network

What is shaping our approach?.

Climate emergency

Greenhouse gases are continuing to accumulate in the atmosphere, locking in further climate change and increasing risks. The longer emissions remain high, the greater the scale of future impacts and the more difficult and costly they will be to address.

We need to rapidly reduce emissions as much as possible, as quickly as possible and aim for a climate positive future to avoid the most severe impacts of climate change.

Energy transition

Renewable energy, electrification and battery storage are creating new opportunities to reduce emissions while improving resilience and lowering costs. However, access to these opportunities is not always equal, with housing type, tenure and affordability influencing who can participate.

We need to reduce barriers and support equitable access to clean energy solutions to ensure the benefits of the transition are shared fairly.

Shared benefits

Many actions that reduce emissions can also improve health and wellbeing, reduce costs, strengthen resilience, support biodiversity and enhance liveability. The greatest value is often achieved when environmental, social and economic outcomes are pursued together.

We need to prioritise solutions that deliver positive outcomes across multiple areas to maximise the benefits of climate action.

Shared responsibility

Most emissions generated within Stonnington are beyond Council's direct control and are influenced by decisions made by households, businesses, developers, utilities and other levels of government.

We need to work in partnership, support community action and advocate for broader policy, regulation and investment changes that respond to the scale and urgency of the challenge.

Emissions reduction hierarchy

Creating a climate positive Stonnington requires more than simply balancing our emissions through offsets. It requires us to reduce emissions wherever possible while also contributing to the restoration and regeneration of the natural systems and carbon sinks that help stabilise our climate.

The **Emissions Reduction Framework** is a decision-making approach that helps prioritise climate action according to its potential impact. Traditionally, in recognition that that some emissions may be difficult or impossible to eliminate, offsets are included at the bottom of the hierarchy.

While offsets can play an important role in addressing residual emissions, we are adopting a modified approach that aligns with our aspiration for Stonnington to become climate positive in the longer term.

Our version of the hierarchy prioritises actions to avoid, then reduce, then replace emissions.

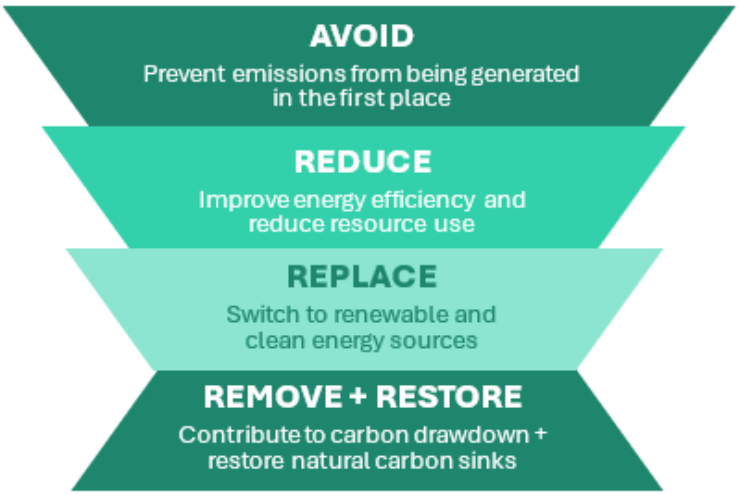


Figure 4. *Adapted Emissions Reduction Framework.*

It also reflects that removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and restoring natural carbon sinks is essential for a healthy climate and community into the future.

We will be guided by this hierarchy in how we deliver against this Strategy and our Climate Positive Stonnington Action Plan.

What we'll focus on

To create a climate positive Stonnington, we will focus our efforts in three areas.

Focus area	What this could look like
2.1 Reduce emissions from Council operations *Investing in emissions avoidance, energy efficiency, electrification and renewable energy generation and storage*	▶ Embedding emissions reduction into asset renewal, capital works, maintenance, and operational decision-making ▶ Improving the energy efficiency of Council buildings, facilities and infrastructure and expanding renewable energy generation and storage such as through installing solar and batteries ▶ Transitioning Council facilities, vehicles and equipment away from fossil fuels like natural gas, petrol and diesel
2.2 Support community emissions reduction *Encouraging and supporting households, groups and businesses to reduce emissions*	▶ Providing education and encouraging uptake of renewable energy, electrification, battery storage and other low-emissions technologies ▶ Supporting households with less ability to participate in the energy transition ▶ Supporting community energy initiatives and advocating for a faster transition to a clean, reliable and affordable renewable electricity grid ▶ Advocating to and working with other levels of government, regional networks, and community partners to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon and ultimately climate positive future
2.3 Preparing for a climate positive future *Reducing Council's Scope 3 emissions, and pursuing opportunities to draw down carbon*	▶ Improving our understanding of supply chain emissions and using Council's purchasing power and partnerships to influence emissions beyond our direct operations ▶ Pursuing opportunities to contribute to carbon drawdown and other climate positive initiatives as technologies, knowledge and approaches continue to evolve

Detailed actions and delivery timeframes will be set out in our **Climate Positive Stonnington Action Plan**, which will be renewed every three years.

Our advocacy priorities

Many of the changes needed for a more climate positive Stonnington, particularly in relation to planning and building controls, energy and transport infrastructure, and policy rest with other levels of government. We seek and support government action on:

- **Low-carbon development**
  Strengthened planning controls and building standards to reduce operational and embodied carbon emissions from new developments, and to improve minimum energy performance standards for existing homes and commercial buildings.
- **Clean energy transition**
  Increased investment, urgency and policy support for grid decarbonisation, electrification and economy-wide emissions reduction, including additional support to ensure priority communities can participate in the clean energy transition and funding for councils to decarbonise major public facilities, infrastructure and assets.
- **Sustainable transport**
  Accelerated investment in public transport, walking, cycling and electric vehicle infrastructure to reduce transport emissions and support a shift away from private vehicle dependence.
- **Sustainable data centres**
  Management of data centre impacts on local energy demand, grid performance and emissions through stronger efficiency standards, renewable energy requirements and community benefit contributions.

Priority 03: Water sensitive and flood ready Stonnington

Where we are headed

Water has shaped Stonnington's landscapes, ecosystems and communities for thousands of years. Over time however, our relationship with water has become increasingly disconnected from the natural systems and processes that sustain it due to the influences of urbanisation, population growth and climate change.

