

# Surf Coast Shire Towards Environmental Leadership Program

Information paper, January 2021



*Surf Coast Shire spans the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung People and Eastern Maar People. We acknowledge them as Traditional Owners and Protectors of this place and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.*

Launched in 2015, the Towards Environmental Leadership Program sees Surf Coast Shire Council and communities working together to protect our natural world, and respond to climate change.

This paper provides an overview of some focus areas of the program, with some highlights achieved already, and others we're working towards.

Our website, [environmentsurfcoast.com.au](http://environmentsurfcoast.com.au), is a great resource if you'd like to find out more. It includes a snapshot of various Council and community initiatives, stories about local environmental leaders, links to resources, and information about upcoming events to inspire ideas and action in the Surf Coast Shire.

# Climate Emergency

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## Background – Why declare a Climate Emergency?

Data collected from the last thirty years at Aireys Inlet Lighthouse illustrates a 1.5 degree increase in maximum temperature. This correlates with other research showing that global temperatures are already increasing and approaching 1.2-1.4 degrees above pre-industrial levels, with the rate of increase per decade also accelerating.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of climate change, the Barwon South West Region is expected to experience an increase in maximum and minimum temperatures, extreme heat days and heat waves, extreme rainfall, harsher and longer fire seasons and sea level rise, including an increase in the frequency and height of extreme sea level events.<sup>2</sup>

The [Climate Emergency](#) movement emerged in recognition of the substantial increase in climate change associated risks affecting the environment and communities around the world. A Climate Emergency declaration commits an organisation to take action at a scale and speed capable of restoring a safe climate, while providing maximum protection to all people and species. To date, over 95 councils across Australia have declared a Climate Emergency.

There is also an emerging body of law, including the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) and the *Climate Change Act 2017* (Vic) placing greater responsibility on local governments to consider and respond to climate change through operational and decision-making processes.

## Council action to date

### Early history

Council has been involved in and has developed a number of climate change initiatives, projects and policies. As early as 2002, Council demonstrated a drive to respond to climate change by participating in the Cities for Climate Protection Program. Climate change and targeted strategies and focus areas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance resilience have featured in many of our Council Plans.

### Climate Emergency Declaration

Council declared a Climate Emergency in August 2019 in response to two petitions received from our community. In December 2019 Council endorsed a three part Climate Emergency Response consisting of:

- 1) *Climate Emergency Corporate Short Term Plan*
- 2) *Climate Emergency Corporate Strategic Approach and Action Plan*
- 3) *Community Climate Emergency Response*

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<sup>1</sup> Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restorations papers *Climate Reality Check 2020* and *The Third Degree 2019* and CSIRO and BOM, *State of the Climate Report 2020*.

<sup>2</sup> *Victorian State Government DELWP CSIRO Barwon Climate Projections 2019*  
[https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0037/429868/Barwon-Climate-Projections-2019-20200219.pdf](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0037/429868/Barwon-Climate-Projections-2019-20200219.pdf)

## Key Climate Emergency Achievements and Outcomes

Prior to the Climate Emergency Declaration and Response, Council showed strong leadership by supporting the Fight for the Bight and Frack Free Surf Coast campaigns, opposing large fossil fuel projects.

Staff across the organisation have been, and continue to be, engaged in skill and knowledge building opportunities and engagement activities such as surveys and workshops. This has resulted in staff considering and addressing climate change in their work.



Some recent examples completed under the Climate Emergency Short Term Corporate Plan include:

- Directing the 2020 Art Seed Development Fund to the theme 'Creative Action for the Climate Emergency',
- Delivering the 2020 Climate Youth Skills Program.
- Embedding climate change in decision-making and governance processes.

To support community Climate Emergency Response planning, a Community Climate Change Survey and Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile have been developed, and results are available to view on our website. These data sources will support and enable informed and targeted community action.

The 'Surf Coast Reimagined' workshop and event series launched in December 2020 and will continue into 2021. The series aims to inspire the community with new ideas for living more simply, growing locally and creating change.

