

# Community Climate Transition Plan

(2023-2030)





The Community Climate Transition Plan is a living/working document.  
Developed for and with the Mount Alexander Shire community by the  
Wararack Transition Working Group

**Community Climate Transition Plan 2023–2030**  
Version 1.0

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(2022–2023)

**PUBLISHER**  
Wararack  
Castlemaine, Victoria, Australia

**PUBLICATION DATE**  
February 2023

**AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD**  
[wararack.org](http://wararack.org)

**ISBN**  
978-0-6457411-0-0

Image sources and credits:  
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School Strike4Climate  
The Hub Foundation  
Wash Against Waste  
Wilderhoods

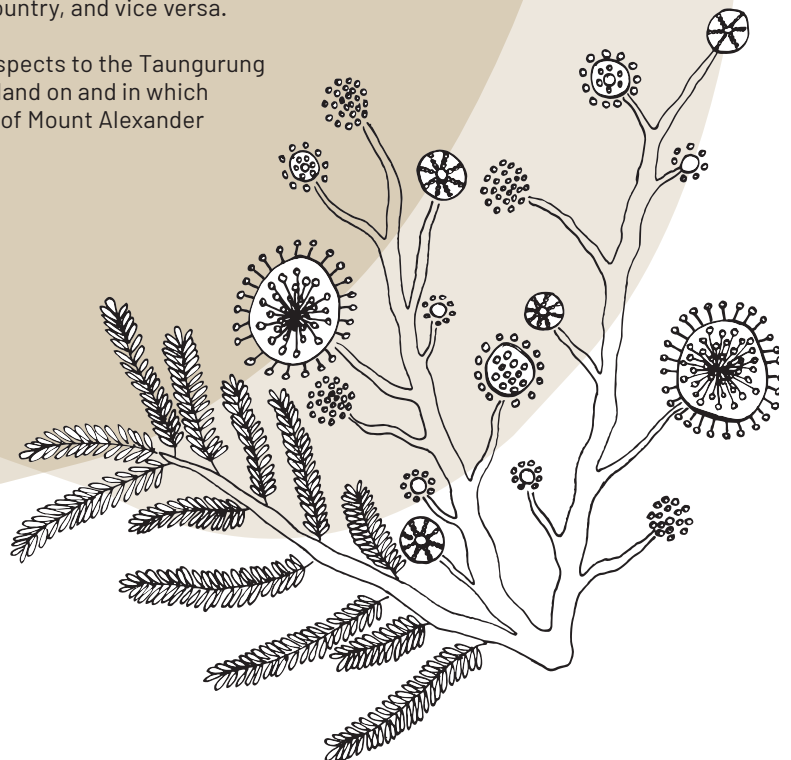
## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Djaara Peoples, the traditional custodians of Djarra Country on and in which we live. We acknowledge and pay respects to past Elders, on whose stolen lands all residents of our shire live.

We acknowledge and pay respects to present Djaara Peoples and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples living, working and playing in Mount Alexander Shire. We express our sincere gratitude to Uncle Rick Nelson, Aunty Paulette Nelson, and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, from 2021 trading as DJAARA – Balaki Wuka (Giving to community); and to Kath Coff, Aunty Julie McHale and the Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation (Nalderun), especially for gifting and granting us permission to use the word 'Wararack'.

We acknowledge and pay respects to emerging Djaara Peoples, such as Daikota Nelson who created the original Wararack (silver wattle) logo artwork. The designation of the three pillars in the *Community Climate Transition Plan (2023–2030)* follows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' critical awareness that livelihoods and culture contribute to shaping Country, and vice versa.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Taungurung Clans, traditional custodians of land on and in which certain residents in the far east of Mount Alexander Shire live.



# Acknowledgements

The Wararack Transition Working Group compiled this Plan drawing on documents authored by various people working within and alongside the group. Material has been judiciously extracted from such internally produced material without inserting quotations or identifying the primary reference material, whereas external sources have been acknowledged in the usual way. We especially thank Elizabeth Geddes for her work on graphics and layout.