By 2040, we aspire to have created a water sensitive and flood ready Stonnington where, as a community, we all understand, respect, and work with water rather than against it.

Living entities

Through the *Wilip-gin Birrarung murron (Yarra River Protection) Act 2017*, Birrarung is the first river in Australia have its status as a living entity enshrined in law. This means it is recognised as a living and integrated natural system that should be protected, respected and cared for in its own right, rather than managed solely as a resource or asset. Our aim is for all waterways to be recognised and celebrated as living systems that sustain environmental, cultural and community wellbeing.



We want the whole community to understand our connection to and responsibility to care for Birrarung and KooyongKoot and consider how decisions and actions affect their health and that of the broader catchment. By walking alongside and learning from Traditional Custodians, we will work to support healing Country through revegetation, habitat restoration, reconnecting natural water flows, and embedding nature-based solutions that restore water's ecological functions.

Flood management requires more than bigger drains

Moving water away as quickly as possible into the stormwater system is not always the best way to manage flood risk. It can damage waterways, prevent groundwaters from recharging, and means our environment cannot absorb and make use of all the rain that falls. We seek to embed and deliver flood management approaches that not only reduce risks and impacts but that also support broader environmental and community outcomes. Water-sensitive urban design, green infrastructure and stormwater harvesting will work alongside drainage infrastructure to slow and store water throughout the landscape, reducing pressure on drains while improving waterway health, supporting biodiversity, cooling the city and making better use of an increasingly precious resource.

Spongey landscapes

Water is an essential part of healthy landscapes, thriving biodiversity and community wellbeing. We hope to create neighbourhoods that are greener, cooler and 'spongier', where water sensitive infrastructure helps to slow, capture, reuse water where it falls, where the role of water is valued, and where we are better equipped to manage water during periods of both drought and heavy rainfall.

Collective action

Across both public and private land, everyone has a role to play in creating a more resilient and water sensitive city. We seek to foster a community with a strong understanding of the water cycle and the role we all play in protecting waterway health, reducing pollution, conserving water and preparing for floods.

Why it matters

Water sits at the centre of many of the mounting environmental challenges facing Stonnington over the coming decades. It supports trees and biodiversity, cools our neighbourhoods, sustains our gardens and green spaces, and influences how resilient we are to drought, heat and flooding.

Much of Stonnington sits on a former floodplain that used to be home to swampy marshlands. The city is home to two of Melbourne's most significant urban waterways, Birrarung (Yarra River) and KooyongKoot (Gardiner Creek). These waterways are living entities that are fundamental to environmental, cultural and community wellbeing. Healthy rivers, creeks and catchments rely on connected landscapes, functioning floodplains, natural ecological processes and clean water to thrive.

These systems are already under pressure from urbanisation, pollution and the legacy of past changes to the landscape. As the climate changes and our city grows, that pressure will increase.

Less predictable rainfall, longer dry periods, more intense storms and growing competition for water resources will place greater strain on waterways, drainage systems and ageing infrastructure that were often designed for a different climate and a less densely developed city. At the same time, continued urban densification can reduce opportunities for water to soak into the ground, increasing runoff, flood risk and pollution, while limiting the ability of waterways and floodplains to perform their natural functions.

These challenges affect more than just water 'management'. They influence the survival of our trees and biodiversity, the resilience of our parks and sportsgrounds, and the safety and liveability of our neighbourhoods.

How we respond will shape whether future generations inherit healthier waterways or degraded ones, thriving natural systems or declining biodiversity, greener and cooler neighbourhoods or hotter and harsher places, and a city that is resilient and prepared for a changing climate or increasingly vulnerable to its impacts.

GHOST WATERWAYS

Water flowing through Stonnington is only partly visible – much of it runs hidden beneath our streets. Birrarung and KooyongKoot run along our city's boundaries, fed by smaller aboveground waterways such as Scotchman's Creek.

Other waterways have long since disappeared from view – straightened, piped and buried over as the city grew. Today, these 'ghost waterways' continue to flow beneath places like Chapel Street and Hedgeley Dene Gardens as part of the stormwater system.

Above or below ground, these waterways and drains work as one connected system. Rain that falls anywhere in Stonnington gathers, collects, and is carried through pits, pipes, creeks and rivers across the catchments of Birrarung and KooyongKoot and out to Port Phillip Bay.

Every rooftop, road and garden in between influences how that system performs, and how clean that water remains.



Figure 5. *Permeability of different surface types (Source: Sustainable Design Fact Sheets, CASBE)*

What is shaping our approach?

Climate change

Climate change is making water management more complex and challenging, with drier conditions overall and putting more pressure on water as a resource, while also contributing to more intense rainfall events and flooding.

We need to use water more efficiently, diversify our water sources, and design our city to be more resilient to both drought and flooding.

Urban growth

Population growth and associated densification is changing how water moves throughout Stonnington. It is increasing pollution, stormwater runoff, and flood risk, putting pressure on drainage systems, and reducing permeability.

We need to improve integrated water management outcomes in how we plan, design and build our city so growth doesn't increase risks and impacts.

Waterways

Waterway health is declining and under pressure from urban growth, climate change, pollution, stormwater flows, and biodiversity loss. Waterways are living entities that need to be considered in our decision-making and actions.

We need to reduce pollution, improve water quality, and reduce stormwater impacts to protect our waterways.

Catchments

Water moves through catchments, not based on municipal boundaries, meaning that partnering with neighbouring councils, state government agencies, Traditional Custodians and community is essential.

We need to collaborate across the catchment to address shared challenges and deliver meaningful outcomes.

Education

Building community awareness and participation in caring for waterways and creating a water sensitive and flood ready city is critical, because everyone influences how water moves through and impacts the catchment.

We need to empower our community with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to create a water sensitive and flood ready Stonnington.

Integrated water management

Creating a water sensitive and flood ready Stonnington requires more than traditional approaches to water management that focus on water conservation We need to consider the whole water cycle, the many ways water influences the health, liveability and resilience of our city, and the many ways land use, urban design and human activity shape how water moves, is used and is cared for.

Integrated Water Management (IWM) has been adopted by the Victoria Government and most local governments as a framework for planning and managing water in a way that is more connected and collaborative. It recognises that our drinking water resources, stormwater, wastewater, waterways, flooding, land-use planning, urban greening, public open space and community wellbeing are closely linked, and that decisions about one can affect outcomes across many others.