To learn more about all of these initiatives, head to [environmentsurfcoast.com.au](https://environmentsurfcoast.com.au).

## Next Steps

### Corporate

The *Climate Emergency Corporate Short Term Plan* and its actions continue to be implemented across the organisation. In early 2021 the plan will transition to the *Climate Emergency Corporate Strategic Approach and Action Plan*, further prioritising climate change. The action plan is still in development at this time, and it is expected to include actions like becoming a carbon neutral organisation, purchasing 100% renewable energy, better understanding and communicating climate change impacts, and developing an Environmentally Sustainable Design Policy. Actions are selected using an assessment process that considers their ability to reduce corporate greenhouse gas emissions and demonstrate best practice.

In addition, climate change will continue to be considered in plans developed across Council, including the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, Council Plan and Asset Management Plans.

## Community

Community appetite for climate action is strong, as demonstrated by the over 400 people who took part in our recent climate change survey and the number of individuals, groups and businesses who are undertaking initiatives.

The Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile for Surf Coast Shire demonstrates that transport and electricity are the two biggest emissions sources in coastal communities, with agriculture an added large emission source in the hinterland.

In addition to the emissions data, already communities have identified community-wide action to focus on renewable energy, setting a net zero emissions target and waste minimisation as priorities. Building on this evidence base and the workshops and event series, community members will be given the chance to initiate, facilitate and mobilise community climate action to develop the community Climate Emergency Response.

To learn more go to [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/About-us/Your-Say/Climate-Emergency](https://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/About-us/Your-Say/Climate-Emergency).



# Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions

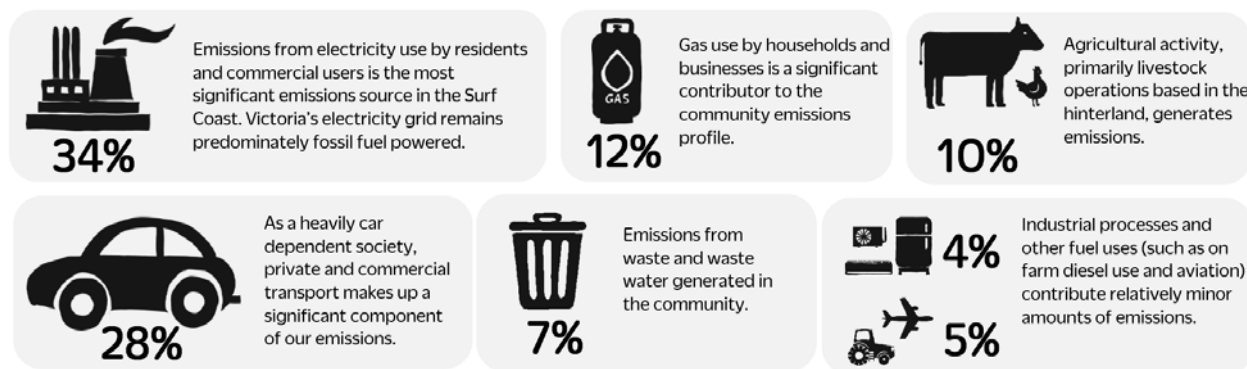
## Background – Reducing emissions is integral

Reducing, drawing down and offsetting greenhouse gas emissions is required to mitigate the risk of the most severe impacts of climate change. Australia is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which has the stated aim of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees celsius. Some recent studies have indicated that 1.5 degrees warming could occur as soon as 2030<sup>3</sup> and as one of the largest per capita emitting nations there is a clear need for Australia to take more climate action. Australia currently has a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2030, with the state of Victoria aiming to have net zero emissions by 2050. The Surf Coast Shire region must play its part in taking action to achieve these emissions reductions.

Council has legislated responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Climate Change Act 2017* to mitigate climate change risks, as well as to adapt and plan for climate change impacts and consider the needs of future generations. As such, Council must support the community to undertake emissions mitigation activities but can also lead by example by reducing and offsetting corporate emissions associated with Council operations.

## Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile

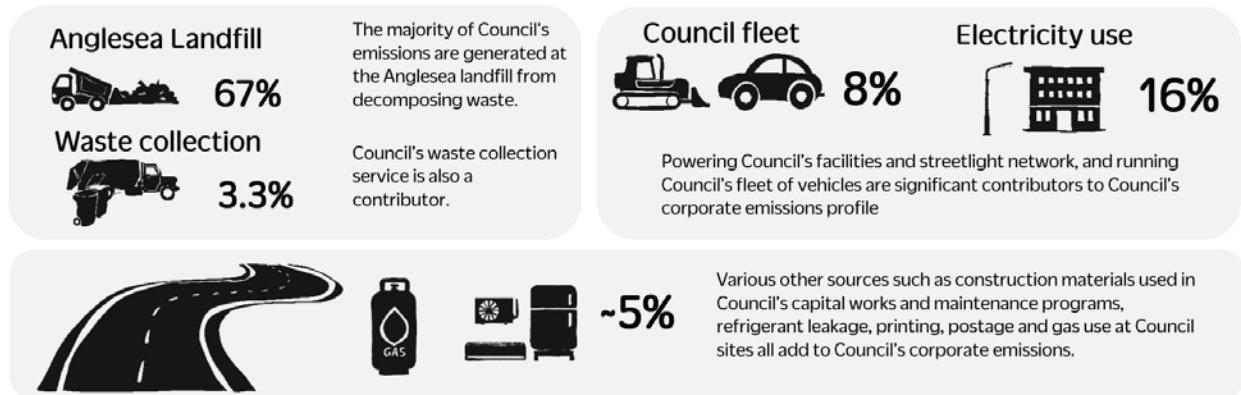
More than 500,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions are generated across our community each year. This is a breakdown of the key sources and percentage contribution they make to the Surf Coast's community emissions profile for 2019.



<sup>3</sup> *Climate Reality Check 2020*, Breakthrough – National Centre for Climate Restoration, David Spratt, Ian Dunlop & Luke Taylor, available at: <https://www.climatecheck.net/flipbook>

## Corporate (Council's) Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile

Activity conducted by the Surf Coast Shire in its every day operations generates approximately 16,500 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. The following are key emissions sources and the percentage contribution they make to Council's corporate emissions profile.



## Emissions trajectories

Based on key factors affecting emissions such as the planned transition of the Victorian electricity grid to renewables, projected population growth and expected electric vehicle uptake, business-as-usual community emissions forecasts for the Surf Coast demonstrate very little decrease in emissions generated. This indicates that action to reduce emissions within our community must be accelerated.

