



Merri-bek
City Council

Climate Risk Strategy

2022



Climate Risk Strategy

The Climate Risk Strategy (the Strategy) describes how Council will proactively plan for and respond to the inevitable impacts of climate change.

Our Vision is that, by 2030:

- Council competently, accountably, and responsively manages climate risk, and
- Merri-bek is climate-resilient, leafy and liveable; with
- A climate-ready and resilient community with no one left behind.

The Strategy describes Council's integrated approach to:

- Managing climate-related risks to Council, our assets and the services we provide.
- Adapting Council's infrastructure, open spaces, natural environment and community services to climate change, while also supporting the Merri-bek community's adaptation journey.
- Building resilience within Council and across the municipality.

Why do we need a Climate Risk Strategy?

Council is committed to reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change while supporting the Merri-bek community in adapting to its now unavoidable impacts. These impacts are already being felt in Merri-bek and will worsen over the coming decades (Figure). They include hotter and drier conditions, with rarer and more extreme rainfall events. Extreme heat is amplified by the Urban Heat Island Effect, and summers will become more challenging as dust and bushfires impact air quality.

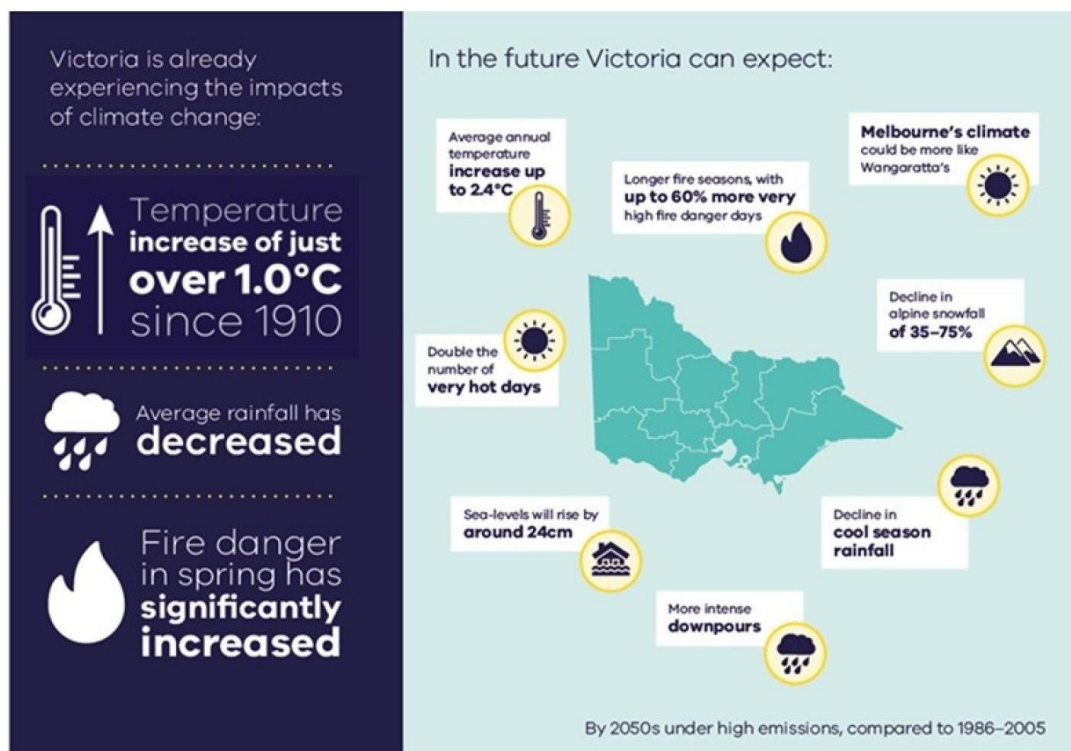


Figure 1. Climate change projections for Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) 2019

Climate extremes will increasingly impact on Council services. High heat days and extreme rainfall events are already impacting when it is safe for Council officers to work outdoors or conduct in-home care visits. Maintaining and growing natural green spaces is challenging in a hotter and drier climate, and drainage infrastructure has difficulty coping with more flooding.

Meanwhile, the demand on Council services will change and increase because of climate impacts. Climate change increases community vulnerability and will significantly impact on vulnerable cohorts such as low-income households, people with disabilities and people with limited English and others. For instance, extreme heat is particularly dangerous for infants and the elderly, as well as being associated with increases in family violence.

Climate change also creates risks for Council. It poses financial risks through the cost of retrofitting infrastructure and rebuilding in cases of damage to property and assets from extreme weather. Insurers are beginning to factor climate change into premiums and are limiting their coverage of significant risks. Governments are also increasingly exposed to legal action for failing to proactively adapt to climate change.

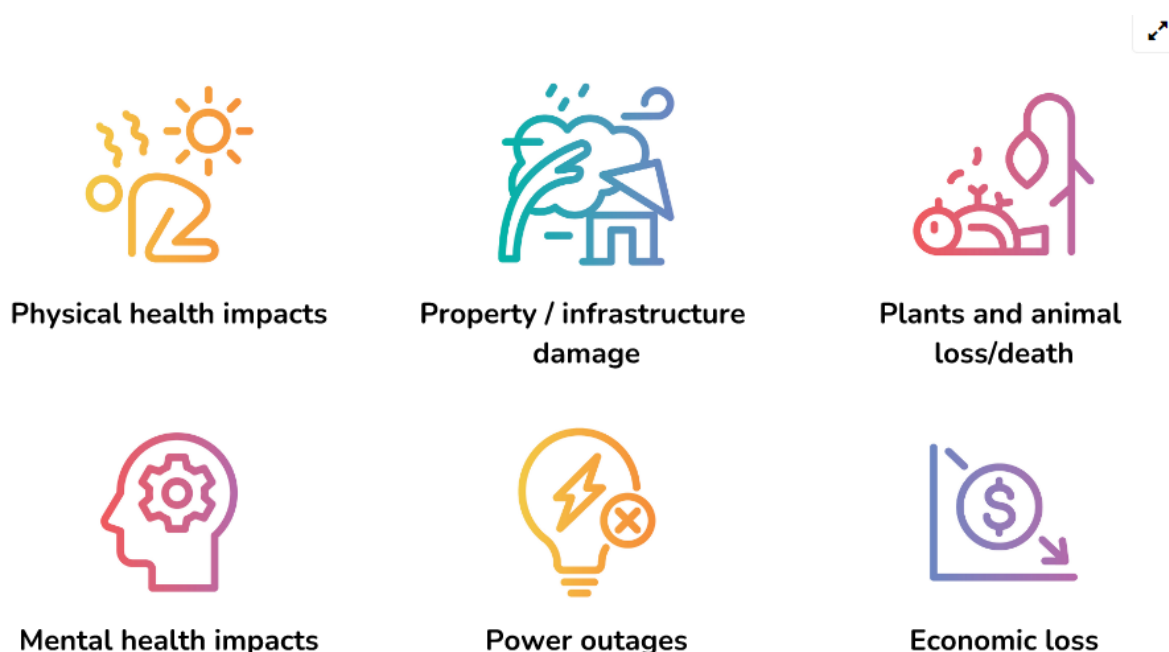


Figure 2 Local climate change risks and impacts

Action is necessary to manage climate impacts and continue providing quality public services.