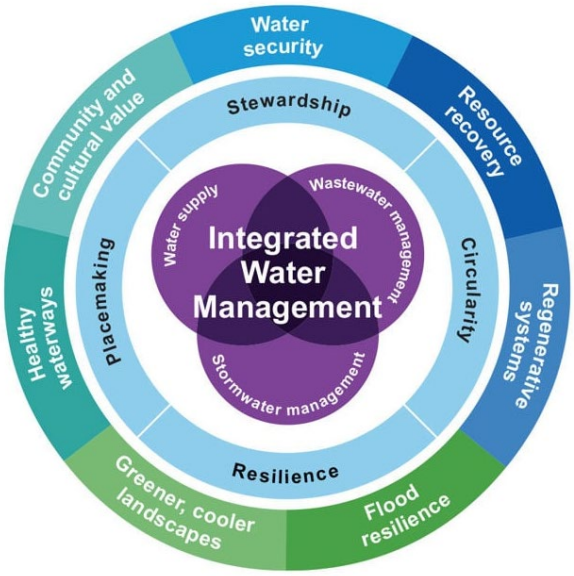


Figure 6. *Integrated Water Management framework. (Source: Arup, 2025)*

Rather than managing water issues in isolation, IWM brings together local governments, water authorities, catchment management agencies, Traditional Custodians, communities and other partners to identify shared challenges and create solutions that deliver environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits at system and catchment scales.

We will be guided by the principles of IWM in how we deliver against this Strategy and our Water Sensitive and Flood Ready Action Plan.

What we'll focus on

To create a water sensitive and flood ready Stonnington, we will focus our efforts in three areas.

Focus area	What this could look like
3.1 Water sensitive Stonnington *Using water wisely and helping our city soak up and slow down rain*	▶ Tracking and reducing water use across Council facilities, sportsgrounds and open spaces and increasing our use of alternative water sources such as recycled water and stormwater ▶ Creating greener, cooler and spongier neighbourhoods that work with water's natural cycles ▶ Embedding water sensitive urban design and integrated water management principles into local planning policy ▶ Educating and encouraging the Stonnington community to conserve water and improve water quality
3.2 Flood ready Stonnington *Understanding our flood risk, reducing it where we can, and helping our community prepare for heavy rain*	▶ Improving our understanding of current and future flood risks and integrating what we learn into how we make decisions ▶ Enhancing the resilience of our local infrastructure, services, open spaces, natural environment and waterways to flooding ▶ Educating and supporting households, communities, businesses and groups to prepare for, respond to and recover from flood events ▶ Working with partners across the catchment to reduce flood risk and improve flood preparedness and response
3.3 Healthy, living waterways *Caring for the health of our waterways and connecting people to the role of water in our lives and community*	▶ Protecting and improving the health of Birrarung, KooyongKoot and the broader waterways that flow through Stonnington ▶ Reducing stormwater pollution and improving the quality of water entering rivers, creeks and ultimately Port Phillip Bay ▶ Working with Traditional Custodians, government agencies, regional networks, local groups, schools, businesses, and residents to support Caring for Country and reconnect communities with waterways as living systems

Detailed actions and delivery timeframes will be set out in our **Water Sensitive and Flood Ready Action Plan**, which will be renewed every three years.

Our advocacy priorities

Many of the changes needed for a more water sensitive and flood ready Stonnington, particularly in relation to planning controls, infrastructure, and policy rest with other levels of government. We seek and support government action on:

- **Living waterways**
  Expanded recognition and protection of waterways as living entities, and increase support for Traditional Custodian-led stewardship, decision-making and Caring for Country.
- **Water sensitive development**
  Strengthened planning controls and building standards to improve water efficiency, permeability, flood resilience and waterway health outcomes in private developments.
- **Sustainable data centres**
  Management of data centre impacts on water resources and waterway health through stronger performance standards, regulation and community benefit requirements.
- **Alternative water sources**
  Increased investment in stormwater harvesting, recycled water, water reuse and other alternative water sources, alongside water-sensitive flood mitigation infrastructure.
- **Catchment collaboration**
  Support for catchment-scale partnerships, governance and investment to improve waterway health, manage flood risks and deliver integrated water management.

Priority 04: Biodiverse, green and connected Stonnington

Where we are headed

Caring for, protecting, and enhancing nature is essential to achieving a resilient, healthy and liveable future for the Stonnington. As our city becomes denser, invasive species, pests and predators put pressure on our native flora and fauna, and the climate continues to change, protecting and strengthening biodiversity, green infrastructure, and our connection to Country will become increasingly important.

By 2040, we aspire to be a city where nature is woven through the fabric of our streets, parks, waterways, and homes. We want biodiversity, greening, habitat connectivity, nature connection and care for Country to be valued and invested in alongside housing, transport, recreation and economic development, helping create a healthier, cooler and more resilient city for current and future generations.

Greening, biodiversity and resilience must work hand in hand

A greener city is not always a more biodiverse or resilient city. All three goals need to be considered together to avoid unintentional trade-offs. We aim to create a future where greening efforts across Stonnington support both people and nature. We want our streets, parks, waterways, private gardens, and new developments to incorporate diverse and climate-resilient vegetation, healthy soils, habitat features and functioning ecological processes.

By selecting and caring for trees and vegetation that are suitable for future conditions, resistant to pest and disease and provide habitat, we can create a more resilient urban forest and ensure nature thrives for generations to come.

Multi-functional infrastructure

As a highly urbanised municipality, Stonnington's remaining native vegetation, urban forest, waterway corridors, and green spaces are critical to ecological health and liveability.

We want to improve the ability of our parks, waterway corridors, streets and urban forest to function as an interconnected and multifunctional network that supports biodiversity, cooling, active transport, flood management, recreation and community health and wellbeing.

Because not all spaces can support tree canopy, we will work to integrate alternative green infrastructure solutions such as green roofs, vertical gardens, vined arbors, and living shade sails. Similarly, recognising that opportunities to create new open space are limited, we will focus not only on growing our open space network where we can, but also on improving the quality, function and connectivity of the green spaces we already have.

We live on, and are part of, Country

We are part of nature and nature is everywhere. We aim to foster a future where trees, vegetation, waterways, wildlife and green spaces are woven throughout Stonnington, from parks and streets, to along waterways, to homes, schools and workplaces. We want to protect, care for, and enhance our existing natural assets, while creating new opportunities for greening that help to strengthen biodiversity, improve liveability, and care for Country so it can care for us in return.