We acknowledge all contributors to Wararack, including: Vicki Anderson, Rosie Annear, Deane Belfield, Michael Billington, Peter Brain, Kyla Brettle, Kath Coff, Step Forbes, Sharon Fraser, Elizabeth Geddes, Alison Hanly, Taryn Lane, Rob Law, Bronwen Machin, Domani Madigan, Melanie Marshall, Damien Melotte, Natalie Moxham, John Neiman, Anitra Nelson, Jodi Newcombe, Cohen Saunders, Cate Sinclair, Warwick Smith, Jane Staley, Sam Thomas, Terry White, Euan Williamson and Lucy Young.

We acknowledge the contributions of numerous anonymous members of the shire community through Wararack run workshops, interviews and via other contact. In particular, we note the use of quotes from participants at the Climate Change Forum, 9 December 2019 and at the Transition Workshops, 7 December 2022 (TW-2022) throughout the text.

We acknowledge the support of numerous organisations who informed this Plan. Bodies involved in the Wararack 2020 steering group included Mount Alexander Shire Council, The Hub Foundation, Castlemaine Institute, Mount Alexander Sustainability Group, Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation (Nalderun), Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance, and Renew. The Castlemaine Institute and Mount Alexander Shire Council supported the project during 2020–2022. Work in 2022 was resourced by Mount Alexander Shire Council, Castlemaine Institute, Clarion Call, Castlemaine Free University, Endgame Media and PowerHub. We thank Kiran Kashkap and Willow Berzin of the Coalition of Everyone for their independent reviews of the Plan.



# Abbreviations



<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Stands for</i>
§	Section
BZE	Beyond Zero Emissions
CI	Castlemaine Institute
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon dioxide
CoE	Coalition of Everyone
e.g.	For example
EV	Electric vehicle
GHG	Greenhouse gas/es
ICLEI	Local Governments for Sustainability
i.e.	That is
IPPU	Industrial Processes and Product Use (UNFCCC)
MACET	Mount Alexander Climate Emergency Team
MADE	Mount Alexander Deliberative Engagement
MAS	Mount Alexander Shire
MASC	Mount Alexander Shire Council
MASG	Mount Alexander Sustainability Group
Nalderun (NEAC)	Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation
NIEIR	National Institute of Economic and Industry Research
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
ZCCT	Zero Carbon Community Transition (Sustainability Victoria grant scheme)
znet	Zero-net (net zero) emissions

## List of Figures

- FIGURE 1. Wararack: Three Pillars
- FIGURE 2. Timeline (and Database) Extract
- FIGURE 3. Wararack Governance Structure
- FIGURE 4. Home Groups
- FIGURE 5. Home Groups: Functions

## List of Tables

- TABLE 1. The ZNET Pathway: Outcomes, 2030
- TABLE 2. Snapshot: MAS Carbon Emissions by Source and Sector (2018–21, Financial Years)
- TABLE 2.1 MAS emissions for 2020–2021 financial year (and two previous year totals)
- TABLE 2.2 MAS emissions for 2020–2021 financial year, sources within sectoral breakdown
- TABLE 2.3. MAS emissions for 2018–2021 financial years, sectoral breakdown

## List of Boxes

- BOX 1. Zero Net Retrofits
- BOX 2. Climate Conversations
- BOX 3. Wararack Initiatives: Themes





# Glossary

## **Carbon emissions**

Carbon (atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions generally refer to all greenhouse gases (GHG), i.e. CO<sub>2</sub> and non-CO<sub>2</sub> GHG. CO<sub>2</sub> is a standard measure of all GHG emissions due to its propensity and long lifetime. Within total GHG, carbon, methane, and nitrous oxide occur roughly in the following proportions 15:4:1.

## **Carbon neutral**

See znet (net zero or zero net) carbon emissions.