- **Climate risk** is the potential for negative outcomes for human or ecological systems due to climate impacts.
- Climate change **adaptation** involves action to reduce negative outcomes of climate change or to harness opportunities.
- **Resilience** is the ability to avoid, withstand, and recover from climate impacts, and 'bounce forward' to a better adapted state.

Early action also has significant financial and social benefits. Deliberate adaptation saves money by avoiding large risks, rather than bearing the cost of remediating impacts and retrofitting adaptation responses. It also supports social cohesion, equity, and wellbeing by reducing vulnerability and fostering opportunity.

What we already do

Council is already responding to climate change through a range of work programs. This Strategy will not duplicate this work. Rather, it is designed to build on it to comprehensively manage Council's climate risk.

Action is already underway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through Zero Carbon Merri-bek, including increasing environmentally sustainable design through the Planning Scheme. Council is also working to adapt and build resilience to climate change, including through:

- **Creating more resilient landscapes and healthy waterways** through stormwater harvesting and projects like Moomba Park Wetland (Integrated Water Management Strategy and The Nature Plan).
- Purchase of land and **creating of new green spaces and local parks** in 'gap' areas without parks in walking distance (Park Close to Home).
- **Increasing canopy cover through tree planting** in streets, parks and gardens (Urban Forestry Strategy).
- **Improving the wellbeing and energy security of low-income residents** through subsidies and support for home insulation/draught-proofing or rooftop solar.
- **Planning and response to emergency events**, including severe weather driven by climate change (Municipal Emergency Management Plan and sub-plans).

Many of these activities help reduce carbon emissions as well as helping us adapt to warmer weather. For example, canopy trees capture and store carbon while providing cooling shade and upgrading building insulation keeps occupants cooler in summer more efficiently.

Our commitments and obligations

Council has climate change roles and responsibilities under Victorian legislation. Council has also made proactive commitments that build on these legislated obligations.

- The [Climate Change Act 2017](#) requires that decision-makers have regard to climate change.
- The [Local Government Act 2020](#) requires local governments to plan for climate change risks.

Council declared Climate Emergency on 12 September 2018. In doing so we acknowledged that climate change is a threat to us and our future, and we committed to urgent action.

In 2020, Council requested an independent audit of our climate adaptation action (Crowe, November 2020). This Audit found that while there was a record of climate adaptation action, Council needs to better plan and coordinate its efforts. It recommended we develop a strategic approach to climate adaptation, risk and resilience, supported by a strong action plan.

Council drivers

The Strategy will work towards the [Community Vision](#), in particular:

Council and community working together proactively and transparently to continue to create a vibrant, safe, healthy, resilient, innovative, and regenerative community.

It is also our delivery mechanism for [Council Plan 2021 - 2025](#) Strategy 3.3, to:

Strategically invest in Council's community services and assets to increase our resilience and adapt to climate change risks and impacts that are now unavoidable (such as severe heatwaves, flash flooding, unreliable rainfall).

And it contributes to achieving Council Plan Strategic Objective 3, namely:

To support Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community through providing equitable access to community facilities and services,

facilitating local partnerships and programs, mitigating the effects of climate change and supporting the community to adapt and build climate resilience.

The Strategy also supports achieving Council Plan Strategic Objective 1:

To strive for maximum protection of people's health, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment.

Shared responsibility

Climate risk poses a huge challenge that is far beyond the resources and scope of any one local government. The risks from climate change impacts us at national, state and regional levels, down to the households and individual. Interdependencies between these scales and levels of government mean that adaptation must be a shared responsibility.

The Federal Government's [National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021-2025](#) includes plans to:

- Drive investment and action through collaboration - The effective delivery of this objective is vital to support local government climate adaptation action.
- Improve climate information and services - Council depends on the CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology to provide us with timely and locally relevant climate change projections to understand the type of future we must plan for.

The Victorian Government has also released [Victoria's Climate Change Strategy](#), which outlines its adaptation priorities to 2025. Of these, action on sustainable adaptation finance is critical for local governments. The State Government is better placed to work with large insurers and financiers to address gaps in insurance coverage and develop approaches to finance adaptation action.

The State Government has developed regional adaptation strategies to support coordinated regional action. The [Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Greater Melbourne](#) outlines key priority action areas to guide local action to address the unique challenges and opportunities climate change creates for Greater Melbourne. Financial support is vital for local governments to effectively deliver the scale of practical activities necessary to implement the regional adaptation strategy.

The State Government has prepared [Adaptation Action Plans for systems vulnerable to climate change](#) impacts or essential to ensure Victoria is prepared. Council adaptation action will be informed by plans for the Built Environment, Health and Human Services, Transport, Natural Environment, and the Water Cycle.

Human Rights and climate justice

In July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly declared that everyone on the planet has a right to a healthy environment. The General Assembly said that climate change and environmental degradation were some of the most pressing threats to humanity's future. This follows the UN Human Rights Council declaring in April 2022 access to a "clean, healthy and sustainable environment" a human right.

Climate change does not affect everyone equally (Figure 3). Council recognises that climate change is as much a symptom of inequality as it is a force that exacerbates it.