People are connected with and care for nature

People are more likely to protect what they value and understand. We want everyone in Stonnington to experience, enjoy and actively care for nature as part of everyday life. Through education, citizen science, volunteering, stewardship, supporting action at home, and walking with and learning from our Traditional Custodians, we can build better connections and a cultural of reciprocal care between people and Country.

Why it matters

Nature is declining globally, nationally and locally. Trees, native plants, animals, insects, and ecosystems are under increasing pressure from multiple interconnected and compounding threats.

Together, urbanisation, habitat fragmentation, vegetation loss, climate change, invasive species, predators and pests, pollution and changing land use patterns are driving biodiversity decline, weakening ecosystem health and making it harder for nature to adapt and recover from damage and disruption.

In highly urbanised areas like Stonnington, these pressures are particularly significant because our remaining habitat is often small, isolated and vulnerable to disturbance or changing conditions, and availability of open space is limited.

At the same time, nature underpins many of the ecosystem services we rely on every day. Trees, vegetation and green spaces cool our urban environment, improve air and water quality, store carbon, support biodiversity, reduce flood risk and contribute to physical and mental wellbeing. Investing in healthy ecosystems is therefore not only about protecting nature, but also about strengthening the resilience, health and liveability of our community in a changing climate.



GROWING A RESILIENT URBAN FOREST

Trees are one of Stonnington's most valuable assets, providing shade, cooling, habitat, carbon storage and many of the characteristics that make our city distinctive and liveable. However, the urban forest we enjoy today was largely established under cooler, wetter and more predictable conditions than those expected in the future.

Many of our trees are mature or ageing. To maintain and build on the canopy cover we have today, strategic and evidence-based succession planning will be critical. As older trees decline and require replacement, we need to think about which species can provide the most canopy cover, while also supporting habitat and thriving in future conditions.

Growing a resilient urban forest also requires species diversity. While both native and exotic trees contribute to Stonnington's liveability, character and biodiversity values, relying too heavily on a small number of species can increase vulnerability to heat, drought, storms, pests and disease.

By carefully managing succession, increasing diversity and selecting climate resilient species, we can create an urban forest that continues to support biodiversity, provide share and cooling, clean air, and community wellbeing for generations to come.

As our city grows and our climate changes, creating conditions that protect these benefits through both conservation and adaptation will become increasingly important.

How we respond will shape whether future generations inherit a city with thriving biodiversity, connected green spaces and healthy ecosystems, or one where nature becomes increasingly fragmented, vulnerable and disconnected from everyday life.

What is shaping our approach?

Climate change

Many of the trees, vegetation, and landscapes that define Stonnington were established under cooler, wetter conditions than those we expect to experience in the future. As the climate changes, some species may become more vulnerable to heat, drought, storms, pests and disease.

We need to increase species diversity, plan for succession, support vulnerable habitats, and consider future climate conditions in our planting and management decisions.

Urban growth

Stonnington's population is expected to continue growing, increasing demand for parks, open spaces and green infrastructure in the context of limited opportunities to increase supply. Urban densification can reduce access to private gardens, increasing the importance of the public realm to provide green spaces and access to nature.

We need to strategically expand, enhance and connect our network of public open spaces and green infrastructure to ensure our city remains liveable and resilient as it grows.

Competing interests

Trees, vegetation and open spaces support many different community needs. They support habitat, cooling, recreation, flood management, active transport, social connection and health and wellbeing. In a growing city, these functions and values are often in competition with other demands for land and infrastructure.

We need integrated approaches that maximise the benefits nature provides for both people and the environment so we can make the best use of our limited space and resources.

Ecosystems

Nature does not recognise property boundaries, and it cannot survive in the public realm alone. Parks, waterway corridors, streets, nature strips, private gardens, school yards, rooftops, balconies, and courtyards and commercial land all contribute to a broader network of habitat, canopy and biodiversity.

We need to strengthen greening and biodiversity outcomes across both public and private land to create conditions for nature to thrive.

Strategy for nature

Creating a biodiverse, green and connected Stonnington requires more than protecting individual trees, species or sites. It requires an approach that recognises the interconnected relationship between people, nature and Country, and the role each plays in supporting the other.

The Australian Government's **Strategy for Nature 2024-2030** provides a framework for halting and reversing biodiversity decline by bringing together three connected goals:

- Connecting people with nature
- Caring for nature in all its diversity
- Sharing and building knowledge

Together, these goals recognise that lasting biodiversity outcomes depend not only on protecting and restoring ecosystems, but also on helping people understand, value and actively participate in caring for nature.



Figure 7. The goals of Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030 (Source: Commonwealth of Australia, 2024).

We will be guided by Australia's Strategy for Nature in how we deliver against this Strategy and our Biodiverse, Green and Connected Stonnington Action Plan.

What we'll focus on

To create a biodiverse, green and connected Stonnington, we will focus our efforts in three areas.

Focus area	What this could look like
4.1 Greener public places and stronger habitat *Protecting and strengthening urban forest, vegetation and habitat across Council-managed land and assets*	▶ Protecting and enhancing trees, vegetation and habitat across parks, streets, waterways, reserves and other Council-managed land ▶ Restoring and strengthening habitat corridors, biodiversity hotspots and ecological connections throughout the municipality ▶ Increasing canopy cover, vegetation diversity and alternative green infrastructure in places where people and nature will benefit most ▶ Improving our understanding of and response to the impacts of climate change, invasive species, predators, pests and diseases
4.2 Protecting and growing nature on private land *Strengthening tree protection and supporting better greening and habitat across private land and new development*	▶ Driving better biodiversity, canopy and greening outcomes in new developments through strengthened planning policy and design guidelines ▶ Improving protections for existing trees, vegetation and habitat on private land, including through penalties and incentives ▶ Educating and supporting households, developers, businesses, schools, and local groups create greener, more biodiverse and climate-resilient landscapes ▶ Encouraging habitat creation and climate resilient, biodiverse planting across private gardens, balconies, nature strips and other shared spaces
4.3 Connecting with and caring for nature *Working with Traditional Custodians and our community to build knowledge, connection and active care for Country*	▶ Working with Traditional Custodians to strengthen Caring for Country outcomes and embed cultural knowledge, values and practices ▶ Building community understanding of the importance of protecting and enhancing biodiversity, canopy, and urban greening Creating opportunities for people to experience, learn about and engage with nature in their everyday lives ▶ Supporting citizen science, volunteering, and community stewardship

Detailed actions and delivery timeframes will be set out in our **Biodiverse, Green and Connected Action Plan**, which will be renewed every three years.

