



CENTRAL VICTORIAN  
**Greenhouse Alliance**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2022-27

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**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2022–27

Our new 2022-2027 strategic plan will guide the direction of the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA) into its 3rd decade of existence.

21 years of regional collaboration on climate change and sustainability is a remarkable achievement worthy of reflection and celebration. It demonstrates the commitment by member councils involved in the alliance. It is notable that the CVGA was the first of the greenhouse alliances, a model that has now grown to cover most local governments across Victoria and been recognised as a global best practice model for addressing climate change.

The next 10 years will be an exciting time for the CVGA, as the region rises to the significant challenges and opportunities in tackling climate change. For example, our region is in the midst of a renewable energy boom and CVGA is well placed to help guide this transition for our councils and communities.

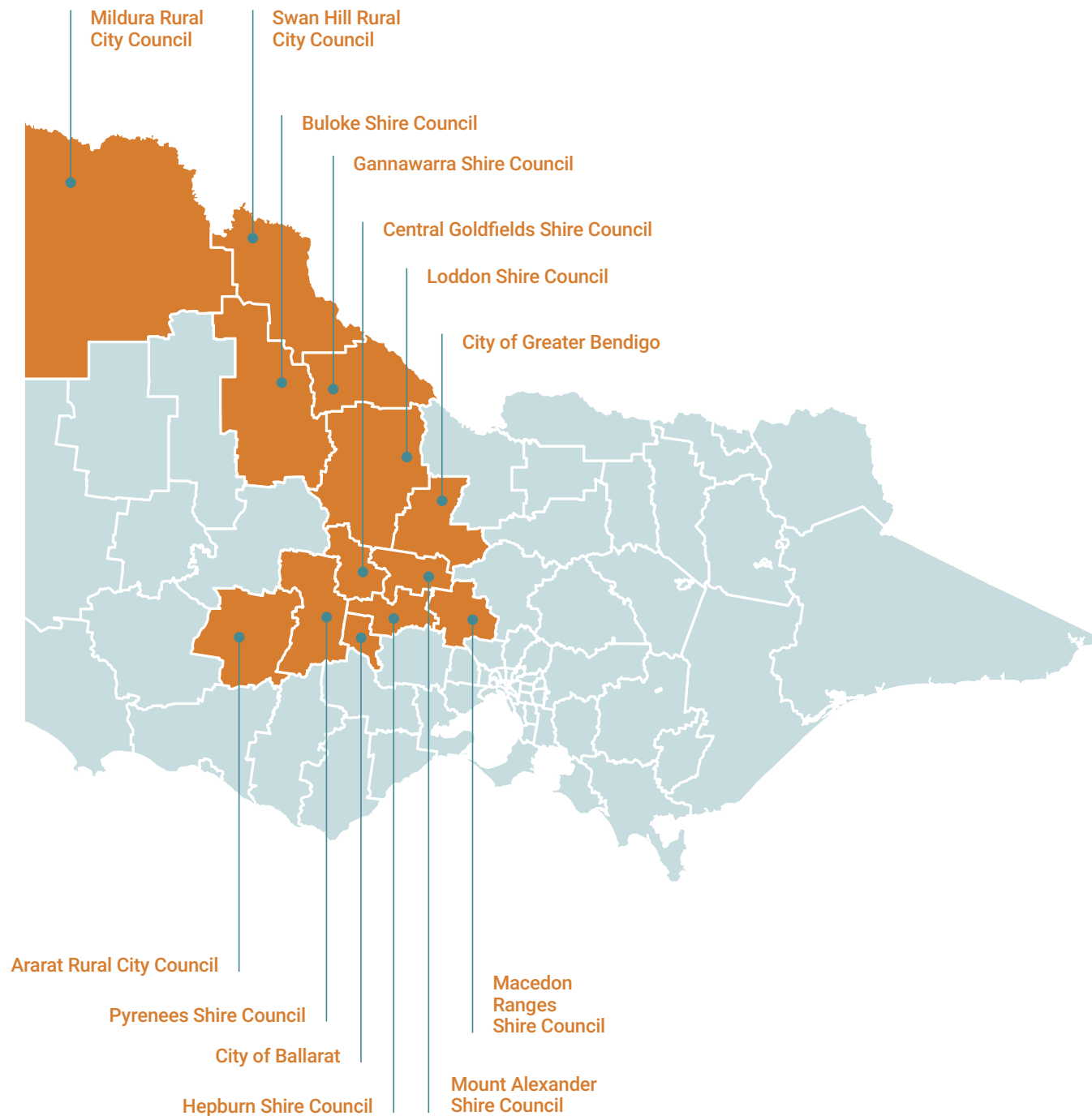
Through collaboration and partnerships, we will strive to address key sources of greenhouse gas emissions in our region across a range of sectors. CVGA is also committed to helping our communities thrive and become more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate and uncertain futures. I look forward to working with our members and collaborators to achieve our vision and ambitions for the region.