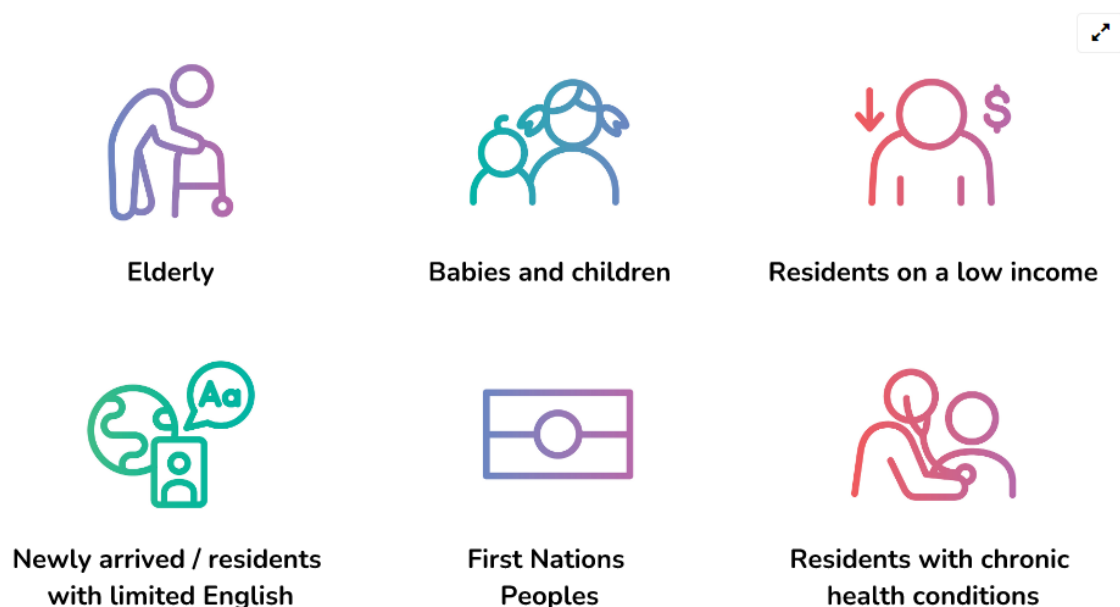


Figure 3. Examples of groups at greater risk

Consistent with our Human Rights Policy (2022), Council's approach to climate adaptation and resilience building will embed a strong focus on promoting social justice, social equity and inclusion.

The Strategy

The Climate Risk Strategy establishes a framework for Council to manage climate risk, drive adaptation action and build resilience. It envisages that by 2040, Council and community will be climate-ready and resilient. This Vision will be delivered through five Goals around:

1. Managing climate risk
2. Built and natural environments
3. Community services
4. Community and business
5. Partnership approaches.

The objectives under these Goals use the **hazard-exposure-vulnerability** model of climate risk (Figure 4) to deliver on outcomes. This approach helps understand the source of climate risk and proactively prioritise, prepare and plan for it.

- **Hazards** are potential natural or human-induced events, trends or physical impacts that might cause damage (e.g., loss of life, injury and other health impacts, as well as damage and loss to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, services and ecosystems)
- **Exposure** is the presence of things we value in places or settings that might be impacted by a hazard. These include people, livelihoods, species or ecosystems, environmental functions, services and resources, infrastructure, or economic, social, or cultural assets.
- **Vulnerability** describes how susceptible the things we value are to adverse impacts from hazards. It includes a variety of concepts including sensitivity and inability to cope and adapt.

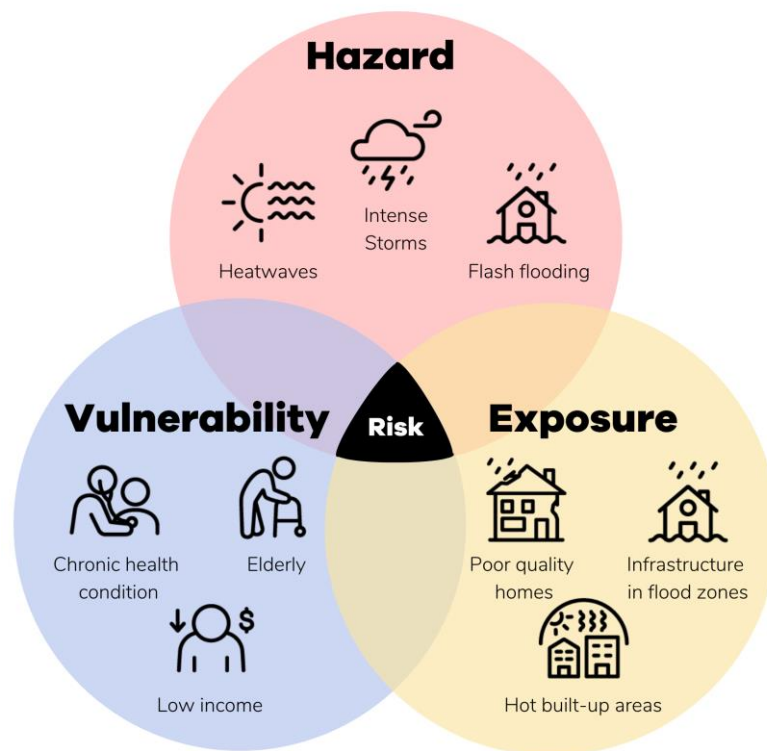


Figure 4. Hazard-exposure-vulnerability model of climate risk

Using this approach supports Council in making decisions about how best to manage climate risk across a range of possible climate futures. This includes:

The future is uncertain, so climate change adaptation requires an iterative risk management process (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The Strategy supports regularly reviewing changing climate risks and making best-value decisions to manage them.

The Goals propose ongoing iterative processes to:

- Gather data and scope risks
- Analyse and evaluate risks and options
- Implement and review projects
- Learn from implemented projects when planning future actions.

The iterative cycle of climate risk planning and review will be aligned to the Council planning cycle.