Our advocacy priorities

Many of the changes needed for a more biodiverse, green and connected Stonnington, particularly in relation to planning controls, nature protection and investment rest with other levels of government. We seek and support government action on:

- **Nature positive development and tree protection**
  Strengthened planning controls and targets to deliver better canopy, greening, biodiversity and habitat outcomes in private developments, including enforcement mechanisms and regional consistency to improve protection of existing assets.
- **Biodiversity investment and monitoring**
  Development of a standardised, legislated approach to biodiversity assessment, along with increased funding for urban habitat restoration, connectivity, and green infrastructure, and associated monitoring and resilience measures.
- **Traditional Custodian leadership**
  Increased support for sustainable, long-term resourcing of Traditional Custodian-led stewardship of Country and environmental decision-making.
- **Urban canopy resilience**
  Reduced barriers to canopy expansion and support for approaches that enable greater tree retention and planting in urban environments, including for alternative green infrastructure.
- **Biosecurity and invasive species**
  Increased investment in the prevention, monitoring and management of environmental weeds, pest animals, invasive species and emerging plant diseases, together with stronger regional collaborative responses.

Priority 05: Circular and resource conscious Stonnington

Where we are headed

The way we currently produce, consume and dispose of products often overlooks or minimises the full environmental impacts of the resources they require. Many products are used for only a short period before being discarded, contributing to waste, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and growing pressure on natural systems.

By 2040, we aspire to have created a circular and resource conscious Stonnington where, as a community, we avoid waste wherever possible, value our resources, make sustainable and responsible consumption choices, and reuse, repair and share in a thriving local circular economy.

Conscious consumption

Every item we buy or materials we use relies on energy, water, land and raw materials, and creates impacts throughout its lifecycle as resources must be extracted, and materials processed, manufactured, packaged and transported for products and materials reach our homes and businesses.

We want purchasing decisions to consider the broader environmental and social impacts of the products and materials we consume in Stonnington. We hope to move towards a culture where resource-conscious consumption is part of everyday decision making. This means households, businesses, and organisations consider whether a purchase is necessary in the first place, and choose responsibly made, local, durable, repairable, reusable products wherever possible, helping to conserve resources, reduce emissions and minimise waste before it is created.

Maintaining value

Materials and products often have value beyond their first intended use. We aim to create to a future where sharing, maintaining, repairing, borrowing, reusing and repurposing are commonplace. By ensuring items remain in circulation for longer, we can reduce demand for new resources and help local communities, businesses and organisations get more value from the materials already in existence.

Our goal is to provide resource recovery services that support maintaining value through reuse, recycling and composting when other options have been exhausted, not as the first choice.

Waste, pollution and end of life impacts

Waste does not disappear when it is thrown away. We want far less material to be lost to landfill, or to end up as litter and dumped rubbish. We seek to normalise waste avoidance, resource recovery and responsible disposal across Stonnington homes, businesses and public places.

Cleaner streets, waterways and public spaces will support healthier ecosystems, improved amenity and better environmental outcomes for both people and nature.



Circularity

Creating a circular and resource conscious city requires changes in how we plan, build, buy and manage resources, facilities, and assets. We will work to further embed circular principles across how Council manages our operations, services, and assets, and how we deliver projects. By improving how we consider lifecycle impacts, and by pursuing opportunities to extend asset lifespans and ways to recover and reuse valuable materials, we can help to create a more efficient and resilient local economy.

Why it matters

The products and materials we use every day depend on natural resources, energy, water and land. From raw material extraction and manufacturing through to transport, use and disposal, every stage of a product's lifecycle has environmental impacts. As our city grows, so too will demand for resources unless we move towards more circular and resource conscious ways of living.

At the same time, climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and growing pressure on finite resources are increasing the need to use materials more carefully. Many products are used for only a short period before being discarded, while valuable resources are lost through waste, litter, dumping and landfill. Although recycling remains important, it can only address part of the problem. Greater environmental benefits can often be achieved by avoiding unnecessary consumption and extending the life of products and materials through sharing, repair, reuse and repurposing.

In an urban municipality like Stonnington, many of the impacts associated with our consumption occur beyond our municipal boundary through supply chains, manufacturing and resource extraction, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, biodiversity loss, resource depletion and in some cases, poor working conditions.

These impacts may not always be immediately visible, but as consumers we have a role to play in reducing them by making more conscious purchasing decisions, supporting sustainable and ethical products and services, and advocating for more responsible business practices and government regulation.

PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP AND THE RIGHT TO REPAIR

Waste and overconsumption are often framed as the result of individual choices, but many factors that influence the impacts of our purchases occur long before we choose to buy something.

Decisions about design, what things are made of, where they are manufactured, how they are packaged, advertising and marketing, and what options are available at the end of a product's life play a huge role in their environmental impact and determine their durability, repairability, and what happens to them when they are no longer working or useful.

Product stewardship recognises that industry and businesses play a major role in determining the environmental footprints of products and materials across the lifecycle and that improvement requires better practices and regulation.

The **right to repair** builds on this idea by guaranteeing access to spare parts, tools, information and repair services that allow products to be used longer, and by prohibiting planned obsolescence.

Together, these approaches ensure responsibility is shared upstream with manufacturers, retailers and governments, rather than the burden of change being left to consumers and councils alone.

Litter, dumped rubbish, overuse of landfills and contaminated recycling are local reminders of this broader cultural and economic challenge. Beyond their immediate impacts on Stonnington's amenity, they represent resources that have lost value prematurely and highlight the need to rethink how we produce, consume and manage materials throughout their lifecycle.

How we respond will shape whether future generations inherit a city that uses resources wisely, prevents waste and pollution, and supports a thriving circular economy, or one where finite resources continue to be consumed and discarded at a rate that places growing pressure on our environment and community.



What is shaping our approach?

Apartment living

Almost three-quarters of Stonnington's housing is medium or high density, and this proportion is expected to grow to xx% between now and 2040. Shared waste systems, limited storage space, private collection services, and high resident turnover can increase contamination and dumped rubbish, and make waste avoidance, recycling and resource recovery more challenging than in standalone homes.