## **Carbon offsets/credits**

Practice of 'balancing' projects that store carbon emissions against activities releasing emissions elsewhere. Controversial in terms of extent (such as purchasing carbon credits to 'cancel' those emitted in an airlight) and content of practices, given that offsetting is risky and uncertain. Carbon absorption in planting trees may not be realised if plants die, say due to bushfires, floods, disease or unforeseen logging. Objectors argue that the natural carbon cycle is finite and past and current human activities leave us massively in debt to Earth, so we ought to concentrate on reduction. (See *The Guardian*, 2023.)

## **Circular economy**

Driven by the concept of zero-waste, waste is minimised by reproductive practices integrating producers and consumers across sectors by improving durability of products, and by repair, re-use, recycling, all using renewable energy. Efficiency and sufficiency – re-think on the basis of need, reduction and degrowth – are essential complements to make such an economy effectively trend to zero emissions.

## **Climate neutral**

See znet (net zero or zero net) carbon emissions.

## **Climate positive (or carbon negative)**

An activity that not only achieves zero carbon emissions but stores additional carbon emissions from the atmosphere.

## **Convivial (and conviviality)**

Sociable, cooperative, mutually agreeable, sharing.

## **Hold(ing)**

As in Wararack, means a carrying, supporting, institution bearing a holistic responsibility for the transition that the whole community is enabling and realising.

## **Methane**

A GHG capable of trapping atmospheric heat around 80 times more effectively than carbon emissions, and degrades around four or five times more readily than carbon. Released from fossil fuel leaks, say from oilwells and shale gas wells, and from agriculture, such as farm animals.

## **Mitigation**

Reduction of GHG emissions.

## **Zero emissions**

Zero emissions [bolded]

No release of greenhouse gas emissions at all.

## **Znet (net zero or zero net) carbon emissions**

Radically reducing carbon emissions and offsetting unavoidable emissions by increasing carbon sinks, such as forests.

# Contents

1	<b>Executive Summary</b>
1	<b>§1. Introduction</b>
2	1.1 Preamble
3	1.2 The Plan
5	1.3 Outline of Document
6	<b>§2. Background and Contemporary Context</b>
6	2.1 Background: Timeline
7	2.2 Climate Forum, 9 December 2019
9	2.3 Wararack in the Making
11	<b>§3. Scoping the Transition</b>
12	3.1 A Tapestry of Transitions
14	3.2 Three Principles: Three Pillars
20	3.3 The Transition in Practice
21	3.4 Wararack: Initiatives
25	<b>§4. Holding the Transition</b>
26	4.1 Processes and Structures to Hold this Transition
31	4.2 Emergent Partnerships and Actions
33	4.3 Resourcing Wararack
34	4.4 Next Steps
36	<b>§5. Conclusion</b>
37	<b>References</b>
38	<b>Appendices</b>
38	I. Latest Census (2021) Key Settlement Statistics for Mount Alexander Shire
39	II. Zero Emissions Byron Plan
41	III. Wararack Decision Making: Roles and Scope



# Executive Summary

This initial 1.0 version of the *Community Climate Transition Plan (2023–2030)* (*The Plan*) sketches a transition that is relational in character and regenerative in its aims and outcomes. The transition aims to measurably reduce carbon emitting activities; to ensure security of everyday needs such as food and housing, and conviviality within the shire community as we adapt to an unstable climate; and, to grow in cultural ways of solidarity and sharing that support our relations with one another, and with Djaara Country, as we move to stabilise the climate. In short, our three pillars and principles are *znet*, *adapt* and *culture*. The Plan is holistic in terms of Djaara Country (within the shire) and works from our strengths.

Wararack is a coalition of those supporting this shire-wide, community-led effort towards regenerative ways of living in response to the climate crisis. Wararack is the glue that brings people and purpose together within this unique place. Wararack will support the shire community to prioritise areas for action, areas that are within the community's scope to influence and are deemed to have the most significant impacts on our net zero emissions reduction target. Wararack will adopt such priorities for promotion as areas for action. Wararack promotes action that helps us to collectively reach net zero emissions, to better prepare for climate impacts, to embrace change and to forge new ways of doing and thinking. This transition to regenerative living is an holistic response to the climate crisis. Wararack is tasked with *holding* this transition to a climate-safe future for the next generation and beyond.