**Cr. Dr. Jen Alden**  
CVGA Chair

Message  
from our Chair

The CVGA represents a formal partnership of 13 local governments who have chosen to work together to address the challenges of climate change. **Our members are:**



Who  
we are

The CVGA develops and implements innovative regional projects, undertakes advocacy on climate and energy policy, shares knowledge and promotes best practice across our region.

## Vision

Our region is climate positive by 2035 and prepared for the impacts of climate change

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## Mission

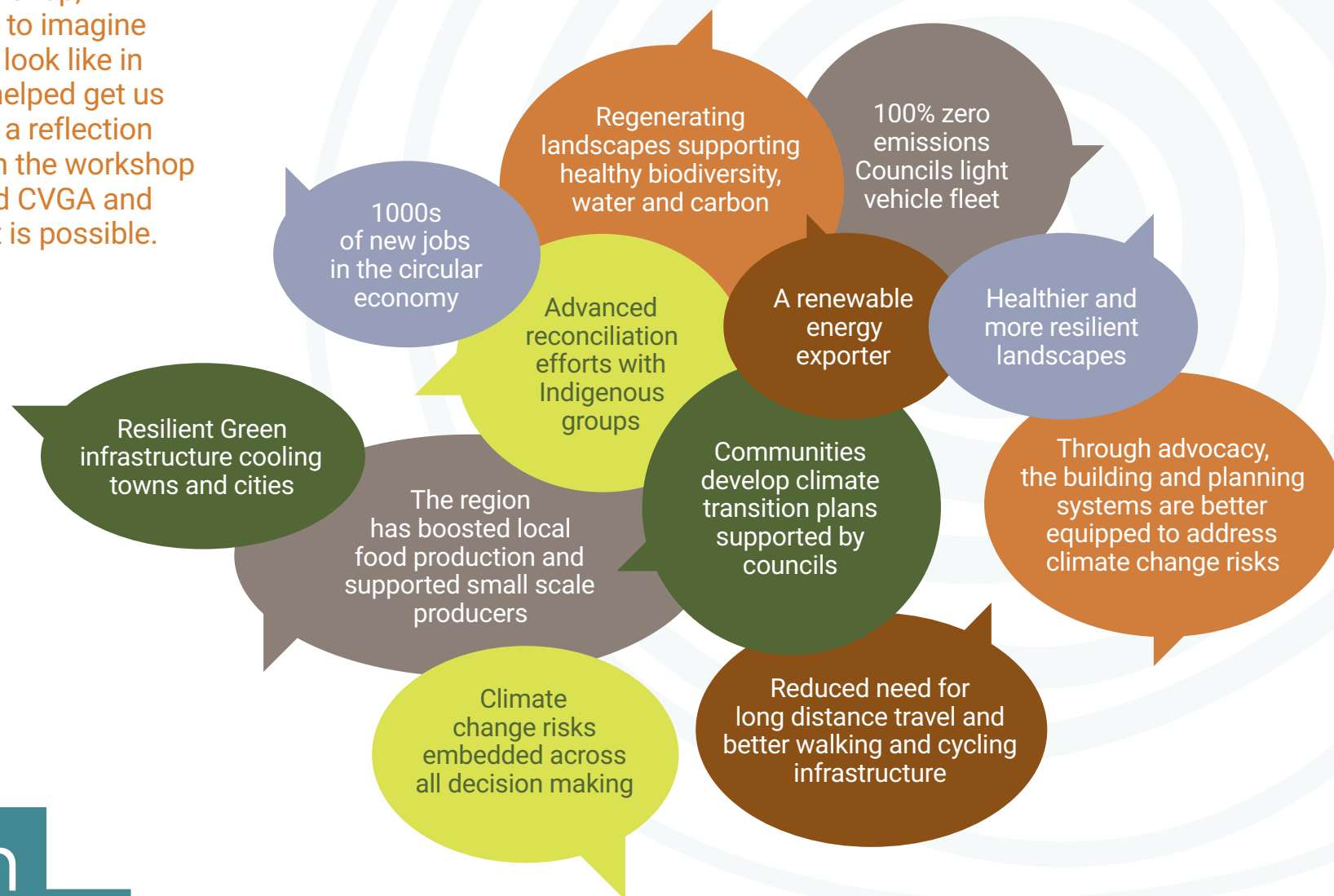
CVGA will lead and support collaborative action by its member councils to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and increase the resilience and adaptive capacity of the region's communities through innovative projects, advocacy and knowledge sharing.