We need to deliver education and design circular economy and waste solutions that reflect and respond to the reality of our current and future density.

Service reforms

The waste and recycling system in Victoria is continuing to undergo significant change, including the standardisation of bin colours and contents, the rollout of food and garden organics (FOGO) collections, the introduction of Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) and broader circular economy reforms. These changes create opportunities to recover more resources and reduce landfill, but they also require changes to infrastructure, Council services and community behaviour.

We need to help our community adapt **to these changes and ensure new systems are convenient, effective and well used.**

Finite capacity

Landfill space, natural resources and the capacity of our environment to cope with litter and pollution are all finite. Many products contain materials that are difficult to recover or lack viable recycling pathways, meaning valuable resources are being lost. Whether emerging alternatives to landfill create more problems than they solve will depend on the type and volume of waste we produce. Continuing to consume and discard materials at current rates is not viable.

We need to use resources more efficiently, reduce unnecessary waste, support circular systems, and develop more sustainable end of life solutions.

Recycling limits

Recycling is an important part of a circular economy, but it can only address materials after they have become waste. It does not reduce the impacts associated with resource extraction, manufacturing, packaging or transport, and many products cannot currently be recycled into equivalent new products. Avoiding waste and extending product life often delivers greater environmental benefits than recycling alone.

We need to move beyond a recycling-focused mindset and give greater attention to reducing consumption, reusing materials and keeping products in use for longer.

The waste management hierarchy

Creating a circular and resource conscious Stonnington requires more than reducing contamination and improving recycling and resource recovery rates. It requires us to reduce waste before it is created and make choices that minimise the broader environmental impacts associated with how the products and materials we buy are produced, consumed and managed throughout their lifecycle.

The Victorian Government's waste management hierarchy provides a framework for prioritising action. It ranks waste and resource management options from most to least preferred:

- **Avoid**: rethinking need, buying less, preventing waste and minimising impacts
- **Reuse**: sharing, borrowing, repairing and repurposing
- **Recycle**: turning existing materials into new products
- **Recover**: extracting remaining value like energy, nutrients, or component chemicals
- **Treat (Contain)**: safely minimise environmental harm
- **Dispose**: landfill as a last resort

We will be guided by Victoria's waste management hierarchy in how we deliver against this Strategy and our Circular and Resource Conscious Stonnington Action Plan.



Figure X: source xx

What we'll focus on

To create a circular and resource conscious Stonnington, we will focus our efforts in three areas.

Focus area	What this could look like
5.1 Circular operations and services *Reducing waste and improving circularity through Council operations and services*	▶ Delivering kerbside and other recycling and resource recovery services and education that make it easier for households, groups, and businesses to avoid waste and recover valuable materials ▶ Improving the prevention and management of litter and dumped rubbish through education, infrastructure, service delivery and enforcement ▶ Reducing waste, single-use products and unnecessary consumption across Council facilities, programs, services and events ▶ Investigating sustainable alternatives to landfill that align with circular economy principles and minimise environmental impacts
5.2 Circular assets and infrastructure *Extending asset life, reusing materials and reducing waste through design and renewal*	▶ Embedding lifecycle thinking and circular economy principles into asset planning, management and replacement decisions ▶ Designing Council buildings, infrastructure and public spaces to reduce waste and extend the life of materials and assets ▶ Prioritising durable, repairable, reusable and lower-impact materials in Council projects and procurement ▶ Exploring rental, hire, and sharing options instead of purchasing furniture and equipment
5.3 Sustainable and resource conscious consumption *Helping residents, businesses and community organisations avoid waste, consume sustainably and keep products and materials in use for longer*	▶ Encouraging and supporting households, businesses and community organisations to make more conscious purchasing decisions and reduce unnecessary consumption ▶ Promoting local businesses, community initiatives and social enterprises that contribute to a sustainable and circular economy ▶ Expanding and promoting opportunities to borrow, share, repair, swap, donate and reuse products and materials ▶ Supporting local food systems and low-waste food practices, including composting, community gardening, food preservation, food sharing and reducing food waste. ▶ Facilitating community-led action that prevents litter, cares for the environment and promotes responsible disposal behaviours.

Detailed actions and delivery timeframes will be set out in our **Circular and Resource Conscious Stonnington Action Plan**, which will be renewed every three years.

Our advocacy priorities

Many of the changes needed for a more circular and resource conscious Stonnington, particularly in relation to industry innovation and regulation, market investment, and policy rest with other levels of government. We seek and support government action on:

- **Circular and resource conscious development**
  Strengthened planning controls to encourage circular design, sustainable material use and resource-efficient development outcomes in private developments.
- **Product stewardship and circular markets**
  Expanded and strengthened product stewardship schemes, circular economy standards and right to repair legislation for priority product streams including textiles, packaging and e-waste, and increased investment in markets, infrastructure, innovation and standards for recycled and circular materials.
- **Consistent waste systems**
  Accelerated waste system standardisation, improved community education and provision of equitable access to high-quality waste and recycling services across all housing types.
- **Sustainable landfill alternatives**
  Increased investment in and consideration of sustainable alternatives to landfill that align with circular economy.

Who shapes sustainability in Stonnington?

Environmental outcomes are shaped by decisions made at every level – from global agreements and national laws, down to the everyday choices we make in our homes, gardens and businesses.

As a local government, we play an important part but many of the changes needed to create a sustainable Stonnington depend on the actions, investment and collaboration of others.

Our role is to lead where we can, support and enable others where we can't, and advocate strongly for the policies and investment needed to achieve better outcomes for Stonnington.



International bodies

Global organisations such as the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change set shared goals, agreements and scientific advice, and track global progress on issues such as climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development.



Australian Government

Sets national policy, laws, targets and funding that shape environmental action across the country including emissions reduction targets, environmental protection, and support for industry, households and other governments to act.



Victorian Government

Sets the state's planning, regulatory and policy framework, manages natural resources, and funds programs for climate action, water, waste and biodiversity. Its planning system has a direct bearing on what happens locally.



Local Government

Shapes local outcomes through the services we deliver, the land and assets we manage, and the planning decisions we make – from parks, street trees and drainage to waste services and local programs. We also enable community action and advocate to other levels of government.



Regional Networks

Bring councils, agencies, Traditional Custodians and community organisations together to act on challenges that cross municipal boundaries, such as caring for shared waterways, improving biodiversity, and elevating sustainability outcomes in private development and to advocate jointly to higher levels of government.