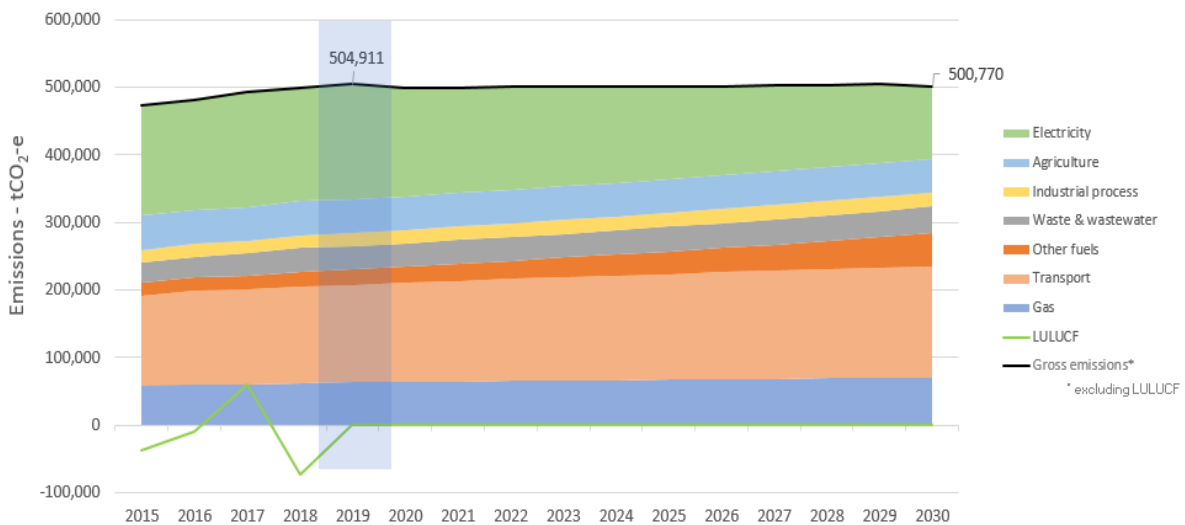


Figure – Surf Coast Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trajectory Forecast to 2030

## Action to date by Council and the community

Surf Coast Shire has adopted a corporate target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions and is currently developing a strategy to reduce and offset emissions associated with Council's activities.

Activities already completed by Council to reduce emissions include:

- **Solar** – over 500kW capacity of solar will be installed by the end of 2021 on Council facilities, reducing emissions and electricity bills. Council has also supported community members to take action and install solar through its [Powered By Positive](#) program (*see Renewable Energy section for further details on Council's renewable energy program*).
- **LED Streetlights** – over \$750k has been spent transitioning all standard streetlights under Council's sole management to the more energy efficient LED type, reducing emissions by 400 tonnes a year, decreasing street light electricity usage by 41% since 2017/18 and saving \$85k from electricity bills in 2019/20.
- **Environmentally Sustainable Design** – more sustainably designed and resource efficient buildings help to reduce energy and gas use and embodied emissions from new buildings. Council has constructed a number of energy and water efficient buildings, completed energy audits of key community buildings, and has hosted and supported Sustainable House design events for the community.
- **Fleet and Electric Vehicle Charging Stations** – Council's fleet includes one electric vehicle and an increasing number of hybrids. There are electric vehicle charging stations at the Lorne Visitor Information Centre and in the Torquay Civic Centre fleet compound.
- **Waste management** – Council is rolling out major upgrades to the way it manages waste, including diverting organic materials in order to reduce emissions at the Anglesea Landfill. A flare has been installed to transform the methane emitted from the landfill to the relatively less potent greenhouse gas, carbon. Council has also supported the local recycled material industry by installing park furniture that contains recycled materials. Council works with community events and businesses to help reduce their waste (*see Waste section for further details*).

Council is further supporting the community to take action in reducing their emissions through the Climate Emergency community planning activities that will be undertaken in 2021. To inform this process Council developed the Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile and undertook a community survey. Of the more than 400 respondents to the survey, 75% said a community target of net zero emissions by 2030 or earlier is needed, more than 81% of respondents said climate change should be more of a priority for Local Government and nearly half identified emissions reduction as a key focus for the future.

## Key achievements and outcomes

- A corporate environmental sustainability target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations has been adopted.
- The Surf Coast Shire community has indicated a strong desire for action to reduce emissions, including responses in the recent survey saying they'd like to see an ambitious community target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 or earlier.
- Council is taking action through installing solar, transitioning LED lights and exploring options to procure 100% renewable energy for its facilities and operations.
- The scale of emissions required to be reduced is significant and action will be required across a number of sectors.

## Next steps

### Corporate

The future focus for the Surf Coast Shire will be to achieve the corporate environmental sustainability target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible by reducing emissions and offsetting residual emissions. Further important work for Council is to procure 100% renewable energy, transition the Council

fleet towards electric vehicles and adopt an Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) policy to guide new council facilities and developments.

### **Community**

Substantial action is required to bring down community greenhouse gas emissions, and Council can play a role in supporting local climate action. Key focus areas will be in developing and supporting local offsetting and drawdown activities, sustainable agricultural practices, community renewable energy initiatives, sustainable design in new developments, and expanding the electric vehicle charging network.