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Our  
purpose

*Climate positive means that an activity goes beyond achieving net zero carbon emissions to actually create an environmental benefit by removing additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.*

During a planning workshop, members were invited to imagine what our region might look like in 2035 and how CVGA helped get us there. The following is a reflection of the aspirations from the workshop by the people who lead CVGA and gives insight into what is possible.



## Our Region in 2035 – what if?

Our region is climate positive by 2035 and prepared for the impacts of climate change.

The CVGA has made a significant impact through its projects, advocacy and knowledge sharing.

According to an impact review undertaken by First Person Consulting, the CVGA has delivered the following benefits to its members during the last strategic plan period;

Net financial savings  
for CVGA councils in  
the order of

**\$9.3 million**

Facilitated

**\$6.6 million**

in financial savings  
for CVGA households  
and businesses  
through our energy  
programs

Leveraged

**\$3.5 million**

in grants and  
a further

**\$400,000**

in project  
co-contributions

Contributed to  
expected emission  
savings of

**569,428  
tonnes  
CO<sub>2</sub>e**

over the life of project  
interventions.

In addition, the region has participated in a number of large innovative projects through the facilitation of CVGA including:

- The Victorian Energy Collaboration; an initiative of the greenhouse alliances that has allowed 46 councils (12 of the CVGA region) to power their facilities and streetlights from 100% renewable electricity
- Charging the regions; the largest local government Electric Vehicle charging network in Australia
- Lighting the Regions; the second stage of the region's streetlighting upgrades program converting streetlights to LED technology.



Our impact  
to date

The work we do is diverse and is based on the idea of the ripple effect of change, represented by our logo.



How do  
we influence  
change?

Our  
Sphere of  
Influence

## 01 COUNCIL

Our core work is to help our member councils address climate risk, embed climate change in decision making and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is achieved through programs and knowledge sharing.

## 03 REGIONAL

By working collaboratively, we influence outcomes across the whole region and with other greenhouse alliance networks to scale up the work we do through programs, knowledge sharing and advocacy.

## 02 COMMUNITIES

Through our programs and partnerships, we assist councils in helping their communities address climate change.

## 04 STATE & FEDERAL

Through our advocacy work we inform and influence state and federal policy and programs, and through our knowledge sharing we help other regions learn from our successes.



The work we do is centred on 3 strategic objectives; programs and partnerships, advocacy, and sharing knowledge.

Annual action plans will be developed each year in collaboration with the CVGA board and officer working groups to identify key priorities across the three strategic objectives above. Advocacy priorities will be developed in conjunction with other greenhouse alliances.

01

Create and deliver innovative regional projects that leverage and maximise the benefits of collective action and partnerships.

02

Proactively advocate on behalf of members for initiatives and policies that support our mission and vision

03

Build capacity and share knowledge within and between member organisations to better address climate change related challenges.