Traditional Custodians

Hold deep cultural knowledge of, connection to, and responsibility for Caring for Country and play a central role in guiding how land, water and ecosystems are understood, managed and protected. Working in partnership with Traditional Custodians strengthens environmental outcomes and supports self-determination and the recognition of cultural knowledge.



Developers

Shape the built environment through how land is used and buildings are designed, influencing the energy, water, waste, greening and long-term environmental performance of neighbourhoods.



Businesses

Influence outcomes through their operations, supply chains and the goods and services they provide, with an important role in cutting emissions, using resources efficiently and reducing waste.



Community

Shapes local sustainability through everyday actions and choices – from how energy and water are used, to how waste is reduced and managed, how purchases are made, how private trees and gardens land is cared for, and through repair, reduce and sharing. Community groups, schools and organisations also drive education, stewardship and local action.

How this Strategy fits with others

Internal alignment

Sustainable Stonnington 2040 sits within a wider framework of Council strategies, policies and plans that collectively support **Stonnington Tomorrow** - our Community Vision 2040 and Council Plan 2025-2029.

Community Vision 2040

Welcome to Stonnington 2040.

A modern, sustainable and interconnected community that supports the good health and wellbeing of all. Our community is a safe, accessible and creative city that celebrates and embraces all cultures including First Peoples past and present.

Supporting principle 2

Take climate and environmental action, protect biodiversity and pursue eco-friendly ways of living, guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

▼

Council Plan 2025-29

Liveable city	*Vibrant destination*	*Thriving community*	***Sustainable environment***	*Well-governed organisation*

▼▲

Sustainable Stonnington 2040: Our Integrated Environment Strategy

This Strategy also intersects with a range of other Council strategies and plans. Together, they shape how we plan for growth, support local businesses, improve health and wellbeing, and manage our assets.

Strategy	How it connects
Housing Strategy 2025 and **Neighbourhood Activity Centres Framework 2025**	By helping new homes and growing neighbourhoods be more environmentally sustainable and climate ready.
Place-Led Economic Development Plan 2023-2027	By supporting circular, resource-conscious business and a more resilient local economy.
Transport Strategy 2040	By reducing transport emissions, encouraging active and sustainable travel, and integrating green infrastructure.
Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029	By addressing the health impacts of climate change and supporting wellbeing through resilience and connection to nature.
Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-2027	By walking together with Traditional Custodians to Care for Country.
Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029	Supporting responsible pet ownership that limits impacts on local wildlife and habitat.
Asset Plan 2025-2035 and **Sports Infrastructure Plan** *(in development)*	Guiding long-term investment in green and built infrastructure, so assets are resilient to climate impacts and avoid harm to the environment.

Open Space Strategy *(in development)*	By strengthening biodiversity, greening, shade and habitat connectivity in parks and public spaces, and supporting flood management.

External alignment

Beyond our own plans, a broader policy and legislative context shapes how we act and advocate. These frameworks set out our responsibilities and connect our local action to state, national and global goals.

State and federal legislation

- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth)*
- *Climate Change Act 2022 (Commonwealth)*
- *Local Government Act 2020 (Victoria)*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Victoria)*
- *Climate Action Act 2017 (Victoria)*
- *Environment Protection Act 2017 (Victoria)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Victoria)*
- *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 (Victoria)*
- *Water Act 1989 (Victoria)*
- *Wilip-gin Birrarung murron (Yarra River Protection) Act 2017 (Victoria)*

Regional, state and federal strategies

- National Climate Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Plan
- Australia's Net Zero Plan
- National Waste Policy Action Plan
- Victorian Climate Change Strategy 2026–2030
- Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan and sector adaptation plans
- Protecting Victoria's Environment: Biodiversity 2037
- Recycling Victoria: A New Economy
- Integrated Water Management (IWM) Framework for Victoria and Yarra Catchment IWM Plan
- Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-2028
- Plan Melbourne 2017–2050
- Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo, Yarra Strategic Plan
- Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) Catchment-Scale Strategic Plan



Monitoring and evaluation

Tracking progress is essential to understanding whether we are delivering what we committed to, whether conditions are moving in the right direction and where our approach may need to change.

Progress will be tracked at two related levels, supported by ongoing evaluation and learning.

- **Strategic indicators** below will help us understand whether conditions are moving in the right direction.
- **Delivery indicators** will also be included in each Action Plan to track whether actions are progressing as planned and the outputs achieved over each three-year period.

In addition to these formal indicators, ongoing program evaluation and lessons learned through project delivery will be used to understand what is working and where there are opportunities to improve or adjust our approach.

Many of the outcomes we are working towards will take time to change and are influenced by factors beyond Council's direct control. Environmental change can also be difficult to represent through a single measure. We will therefore use a focused set of indicators to track comparable trends over time and understand whether Council's work is contributing to progress, rather than attributing every change directly to this Strategy.

Where possible, we will use reliable data that is already collected through Council and external monitoring programs. Where baselines or targets are not yet available, they will be established as suitable data becomes available. Indicators may be updated where improved measures emerge, with any significant changes explained through public reporting.

Strategic indicator	Baseline	2040 Target	Data source
Priority 01: Resilient, adaptable and empowered Stonnington			
Understanding of climate risk of priority Council services Percentage of identified priority services with a current climate risk assessment and agreed adaptation actions	0 New process commencing 2026/27	100%	Council data
Service recovery following climate-related disruption Percentage of actual disruptions in which core services are restored within their agreed recovery timeframes	To be established 2027/28	To be established	Council data
Community confidence in their local area's ability to adapt to climate change Percentage of respondents who report being very or somewhat confident that their local area will be able to adapt to the effects of climate change in their lifetime	48% (2026)	Increase	Community Views Survey (every two years)
Residents' confidence in their ability to adapt to climate change Percentage of respondents who report being very or somewhat confident they will personally be able to adapt to the effects of climate change in their lifetime	66% (2026)	Increase	Community Views Survey (every two years)