To learn more about upcoming community activities and what Council is doing visit [environmentsurfcoast.com.au](http://environmentsurfcoast.com.au).



# Renewable Energy

## Background – The importance of transitioning to renewable power

Electricity use is the largest source of emissions within the Surf Coast, making up approximately 34% of community emissions or approximately 170,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. Although only a small proportion of regional electricity use, Council does use 2.2MWh each year to power its community facilities and streetlight network. Victoria's electricity grid remains predominantly fossil fuel powered, with 25% of electricity being generated from renewable sources in 2020<sup>4</sup>. As such, there is significant work required to transition Surf Coast's energy grid to renewables. The community supports this, with two thirds of respondents to the recent community climate change survey indicating that transitioning to renewables should be a priority.

## Action to date by Council and the Community

Council has adopted the corporate environmental sustainability target of 100% renewable energy and is currently exploring ways of procuring renewable energy for its electricity use from 2021/22.

The Renewable Energy Task Force established by Council in 2016 and consisting of Councillors, and local industry and community representatives has provided advice and strategic direction to Council in supporting the transition to renewables. This has included supporting the roll out of the successful [Powered by Positive](#) program which saw residential solar uptake in the Surf Coast go from below the states average, to the highest in the Barwon South West region, with more than 1 in 5 houses now having solar installed.



Council has also installed solar systems across more than 20 Council sites. Over 500kW capacity of solar will be installed by the end of 2021, which is more than double the Victorian shire average of 223kW. Council has also undertaken energy efficiency audits at a number of community facilities, held several successful solar and Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) community information sessions, and worked with local businesses to explore their solar options.

There are several active community groups with an interest in supporting local renewable energy options including Surf Coast Energy Group, Anglesea Community Energy, Geelong Sustainability and the Barwon Region Alliance for Community Energy.

The [Barwon South West Renewable Energy Roadmap](#) also includes some interesting insights.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://reneweconomy.com.au/victoria-passes-half-way-mark-on-road-to-50-renewables-by-2030/#:-:text=Victoria%20has%20passed%20the%20half,per%20cent%20renewables%20by%202020.>

## Key achievements and outcomes

- A corporate environmental sustainability target of 100% renewable energy to power Council operations has been adopted and options to procure renewable energy to power Council facilities and street light networks with renewables from 2021/22 are currently being investigated.
- Council has installed 443.5 kW of solar capacity on Council facilities with more than 500kW capacity expected to be installed by end of 2021.
- With the support of Council's Renewable Energy Task Force and Powered By Positive program the Surf Coast region has gone from below the state average in solar uptake to the highest in the Barwon South West region. These programs have supported numerous residents and businesses to take action and switch to green power.
- Our community has indicated a strong desire to transition to 100% renewable energy and Council can play a role in supporting this.



## Next steps

### Corporate

The future focus for the Surf Coast Shire Council will be to realise its corporate environmental sustainability target and secure 100% renewable energy for its power use. Council intends to continue installing solar at Council sites, as well as explore energy storage options and support community groups to install solar at leased Council facilities like community houses and sporting clubs. Council can also play an important role in supporting renewable energy options in new developments, community energy initiatives and commercial solar installs.



### Community

There is a strong desire for more renewable energy and community owned energy within the Surf Coast Shire. Local community energy groups are active in supporting the transition to renewable power with groups like Surf Coast Energy Group, Anglesea Community Energy and the Deans Marsh Cottage undertaking initiatives in this space. Key focus areas will be to explore community owned renewable energy options and powering key community facilities with renewable power.

## Local Food Program

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### Background – The value of local food and resilient communities

Based on current research and understanding of greenhouse gas emissions sources, food and farming contributes between 20-39% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

As food and farming is such a large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions it has been identified as a focus for local climate change action. In the recent community climate change survey, 38% of respondents selected 'Uncertainty around food; supply contamination and nutritional decline', as areas of concern and priority to address.