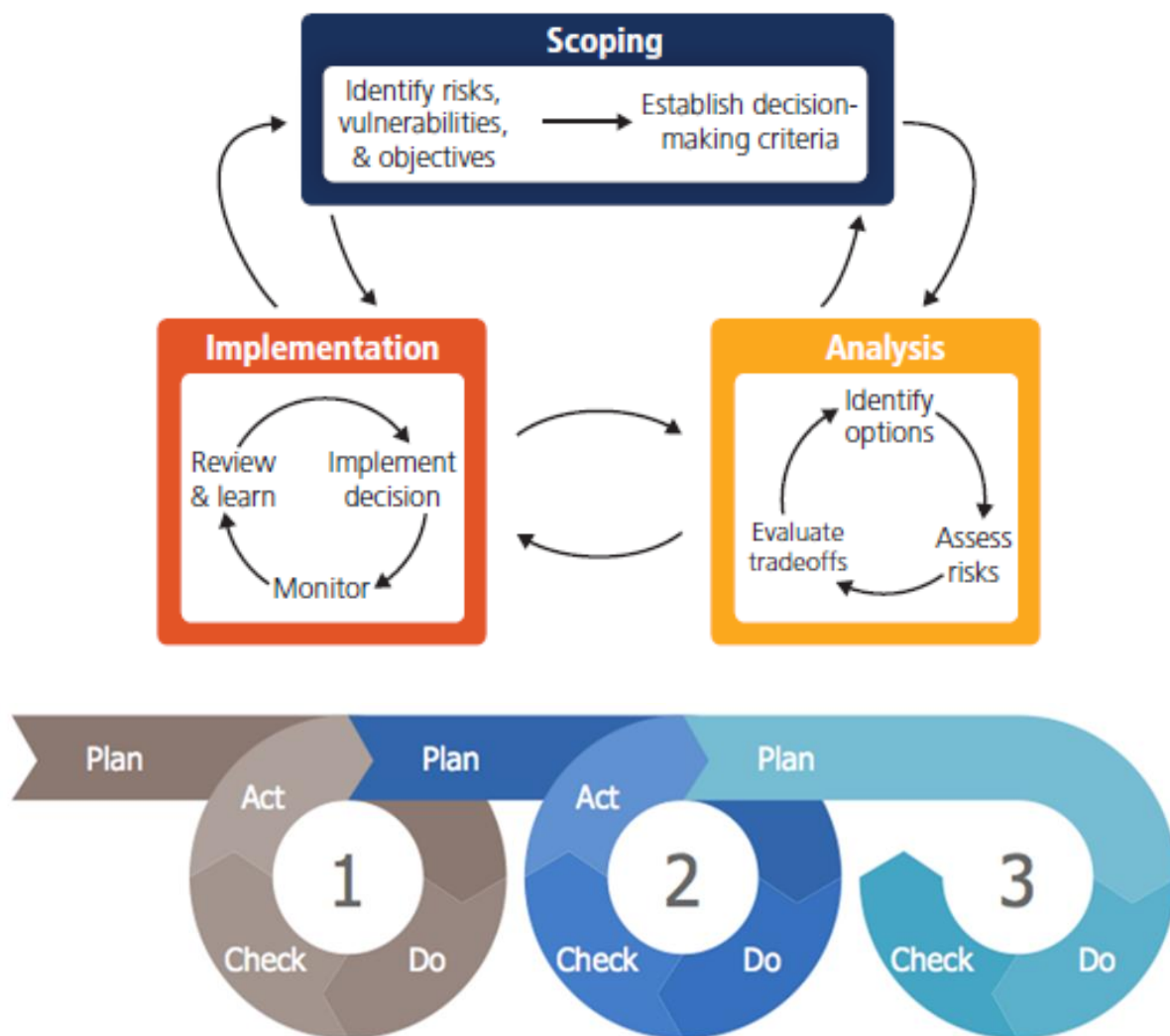


Figure 5. Managing climate risk is an iterative process (IPCC WGII AR5 and Deming E.W.)

The systems proposed through the Goals will also allow Council and community to use an 'adaptation pathways' approach to consider and respond to ongoing climate risk (Figure 6). Adaptation pathways help develop and iterate plans for achieving the Vision, even in an uncertain future, by prioritising, preparing and planning for important decisions. This approach helps reduce unnecessary expenditure by focusing on the intended outcome and using appropriate information to make the most cost-effective decision each point in time.