Strategic indicator	Baseline	2040 Target	Data source
Priority 02: Climate positive			
Corporate scope 1 and 2 emissions Tonnes CO_2e (carbon dioxide equivalent) Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions generated from Council operations per year	~3,000 t CO_2e (June 2026)	Net zero by 2030 Climate positive by 2040	Council utility bills and fuel data
Corporate scope 3 emissions *Methodology to monitor Scope 3 emissions to be developed through delivery of Climate Positive Action Plan 2026-2029.*	To be established	Decrease	Council data (to be established)
Council solar PV (photovoltaic) capacity Kilowatts of solar PV capacity installed on Council buildings	1,171kW	Increase	Council assets data
Community solar PV uptake Percentage of households with solar PV installations	15.8%	Increase	APVI Solar Map
Priority 03: Water sensitive and flood ready			
Council drinking water use Megalitres of drinking water used by Council each year. Megalitres of drinking water used in Council buildings each year. *Note: Seasonal conditions and changes to facilities and services may influence this outcome.*	To be established (2025/26)	Decrease	Council water bills
Stormwater harvesting and reuse Megalitres of stormwater harvested and used on Council facilities each year. *Note: Seasonal conditions may influence this outcome.*	To be established (2025/26)	Increase	Council data
Water sensitive urban design Number of water-sensitive urban design assets installed	374	Increase	Council data
Community flood preparedness Percentage of respondents who feel confident that they know how to prepare for and respond to flooding in their local area	To be established (2028/29)	Increase	Sustainable Stonnington survey (every three years)
Health of Birrarung and KooyongKoot Water quality (environmental) for Birrarung and KooyongKoot	Birrarung: Very low (2025) KooyongKoot: Very low (2025)	Increase	Melbourne Water Healthy Waterways Strategy data
Priority 04: Biodiverse, green and connected			
Canopy cover in Council-managed parks Percentage of Council-managed land covered by tree canopy	31.4%	Increase	Council data
Canopy cover on Council-managed road reserves Percentage of Council-managed land covered by tree canopy	29.15%	Increase	Council data
Canopy cover on residential land Percentage of private land covered by tree canopy	19%	Increase	Council data

Biodiversity value at priority sites *Monitoring framework and methodology to measure biodiversity value at key sites will be established through the delivery of the Biodiverse, Green and Connected Stonnington Action Plan 2026-2029*	To be established (2027-28)	Increase	Council data (framework to be established)
Habitat connectivity Number of assessed biodiversity sites with connectivity rated moderate or greater	6 of 54 sites	Increase	Council data (every 3-5 years)
Community connection with nature Percentage of residents who report feeling connected to nature in Stonnington	To be established (2028/29)	Increase	Sustainable Stonnington community survey (every three years)
Priority 05: Circular and resource-conscious			
Circular materials in Council projects Percentage of major capital projects in design or delivery incorporating circular economy principles.	To be established 2026/27	100%	Council data
Household waste sent to landfill Kilograms of kerbside collection waste sent to landfill per serviced household each year	370.6kg (2025/26)	Decrease	Council data
Resource recovery of recycling and green organics Percentage of household recyclables and FOGO diverted from landfill	40.7%	≤20%	Council data
Contamination in household recovery streams Contamination rates for mixed recycling and FOGO	Recycling: 27.9% FOGO: 7.4%	Recycling: ≤5% FOGO: ≤1%	Council data

Reporting and review

QUARTERLY
Internal monitoring

We will review Action Plan implementation progress internally each quarter, including actions completed or underway, upcoming milestones, delivery risks and any corrective action required.

ANNUAL
Public reporting

A public Sustainable Stonnington 2040 update will report progress across all five Action Plans each year. It will cover delivery against commitments, movement in available strategic indicators, key achievements, challenges and any significant changes to delivery.

THREE YEARLY
Action Plan renewal

Each Action Plan will be formally reviewed in the final year of its three-year term, or earlier if significant changes in policy, evidence or circumstances require it.

Findings from monitoring and evaluation will inform the next generation of actions, indicators and targets.

FIV-YEARLY
Strategy review

Sustainable Stonnington 2040 will be reviewed every five years to assess progress, consider new evidence and determine whether its priorities and long-term direction remain appropriate. It may be reviewed sooner if significant changes make this necessary.

The Strategy will be evaluated more thoroughly and redeveloped in the final year of its term.

Key Terms

While we have aimed to keep the language used within this document as clear and accessible as possible, the complexity of sustainability, climate and environmental topics means some technical and less familiar terms are used.

We have provided a list of definitions for key terms to support shared understanding of key terms used throughout:

Biodiversity	The variety of all living things, including plants, animals, fungi, microorganisms and the ecosystems they form.
Caring for Country	A core philosophy and practice of Australia's First Peoples that recognises the interconnected relationship between people, land, water, plants, animals and culture, and the responsibility to care for Country so it can continue to sustain life and care for people in return.
Circular Economy	An economic system that aims to reduce waste and keep products, materials and resources in use for as long as possible through avoiding, reusing, repairing, sharing and recycling instead of disposing items and materials to landfill.
Climate Adaptation	The process of preparing for and adjusting to the impacts of climate change to reduce risks and build resilience.
Climate Positive	An outcome where more greenhouse gases are removed from the atmosphere than are emitted.
Climate Resilience	The ability of people, communities, infrastructure, ecosystems and organisations to prepare for, respond to and recover from climate-related impacts and disruptions.
Carbon Drawdown	Actions that remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and store them in natural or human-made systems.
Carbon Sink	A natural or human-made system that absorbs and stores more carbon than it releases, such as forests, soils and wetlands.
Electrification	Replacing equipment, appliances and vehicles powered by fossil fuels with electricity-powered alternatives.
Green Infrastructure	Natural and built features such as trees, parks, green roofs, raingardens and waterways that provide environmental, social and economic benefits.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Gases released into the atmosphere that contribute to climate change, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.
Integrated Water Management (IWM)	A collaborative approach to planning and managing water that considers waterways, flooding, stormwater, wastewater, drinking water and urban design as part of one connected system.
Lifecycle Carbon	The greenhouse gas emissions associated with extracting, manufacturing, transporting, constructing, maintaining and disposing of a product, building or asset.
Permeability	The ability of water to soak into the ground rather than running off hard surfaces such as roads, roofs and pavements.
Urban Forest	The trees and other vegetation across a municipality, including those in streets, parks, waterways, gardens and other public and private spaces.
Urban Heat Island Effect	The tendency for urban areas to become hotter than surrounding areas due to large amounts of hard surfaces, buildings and reduced vegetation.
Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)	Design approaches and infrastructure that manage stormwater, improve water quality, reduce flooding and make better use of water in urban areas.