Local food programs and initiatives contribute to *mitigating* climate change by contributing to a reduction in the emissions from mainstream food and farming processes, and *adapting* to a changing climate by fostering resilience within communities. This resilience is in the tangible form of locally grown and produced food, and in the form of community connection and empowerment.

Below is a list of actions, and more information can be found at [environmentsurfcoast.com.au/local-food](http://environmentsurfcoast.com.au/local-food).



### Council action to date

#### The Local Food Program and Action Plan

Council has a [Local Food Program and Action Plan](#) (2018-2021). The three year plan outlines actions that both Council and community can take to create a more resilient, fair and sustainable local food system. Priority actions have been identified in the areas of food production, processing, distribution, access and consumption, and waste management.

#### 'Home Grown' program

The free Home Grown sustainable gardening program was established in 2019 to help our community build skills and knowledge to turn their outdoor spaces into productive gardens. This is achieved through the delivery of both face to face and online gardening workshops, events and online resources.

Key aims of the program include:

- Building local capacity and capability to grow fresh produce to both increase food security and minimise emissions from food production, packaging and transport.
- Reducing and minimising unnecessary waste entering landfill by encouraging the conversion of food scraps and other green materials into compost and mulch.
- Promoting clever garden design based on permaculture principles to minimise water use, and reduce homes' energy use through smart planting to heat and cool homes.
- Encourage the planting of native and indigenous plants for improved biodiversity and habitat

#### Community Orchards

Council recognises the value of green and open spaces, and has worked in partnership with our community to identify opportunities and establish food trees and gardens in park lands. Current sites include Torquay's Quay Estate, Torquay North and Jan Juc's Ocean View Estate. Additional orchards are being investigated in the townships of Aireys Inlet and Winchelsea.

## **Nautical Rise Indigenous Culinary Community Orchard and Garden**

A unique indigenous orchard and culinary garden project is underway in Nautical Rise, Torquay. The garden will be a community built and maintained space, with plants chosen to reflect the six seasons recognised by our local indigenous community.

The project, initiated by the Quay Residents Association, has the support of the Wadawurrung, the Traditional Owners of the land, and has so far secured funding for stage one – a community yarning circle. Further stages will see additional plantings and interpretative signage installed to help increase understanding and encourage everyday use of a range of indigenous edible plants.

## **Community Gardens**

Community gardens bring people together to grow food and other plants, and learn new skills. It's a zone of interaction between people of all ages and a space for community members to connect.

Council supports a number of Community Gardens by assisting with maintaining facilities, providing advice and helping to host events. Find out more about Community Gardens in Torquay, Anglesea, Aireys Inlet, Lorne and Winchelsea on our [website](#).

## **Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program in Council Managed Kindergartens**

All Council managed early years facilities take part in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program. The aim of the program is to engage and educate children in growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing healthy food.

Through the program children learn essential life skills and knowledge. This includes planting seeds and learning how to care for plants, harvesting fresh produce they have grown themselves and understanding the importance of sustainable living. The program links directly to the Local Food Action Plan ensuring that children (and their families) who attend these kindergartens have access to fresh, local food.



## **Staff vegetable and herb garden**

Located at Council's Torquay Civic building, a vegetable and herb garden has been established for staff to access in the outdoor lunch area. The garden is maintained by staff and provides access to fresh food through the seasons. Food waste generated by staff is composted and fed to worms on site and used to 'close the loop', by returning nutrients to the garden.

## Community events and initiatives

Council supports and sponsors a number of popular community sustainability and local food events that have included:

### **Otway Harvest Trail**

The Otway Harvest Trail celebrates hinterland food and its producers and artisans.

For more information visit [otwayharvesttrail.org.au](http://otwayharvesttrail.org.au).

### **Otway Food & Fibre**

The Otway Food and Fibre Showcase is a biennial one day event celebrating the diversity and quality of food and fibre producers in our region.

For more information visit [facebook.com/otwayfoodandfibre](https://facebook.com/otwayfoodandfibre)

### **Green Living Festival**

The festival was first held in Anglesea in 2019 to celebrate sustainable living, but was put on hold for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event features interactive workshops, eco-living displays, stalls, food, guest speakers and children's activities.