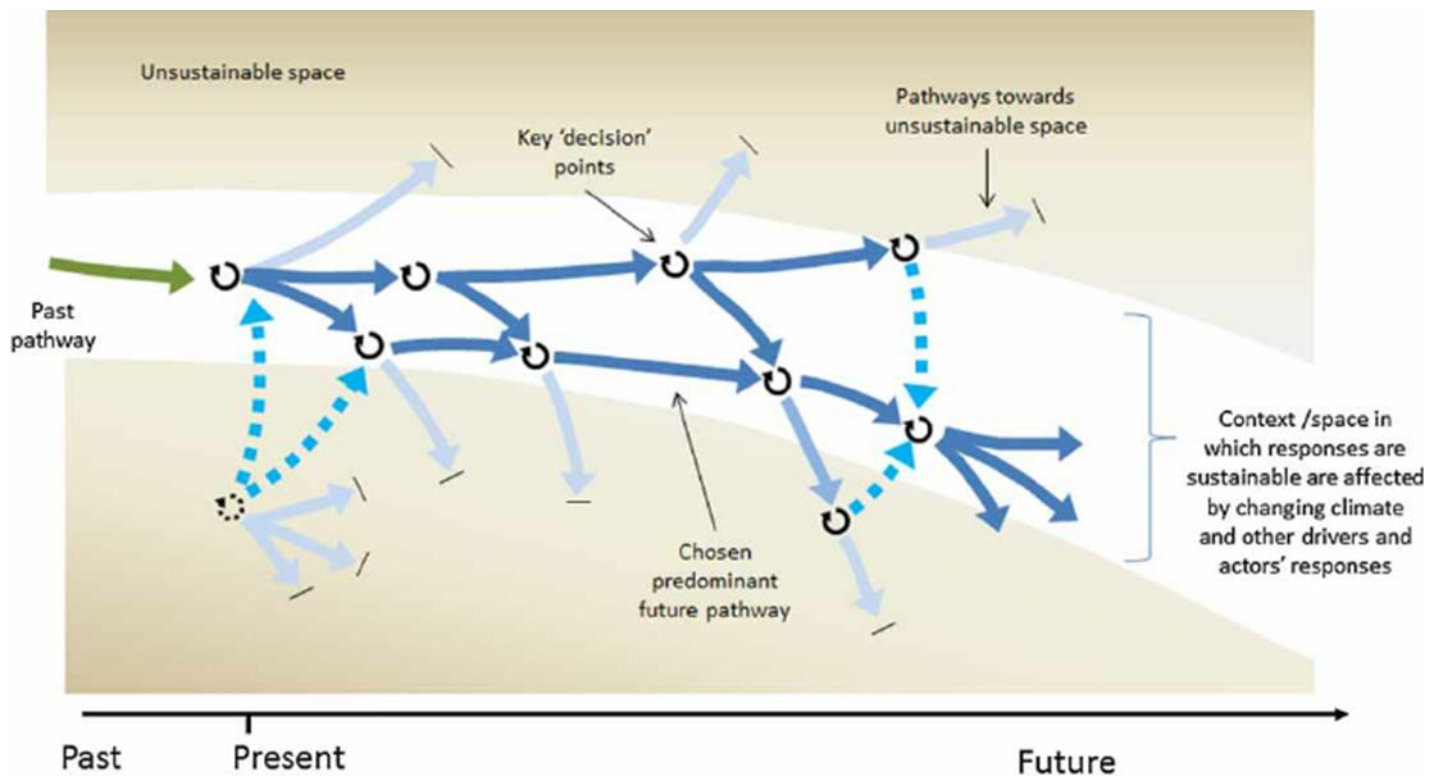


Figure 6. Adaptation pathways (Fazey et al, 2015)

Community Stories

"I come from the Pacific and our staple diet is taro, which is a good crop that grows under the ground. We eat it every day. We eat the entire plant – roots and leaves. We can't buy taro here in Melbourne, so people from Fiji grow it in their garden.

I've been growing taro here for 20 years...but I've noticed in the last four or five years, the leaves are curling up and burning in the summer heat, so it's no use to me. In the Pacific, people depend on this for their staple diet. If this continues, people will have problems, and this is what's happening in my garden now. I had no problems and then suddenly I can't use it."

Member of Aged Friendly Reference Group

"I think one of the issues, particularly in Brunswick where I live, is the large number of very tall buildings made out of concrete. Building developers seem to have no requirement for green spaces. I think there's a need for more trees, more shade and the council really needs to push for that, especially to make requirements of all developers that they provide some green space."

Member of Aged Friendly Reference Group

This is a housing issue. If people are renters, they don't ask their landlords to insulate and draft resist and all that sort of stuff, because they don't want their rent to go through the roof. They just put up with bad surroundings where they live.

Local resident

"I've weatherproofed my house, it just means I have to stay home in summer, which is when you want to be out gardening and walking. I'm grateful I won't get built out because I live in a conservation area. We've got lots of trees and council's planted more trees in the park, which is brilliant, but it's not like that for everybody. It's a big and immediate issue, I guess, is what I'm saying. It has huge costs associated, which on an age pension, is no joke."

Member of Aged Friendly Reference Group

"I was only getting around on my push bike... it was so hot that I feared my tyres were going to melt. I was perspiring so heavily by the time I crossed Merri Creek and got to Sydney Road, that was all I could take. Eventually I went into a shop that was airconditioned and I asked for a drink as an excuse to stay there."

Member of Aged Friendly Reference Group

Goal 1 – Managing climate risk

By 2025, Council has iterative risk management, reporting and decision-making processes in place to manage climate-related risk to assets, service delivery, finances and liabilities.

To effectively manage climate risk and deliver adaptation outcomes, Council requires effective internal processes to understand the risk and integrate it into organisational decision-making. These systems are foundational to prioritising, identifying, and planning climate adaptation action across the other four goals. Hence, this Goal should be delivered by 2025.

In line with the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), Council will establish processes to actively monitor and transparently report on climate risk. Council will also build capacity and capability to provide services under climate change through workforce training and planning systems.

OBJECTIVES and desired Outcomes	
1.1	TO IMPROVE COUNCIL UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANISATIONAL AND COMMUNITY CLIMATE CHANGE RISK <u>EXPOSURE</u> AND <u>VULNERABILITY</u>, BASED ON HIGH-QUALITY INFORMATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE <u>HAZARDS</u>
1.1.1	Council officers have access to climate change scenarios, and locally relevant climate projections and data, to inform decision-making, asset design, service delivery, environmental management, risk and vulnerability assessment and monitoring.
1.1.2	Council officers and decision-makers understand the likely range of possible future climate change impacts on the municipality, including sudden shocks and long-term stressors, and know how to use this information to appropriately inform decision-making.
1.1.3	<p>Council decision-making is informed by established tools and processes to regularly monitor, review and evaluate, the changing exposure and vulnerability of infrastructure, open spaces, natural environments, and community services, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - physical and structural risks associated with climate hazards, - risks to their functional performance as a result of climate change, and - transition and liability risks arising from Council's response to climate change. <p><i>Building on 1.1.1 and 1.1.2</i></p>
1.1.4	<p>Council officers and decision-makers understand and use appropriate data, tools and approaches, including climate change projections, scenario planning and business continuity planning, to understand how climate change is likely to impact the delivery of council services at different timescales, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ability of council to deliver the service, - The ability of the community to access the services, and - Increases or decreases in demand for services, or the need for entirely new services. <p><i>Building on 1.1.1 and 1.1.2</i></p>
1.1.5	<p>Council monitors and understands the changing exposure and vulnerability of the Merri-bek community, residents and businesses (especially vulnerable cohorts) to the risks and impacts of climate change, regularly reviews this through established processes (such as the Risk Register) and forward scans for new and emerging risks.</p> <p><i>Related to 1.1.3</i></p>

1.2	TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ON PRIORITISING, PREPARING FOR AND PROACTIVELY ADDRESSING CLIMATE RISK, DRIVING CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND BUILDING RESILIENCE
1.2.1	Council design, delivery and management of its infrastructure, open spaces, natural environments, and community services is informed by an understanding of the level of climate-related financial and liability risk it is willing to tolerate; Council actively limits the creation of future financial risk.
1.2.2	Council has embedded clear and transparent tools for considering climate adaptation implications and trade-offs in decision-making across its infrastructure, open spaces, natural environments, and service provision functions. <i>Building on 1.1.4 and 1.2.1</i>
1.3	TO IMPROVE MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION OF CLIMATE RISKS AND ADAPTATION ACTION TO BETTER INFORM INVESTMENT DECISIONS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION
1.3.1	Council officers actively monitor and evaluate the outcomes of adaptation action against new and emerging climate risks to its infrastructure, open spaces, natural environments and community services. Council has embedded a culture of evaluation and learning which influences and informs climate change adaptation decision-making. <i>Building on 1.1.3, 1.2.1</i>
1.3.2	Council officers actively monitor climate adaptation support provided to residents and businesses, including through Zero Carbon Merri-bek community engagement.
1.4	TO IMPROVE THE PROACTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE MANAGEMENT OF CLIMATE-RELATED LIABILITY AND FINANCIAL RISK WITHIN THE ORGANISATION
1.4.1	Council effectively integrates climate risk and opportunity into financial management and strategic planning processes to manage the impacts of climate change on the organisation. <i>Building on 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4 and 1.2.1</i>
1.4.2	Council is transparent in its accountability for climate-related risks and regularly reports on them within our organisation and to the community. <i>Building on 1.1.3, 1.1.4, 1.3.1 and 1.4.1</i>
1.5	TO IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF OUR WORKFORCE TO DELIVER PRIORITY SERVICES WHILE RESPONDING TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE
1.5.1	Council officers and decision-makers have the training, knowledge and capability to make critical decisions informed by current and probable future climate contexts. <i>Related to 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4</i>
1.5.2	Council workforce planning is used to proactively manage officer safety, wellbeing and workloads in response to the challenges posed by climate change.