Our Work

PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

SHARE AND BUILD KNOWLEDGE

ADVOCACY

How we work

For the past number of years CVGA has had a strong focus on the energy sector both within councils own operations and across communities. This is a key strength of the CVGA and should continue as a focus area for emissions reductions. However, in order to achieve our vision it is critical that we address broader sectors and service areas such as transport, agriculture, planning and community development. Our role may be as leaders, facilitators or supporters and thus will rely on strong partnerships with key stakeholders in the region.

The work that CVGA does also balances work relating to councils' own operations and service delivery, as well as direct community facing programs (eg. MASH). Maintaining projects that deliver financial savings to councils is important for justifying membership fees.

However there will also be projects that are considered worthwhile doing that do not necessarily lead to direct economic benefits but are of social or environmental value/necessity.

The work and initiatives undertaken by the CVGA can broadly fit under the following 5 action areas. These action areas should be reviewed every 3 years.

## 01 Clean Energy Resilience

This action area reflects work CVGA is doing to help the region become a net exporter of renewable energy whilst also improving the reliability, cost and resilience of energy for communities across the region.

Examples of current initiatives under this action area includes:

- The Donald and Tarnagulla Microgrid Feasibility Study
- Community Sparks: Neighbourhood Batteries for Central and North West Victoria
- More Australian Solar Homes (MASH), Hepburn Bulk Buy and Mallee Sun Bulk Buy
- Small Business Energy Savers Program
- Energy market advocacy such as energy efficiency standards for low income housing
- Charging the Regions

## 02 Adapting Communities

This action area reflects work CVGA is doing to help communities in the region become more engaged in adapting to climate change and reducing its vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

Examples of current initiatives under this action area includes:

- Cool It
- Community transition planning (ZNET, Warrarrack, Mildura)
- How Well are We Adapting
- Advocacy to Parliamentary Inquiry into Climate Change in Victorian Communities
- Ensuring Victoria's Planning and Building Systems Effectively Tackle Climate Change

The task ahead

# 03



## Carbon Neutral Councils

This action area reflects work that CVGA is doing to help its member councils achieve emissions reductions in its own operations. Many councils have their own emissions reduction targets that are within 2025–45, however CVGA's goal is to help all councils accelerate their own targets to achieve net zero by 2030.

- Victorian Energy Collaboration
- Advocacy for getting off gas
- Fleet assessments and EV charging in council operations
- Lighting the Regions

# 04



## Climate Ready Councils

This action area reflects work that CVGA is doing to help member councils embed and improve consideration of climate change across operations and service delivery.

- Climate Ready Council Plans project
- Capacity building and knowledge sharing (eg. Conference, members forums etc.)
- Asset vulnerability assessments
- How well are we adapting project

# 05



## Ambitious Partnerships

This action area reflects work that CVGA is doing to help facilitate greater action across the region in areas where councils have less influence. This is done through effective partnerships and collaborations including:

- Victorian Government Regional Adaptation Plans
- Victorian Governments Renewable Energy Zones
- CSIRO Zero Carbon Regions
- Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration
- Grampians New Energy Taskforce Roadmap to Net Zero
- Mallee Innovation Research Centre
- Community Power Hubs (Grampians and Loddon Mallee)
- Local Sustainability Groups
- Regional Development Victoria
- Catchment Management Authorities and Water Authorities

CONTINUED

# The task ahead

Measuring the impact of CVGA's work is critical to realising the vision of the organisation, ensuring value for money and underpinning councils' ongoing memberships.

This will be achieved by evaluating the work of CVGA against its strategic objectives in a number of ways across key areas: projects and partnerships, capacity building and knowledge sharing and advocacy. Success is underpinned by participation of staff and Councillors at CVGA events, meetings and projects and contributions to policy, regulatory or program changes. Annual action plans will be developed each year and evaluated against.

Parameters will include:

- Outcomes and impacts of projects and initiatives
- Estimates of reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- Estimates of financial savings to councils and communities
- Estimates of funding leveraged by CVGA
- Monitoring of progress against annual action plans
- Inclusion of annual impact statements in CVGA's annual report

In addition, quarterly council updates, newsletters, conferences and members forums should be used to communicate the work of the alliance to its members. Every three years the CVGA should also engage an independent impact review.



# Measuring success



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