For more information visit [facebook.com/greenlivingfestival/](https://facebook.com/greenlivingfestival/)

### **Eat Local Month**

Last held in 2017, Eat Local Month is a month-long food and farming festival that celebrates the region's independent growers, restaurants, cafes and food artisans. It provides the community an opportunity to experience the flavours of the Surf Coast and surrounds.

### **Good Fish Project**

The Good Fish Project is an initiative of the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS), designed to promote the use of sustainable seafood in restaurants and other food outlets. 2014 saw a partnership between AMCS and Surf Coast Shire Council, whereby local restaurants were assisted to raise the profile of sustainable seafood through their menus and a range of events.

For current information about the project visit [goodfishproject.com.au](http://goodfishproject.com.au)

# Valuing Resources and Avoiding Waste

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## Background – Minimising waste to minimise emissions

Although it can be easy to throw things in the bin, managing waste from households and communities has a significant impact on our natural environment.

Research shows that climate change is caused by human activity and this is connected to our use of resources and a culture of consumption within society. Anglesea Landfill generates approximately 11,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year, and will continue to do so for many years to come. Collecting waste and materials for recycling, transporting it, sorting it, processing the materials, and creating things in the first place also contribute emissions.

In the recent community climate change survey of over 400 respondents, 55% listed 'Zero waste - avoiding and minimising waste in the first instance. Recycling waste into alternative materials resulting in zero waste sent to landfill', as priorities for future climate change action.

## Waste Avoidance, Reduction and Recycling

These are some Council and community initiatives that encourage waste avoidance, reduction and recycling in Surf Coast Shire.

### Repair Café Surf Coast

Repair Cafes are all about repairing things – together. [Repair Café Surf Coast](#) events run monthly, with passionate and skilled volunteers available to help repair a range of household items. Learning how to fix what we already have means sending much less to landfill.

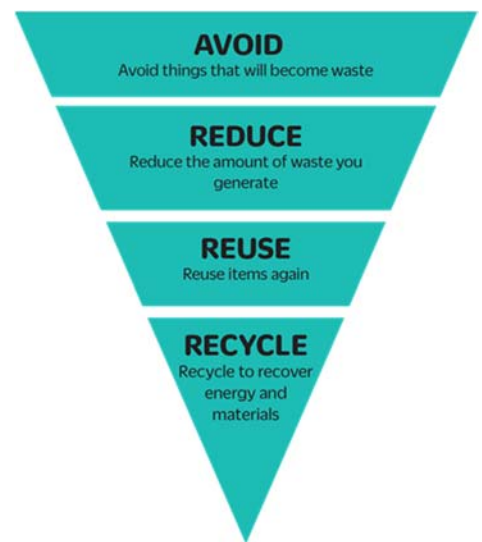
(Read about other fantastic community groups fighting the war on waste in the Plastic Wise section below.)

### Anglesea Community Resale Centre

Secondhand furniture and other items that are too good to send to landfill can be purchased from the [Community Resale Centre](#) at Council's Anglesea Landfill. The Centre is run by local community groups, with profits returned to the community.

### Recovering organic waste from landfill

Organic matter sent to landfill releases methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide. In December 2018 Council introduced a [Food Organics and Garden Organics \(FOGO\) pilot in Anglesea](#), which saw residents placing all food scraps into their household green waste collection bins along with garden waste. Instead of going to landfill, all of the organic materials are processed into compost, and the pilot resulted in 22% less waste from Anglesea households being sent to landfill. The FOGO service has stayed in place for Anglesea residents, and will be rolled out shire-wide in February 2021.



### Changing to a four bin kerbside service

In February 2021, Council's kerbside collection service is changing to a four bin system, which includes a Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) service and a fourth bin for collecting glass. In addition to the benefits of a FOGO service mentioned above, separating glass from other recyclable materials also improves our ability to recover resources.