Related strategies and initiatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary disclosures in line with the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Risk - 10-year Financial Plan - 4-year Budget - Procurement Policy 2021-25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Transparency Policy - Enterprise Risk Management Policy - Thermal Comfort Policy - Occupational Health and Safety Policy - Heat Management Procedure - Bushfire Smoke Hazards Procedure

Goal 2 – Built and natural environments

By 2030, Council has improved the ability of its infrastructure, open spaces and natural environments to avoid, withstand and recover from climate impacts, while continuing to provide for community wellbeing, amenity and ecosystem services.

Built and natural environments define how urban populations experience climate change. The Urban Heat Island Effect exacerbates the severity of increasingly high temperatures and heatwaves for urban populations while reduced rainfall limits the establishment and retention of tree cover.

Climate change can impact on Council's ability to provide effective services, and community members ability to access those services. Managing Council's built and natural environments therefore requires understanding the service delivery purpose of Council facilities, e.g. maternal and child health services require facilities that are safely accessible during extreme weather and which are comfortable for staff, mothers and new babies.

"I have noticed that at the peak of summer, I tend to avoid streets that offer little shading/tree coverage. Temperatures are noticeably hotter on streets where there is less greenery."

Local resident (online comment)

Natural environments and open spaces are critical for urban amenity under climate change as they provide ecosystem services such as shade, water retention and cool transit corridors. These areas also support diverse plant and animal species and community wellbeing. Effective Council action is necessary to maintain and improve these spaces under climate change.

OBJECTIVES and desired Outcomes

2.1 TO IMPROVE THE CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE OF NEW AND EXISTING HIGH-PRIORITY COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF COUNCIL SERVICES

- 2.1.1 Council understands the changing climate-related risk, vulnerability and exposure of its infrastructure, open spaces and natural environments, has prioritised these and is developing and implementing appropriate responses.
Building on 1.1.3 and 1.1.4
- 2.1.2 Based on Council's risk tolerance, highest priority council services, centres, hubs and leased properties are built, adapted and operated to remain accessible, safe and serviceable during chronic and extreme weather events, including high heat days.
Building on 1.1.4, 1.2.1 and 1.3.1
- 2.1.3 Council's new designs and developments, as well as upgrades and retrofits of existing priority infrastructure, contribute to the climate resilience of the community and the services those assets support, in line with Council's risk tolerance.
Building on 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.2.1 and 1.3.1
- 2.1.4 Council has established processes to rapidly recover from climate impacts to its infrastructure, open spaces and natural environments, learn from these experiences and rebuild to a better adapted state.
Building on 1.3.1

2.2 TO IMPROVE THE CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE OF NEW AND EXISTING HIGH-PRIORITY COUNCIL OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL

ENVIRONMENTS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY WELLBEING, DELIVER ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, AND PROTECT PLANT AND ANIMAL HEALTH.

- 2.2.1 Council designs its open spaces to contribute to local cooling and flood risk mitigation, to reduce community exposure to climate impacts, especially heat, and to improve climate-related community health and wellbeing outcomes.
Building on 1.1.4, 1.1.6 and 1.2.1
- 2.2.2 Council designs and manages its open spaces and natural environments to withstand and function under hotter, drier conditions, as well as higher flood risk conditions, while fostering biodiversity and ecosystem services.
Building on 1.1.3 and 1.1.4

Related strategies and initiatives

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 - Asset Management Policy - Developing and implementing a 10-year Asset Plan - Drainage Asset Management Strategy - Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan - Urban Forest Strategy - Open Space Strategy - Community Infrastructure Plan - Zero Carbon Merri-bek – Climate Emergency Action Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature Plan - Park Close to Home Framework - Towards a Water Sensitive City - Cooling the Upfield Corridor - Action Plan - Sustainable (Council) Buildings Policy - Victorian Built Environment Adaptation action plan - Victorian Natural Environment Adaptation Action Plan - Victorian Water Cycle Adaptation Action Plan |
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Goal 3 – Community services

By 2030, Council services are resilient to climate impacts such that we can support our community through the shocks and stressors associated with climate change.

Council Plan Strategic Objective 3.3 recognises the importance of effective climate change adaptation to delivering health and wellbeing outcomes to the Merri-bek community. Aging people, young children and vulnerable persons are the most severely impacted by climate change, with potential for significant health impacts and even death. Climate change is also likely to contribute to poor mental health and increase the vulnerability of sections of the broader population. In combination, the demand for Councils' community services is likely to increase, while the provision of these services will become more challenging through chronic and extreme events.

The demand placed on Council's emergency management functions is already increasing in response to more frequent and severe weather events. Proactive planning is necessary to allow Council to continue delivering these services as demand increases, while also providing support to neighbouring local governments through partnerships arrangements.

"I can recall my whereabouts on Black Saturday. I was at the Cramer Street Library in Preston. The library was full to the brink because of the air conditioning. You could lie on the floor if you wanted to... There were announcements made into the afternoon on the whereabouts of the cool change."