For more information visit

[surfcoast.vic.gov.au/RecyclingAndWaste](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/RecyclingAndWaste).

On our website you can sign up to the Waste &

Recycling e-newsletter. This will also keep you in the loop about the new app we're developing to help you get it right on bin night.



### Victoria's Circular Economy

Through [Recycling Victoria: a new economy](#), the Victorian Government has committed to implementing the types of waste management reforms that we are putting in place in Surf Coast Shire. It includes a Circular Economy Policy and 10 year action plan that will help individuals, households, communities, councils, businesses, industries and the recycling sector to reduce waste and pollution, improve recycling, protect our environment and create a stronger economy.

## Surf Coast Plastic Wise Program

Our community and Council recognise the problems being caused by plastic pollution locally and globally, and we're tackling it through our Plastic Wise Program.

Through community actions, markets and events, businesses, Council initiatives and partnerships, we're working towards eliminating single use plastic items by encouraging the use of reusable alternatives.

These are some Council and community initiatives that support a Plastic Wise Surf Coast:

### Plastic Wise Events and Markets Policy

This policy is Council's commitment to eliminating single use plastics at events and markets held in the Surf Coast Shire. It has also been adopted by local foreshore managers, the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee. The policy requires event organisers to work with their stallholders, sponsors, contractors, volunteers, participants and patrons to use alternatives to single use and disposable plastic bags, packaging and promotional materials.

Our Plastic Wise Events and Markets Policy was introduced in 2016, and following an extensive review with community and market stakeholders, was updated in October 2018. We were proud to win the Keep Victoria Beautiful – Sustainable Cities award in the Community-Government Partnerships category for the policy in 2018. We have also been happy to see other councils, land managers and community groups use our policy as a starting point for their own.

Find the policy and event guide at [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/plasticwise](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/plasticwise)



### Community groups

Community groups have been vital in leading action to reduce the use and impacts of single use plastics in the shire. In 2004 Anglesea became the first township on mainland Australia to eliminate single use plastic bags at the checkout, followed by Aireys Inlet. A number of active groups currently support businesses and their communities to shift away from single use plastics, including;

- [Plastic Wise Torquay](#) (formerly Plastic Bag Free Torquay)
- [Plastic Wise Winchelsea](#)
- Boomerang Bags

### Businesses

Local businesses are avoiding plastic packaging, developing sustainable products, participating in litter cleanups, offering discounts to customers who bring their own coffee cups, and accepting customers' clean containers for takeaway foods. You may see stickers on shop windows or signs in car parks to help you remember to use your own reusable bag.

### Boomerang Bags

Boomerang Bags – reusable cloth bags shoppers can borrow and return – are available at a number of local supermarkets, shops, markets, schools and Bendigo Bank branches, and at Surf Coast Shire Civic Centre. Originating in Burleigh Heads, Queensland in 2013, Boomerang Bags were brought to the shire in 2015 by the Plastic Wise Torquay group.



### **Beach clean ups**

A number of groups coordinate local beach cleanups that community members can participate in, including Cleaner Coast, Surfrider Foundation Torquay and Clean Up Australia.

### **Take 3 for the Sea**

The [Take 3](#) campaign has a simple message: take three pieces of rubbish with you when you leave the beach, waterway... or anywhere! You might notice reminders of this on many of the metal bins in our townships.

### **Plastic Free July**

[Plastic Free July](#) is a global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution – so we can have cleaner streets, oceans, and beautiful communities. Surf Coast Shire Council staff participate each year. Challenge yourself and others to get involved!

### **Seal the Loop**

[Seal the Loop](#) aims to prevent fishing line and other waste from causing harm to wildlife by providing special bins in prime fishing locations. Coastcare and other community groups take responsibility for managing the bins in partnership with local land managers, including Surf Coast Shire Council and the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee.

Visit [environmentsurfcoast.com.au](http://environmentsurfcoast.com.au) for more about the Towards Environmental Leadership Program and local action on climate change.