Member of Aged Friendly Reference Group

OBJECTIVES and desired Outcomes

3.1 TO BUILD THE RESILIENCE OF ESSENTIAL COUNCIL SERVICES TO ENSURE SERVICE CONTINUITY THROUGH CHRONIC AND EXTREME CLIMATE EVENTS

- 3.1.1 Council understands the community's changing vulnerability to climate impacts, has prioritised these and is developing and implementing appropriate responses through its services.
Building on 1.1.5, 1.2.1, and 1.3.1.
- 3.1.2 Council's business continuity, service resilience and disaster recovery planning include provision of prioritised services through acute, chronic, sustained and compound climate events, in line with the organisational risk tolerance statement and climate scenarios.
Building on 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 1.2.1 and 1.3.1
- 3.1.3 Council undertakes medium/long-term service planning based on a range of climate scenarios and expected changes in the demand on services in these plausible futures.
Building on 1.1.4, 1.3.1 and 3.1.1

3.2 TO IMPROVE COUNCIL'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CAPACITY IN LINE WITH PREPAREDNESS FOR LIKELY FUTURE CLIMATE CHANGE EVENTS

- 3.2.1 Council integrates and draws on climate scenarios, climate change projections and adaptation planning approaches to ensure its emergency planning and preparedness accounts for future climate change impacts and responds to the needs of the most vulnerable.
Building on 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4
- 3.2.2 Council has established processes to rapidly recover from climate events that draw on our emergency management capability, learn from these and rebuild to a better adapted state.
Building on 1.3.3 and 1.3.4

Related strategies and initiatives

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Municipal Emergency Management Plan- Human Rights Policy- Social Cohesion Plan- Community Infrastructure Plan- Children, Young People and Families Plan- Living and Aging Well Framework- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Early Years Infrastructure Plan- Aquatic and Leisure Strategy 2018 -2038- Victorian Health and Human Services Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2022-2026- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019 -2023 |
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Goal 4 – Community and business

By 2030, Merri-bek residents and businesses have access to relevant and appropriate information and support from Council to take meaningful action to adapt and build resilience to climate change.

Council recognises that communities and businesses face significant and increasing challenges due to climate change and other emerging risks. Understanding these challenges and having access to appropriate support can help drive community and business climate adaptation. Council action can empower individuals to make effective choices to reduce their exposure to climate risk and build resilience.

“Vulnerable people in the community seem more concerned about extreme weather. They are worried about how to cope on extreme days.

Conversations are about ‘preparing for’ rather than ‘enjoying’ the season.”

Member of Aged Friendly Reference Group

Climate resilience for communities and businesses is a function of social and economic factors, as well as environmental ones. Resilient communities are highly connected, equitable and just. Building the climate resilience of Merri-bek’s community is therefore closely tied to the effective delivery of Council’s work to protect and enhance human rights, local affordable housing, resilient food systems and social cohesion. These outcomes underpin people’s sense of safety, belonging and

willingness to help one another, all of which support resilience.

OBJECTIVES and desired Outcomes	
4.1	TO SUPPORT AND EMPOWER THE MERRI-BEK COMMUNITY, AND BUSINESSES, IN IDENTIFYING HOW THEY ARE IMPACTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE, NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE, AND IN ACTING TO PROACTIVELY MANAGE THESE IMPACTS
4.1.1	Council understands the barriers and challenges Merri-bek residents face in adapting to climate change and building resilience. <i>Building on 1.1.5, and 1.2.2 Related to 3.1.1</i>
4.1.2	Council works with partners and provides appropriate support to Merri-bek residents and community, especially vulnerable cohorts, to empower them in proactively adapting to climate change and building resilience. <i>Building on 1.1.5 and 5.1.2 Related to 3.1.1</i>
4.2	TO RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SUPPORT COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH A COORDINATED CLIMATE COMMUNICATION APPROACH
4.2.1	Council implements a comprehensive climate communications plan to support community and business.
4.2.2	Council officers and programs provide locally relevant climate change information to residents and businesses in an appropriate and accessible manner to reduce information and knowledge barriers. <i>Building on 1.1.1, 1.1.5, 4.1.2 and 4.2.1</i>

Related strategies and initiatives

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Social Cohesion Plan- Human Rights Policy (2022)- Gender Equality Statement- Social Cohesion Plan (2021 – 2025)- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (2021 – 2025)- Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities- Later Years Strategy- Library Services Strategy- Living and Aging Well Framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Economic Development Strategy- Industrial Land Use Strategy- Affordable Housing Action Plan- Establishment of a Northern Food Hub- Food Systems Strategy- Community Engagement Policy- Develop a Child and Youth Engagement Framework- Accessible and Inclusive Communications Policy- Community Engagement and Public Participation Policy- Social Media Policy |
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Goal 5 – Partnership approaches

By 2030, Council collaborates with and influences a range of private, community and public sector partners to drive adaptation and build climate resilience in Merri-bek.

Climate change will create significant challenges for Council; overcoming these will require coordinated action by a range of stakeholders. For instance, reducing and responding to the Urban Heat Island Effect is vital as it increases heat stress and can severely impact more vulnerable communities. Private landowners, developers, property managers and the State Government all have roles to play in increasing canopy cover and reducing heat absorbing surfaces (e.g., concrete, asphalt, brick walls). Climate change also impacts water availability. Combatting this requires close cooperation between different councils, water companies and State Government.

Council has an opportunity to influence climate resilience outcomes through its engagement with stakeholders and partners. Advocacy efforts can be used to improve outcomes for aged people, young children and diverse communities through State-based housing, transport, and health services. Council's own policies and requirements can change the climate responses of the organisations it funds and works with, as well as its suppliers.

"We've noticed more extreme weather each year. Storms, very hot nights...all these impact our residents, who have complex medical needs and are aged and frail. They also impact our staff, preventing them from making it to work some days."

Community service provider

OBJECTIVES and desired Outcomes

5.1 TO WORK WITH PARTNERS TO EFFECTIVELY DRIVE CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE IN THE MERRI-BEK COMMUNITY

5.1.1 Council works with our partners and the organisations we fund, across community services and the built and natural environment, to:

- Reduce their climate risk,
- Reduce climate risks to the goods and services they provide, and
- Build their climate resilience.

Related to 1.3.2

5.1.2 Council actively partners with community organisations and leaders to build Merri-bek's climate resilience.

5.1.3 Council works with developers, landowners and residents to drive climate adaptation and resilience on private land.

Dependent on 1.1.4

5.1.4 Council collaborates with regional and State partners, and other stakeholders, to build and leverage systems and processes to manage and respond to climate-related risk at the regional scale efficiently and effectively.

5.2 TO INFLUENCE OTHER ACTORS TO DRIVE WELLBEING, CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE OUTCOMES FOR THE MERRI-BEK COMMUNITY

5.2.1 Council advocates to and influences other levels of government and service providers to improve the provision of services that support climate resilience of the community, and particularly to vulnerable community members (e.g. services that influence health and transport outcomes for aging people).

5.3	TO WORK WITH PROVIDERS OF GOODS AND SERVICES TO IMPROVE CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE IN THE MERRI-BEK COMMUNITY
5.3.1	Council collaborates on procurement with regional and State partners, and other stakeholders, to create scale that leverages efficient and effective responses to climate-related risk.
5.3.2	Council's procurement policy drivers our contractors to provide climate-resilient standard offerings

Related strategies and initiatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) - Climate Emergency Australia - Cities Power Partnership - Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) - Climate Active - ICLEI Oceania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better Futures Australia - Chain of Ponds Collaboration - Greening the West - Neighbours United for Climate Action - Merri Creek Management Committee

Governance

Developing, integrating and iterating climate risk, adaptation and resilience in Council is a long-term process that needs its own governance arrangements.

Within Council, the Climate Resilience Integration Board (CRIB), has been established to coordinate and develop the Strategy and associated Action Plan. The CRIB is responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Strategy
- Integrating the Strategy with other strategic processes in Council
- Supporting securing resourcing for developing and implementing the Strategy
- Facilitating cross-organisational participation in delivering the outcomes of the Strategy
- Ensuring delivery of the Strategy in line with Council governance and fraud prevention policies.

The CRIB is also responsible for driving the effective integration of climate risk and resilience in Council strategies, policies, projects and service delivery approaches, including by:

- Reporting on progress to Executive, the Audit and Risk Committee and Council.
- Providing governance for and actively managing the Climate Emergency Strategic Risk.
- Giving effect to the agreed recommendations of the Audit.
- Working to improve the quality of voluntary climate risk disclosures in annual reports.
- Taking actions to manage risk in line with the climate risk tolerance statement.
- Providing quarterly updates to the Risk Management Committee.
- Developing the awareness and capacity of CRIB members and staff leaders to proactively manage climate risks and build resilience within their service area.
- Engaging with external experts and organisations working in similar areas to inform the continuing evolution of Merri-bek's approach.
- The CRIB will also ensure the alignment of its climate change adaptation, risk and resilience work with mitigation action being undertaken through the Zero Carbon Merri-bek program.

CRIB membership is composed of:

- Director, Place and Environment (CRIB Chair), Owner - Climate Emergency Strategic Risk
- Director City Infrastructure
- Director Business Transformation
- Director Community
- Chief Financial Officer
- Manager, Governance and Strategy
- Manager, Sustainability and Climate.

3-year Foundational Action Plan

To progress towards the high-level Goals, Objectives and desired Outcomes identified in the Strategy, an initial 3-year action plan will drive:

- improved understanding of Council and community's current climate risk**
 - defining the level of risk Council is financially able to bear**
 - processes to equitably prioritise addressing risks within financial constraints.**
-

Delivering the Strategy will require understanding and prioritising Council's climate-related risks and designing and implementing actions to address them. Council needs appropriate information gathering, risk assessment and decision-making processes in place to do this effectively.

The first 3 years (with 2022/23 being the first 'foundational year') of delivering the Strategy will primarily focus on developing foundational information, tools, and decision-making frameworks under Goal One to support us in understanding:

- What climate change means for Merri-bek under different climate scenarios
- The nature and extent of climate risk to Council infrastructure, open spaces, natural environments and community services
- The nature and extent of climate risk to the Merri-bek community, residents and businesses
- Council's tolerance for climate-related financial and liability risk
- Where Council's climate resilience priorities should lie
- How we identify the most cost-effective investments with the greatest climate resilience pay-offs and environmental and social benefits for Council and community.

These foundational actions will establish iterative risk management processes that will support Council in managing climate risk and adapting to climate change. The foundational actions will also allow Council and community to use an adaptation pathways approach to plan our ongoing climate risk response.

Implementing these foundational actions may reveal time-critical, high-likelihood and high impact climate risks. In the event this happens, these will be prioritised for consideration by the CRIB and may be referred to Executive and Council to address.

Adaptation and resilience actions also offer opportunities to maximise environmental and social benefits such as improved quality of urban biodiversity and waterways, carbon storage potential, positive health outcomes, and increased community safety. They support the impacts and effectiveness of other strategies and plans to deliver benefits to the community, such as the Urban Forest Strategy, Living and Aging Well Framework, Nature Plan and other strategies and policies by ensuring that these are implemented in ways that account for and manage climate risks. On-ground action to drive adaptation and climate resilience will continue through these and other programs while the foundational systems to deliver the Strategy are established.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The Strategy will be monitored, evaluated and reported against progress and outcome indicators, and case studies of achievements. This will build a shared understanding of Council and community's changing climate risk and will support iterative review and planning.

Monitoring and reporting on the Strategy will include:

1. Annual reporting on the Action Plan.
2. Quarterly and annual reporting on the actions and outcomes by the Climate Risk Working Group to monitor progress towards the objectives.
3. Annual review and appropriate revision of the Action Plan in response to emerging trends, new information and changing priorities.
4. Refreshing the Strategy and Action Plan in 2024/25 in line with the next Council Plan.

Reporting	Purpose	2025 high-level indicators
Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To update the CRIB on progress delivering the Strategy and Action Plan - Monitoring and reporting to support responsive management of emerging issues - To develop effective climate risk data collection, monitoring and evaluation systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress against Strategy and Action Plan - Progress establishing processes to monitor and report on climate risks and emerging issues, including establishing a balanced scorecard approach to monitoring and reporting
Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To update the Executive and Council on implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan and progress toward goals - To prioritise, plan and fund projects and programs identified in the Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress against Strategy and Action Plan - Tools and processes established to effectively and iteratively manage climate risk - Information is available to effectively prioritise, prepare, plan and fund forward actions
2024/25 evaluation of the Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate the success of the Strategy and initial Action Plan - Identify and prioritise actions for inclusion in the next Action Plan - Develop the next Action Plan in line with the Council planning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress against Strategy and Action Plan - Usability and utility of the tools and processes established to monitor, evaluate and report on climate risk - Impact of greater climate risk awareness and information on organisational decision-making - Quality of information available to effectively prioritise, prepare, plan and fund the next Action Plan