The Wararack narrative of change emphasises relationships, ecological and social regeneration, inclusion, justice, collectivity, connection and collaboration. Wararack aims to develop inclusive and adaptive processes to inspire people living within Mount Alexander Shire to imagine, create and work together towards a shared future in a rapidly changing world. Our approach is to nourish existing strengths in our community — a clear voice for climate justice, the will to collectively shape our future and a diverse range of projects, programs, initiatives and groups actively working towards *regeneration* across all activities. We are establishing processes for collaborating effectively; internally as a diverse community and externally as a coalition collaborating with government and other relevant powerbrokers.

Wararack is comprised of a Core Group, Home Groups, Action Groups, Guardians, Critical Friends, Partners and other supporters (such as funders) — all open to any member of the shire community to become active within. Initiatives are independent activities with similar, contributory, objectives. As in a natural ecosystem, Wararack sees distinctive roles and places for everyone in the shire community. Knowledge and power is distributed and the system itself is regenerative and self-perpetuating. *The Plan* proposes principles and pillars, structures and uniform approaches for community members to become involved in the transition. *The Plan* also sketches out how Wararack is forming as a custom-made institution for this unique community-based transition. Our vision is for Wararack to support an existing and expanding ecosystem of thriving project-based activities (Initiatives) that collectively provide regenerative outcomes for the whole community.

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## §1. Introduction

This introduction begins with an explanatory preamble; briefly sketches the aims of the *Community Climate Transition Plan (2023-2030)* (*The Plan*) and outlines the structure of this document.

### §1.1 Preamble

Institutional climate transition plans are usually timebound action plans clearly outlining how organisations will pivot existing assets, operations and entire business models towards a trajectory aligning with science-based recommendations. This plan differs because we are seeking to transition whole-of-community ways of relating and acting, to live regeneratively, in ways that support zero net emissions and sustainable ways of living more generally.

Consequently, this transition action plan focuses on how we align efforts of businesses, governments, community groups, organisations and individuals by evolving new, trusted and effective relationships between us. These relationships involve social changes to structures and processes, to how we hold power and think. This transition plan reflects the complexity of social changes that go well beyond one point of leverage, one organisation or one actor. Instead, if we work well together, we believe we can implement the trajectory necessary.

Wararack is the emerging institutional glue for our community coalition supporting *The Plan*. Our vision is for Wararack to support a thriving ecosystem of project-based activities (Initiatives) that collectively provide regenerative outcomes for the whole community and to establish foundational systems and processes for working together into the future. As in a natural ecosystem, we see distinctive roles and places for everyone, knowledge and power is distributed, and the system itself is regenerative and self-perpetuating.

Wararack aims to develop inclusive and adaptive processes to inspire people living within Mount Alexander Shire to imagine, create and work together towards a shared future in a rapidly changing world. Our approach is to nourish existing strengths in our community – a clear voice for climate justice, the will to collectively shape our future and a diverse range of projects, programs, initiatives and groups actively working towards *regeneration* across all activities. We are establishing processes for collaborating effectively both within, as a diverse community, and as a collective working with government and other organised powerbrokers.

What does it mean for Wararack to 'hold' the transition? Wararack is a carrying, supporting, institution for the whole community who will collectively enable and realise the transition. *The Plan* proposes principles and pillars, structures and uniform approaches for community members to pick up, hold and guide the transition within Wararack as a customised institution for this particular community-based transition.

*The Plan* has been compiled by the Wararack Transition Working Group and initial Wararack Core Group (2022–2023), drawing on various documents produced by community members on reducing carbon emissions and addressing climate change. It is a living document to be modified as we learn what works and decide how to address what gets in the way of achieving our shared goals. This version 1.0 offers collective thinking about planning at this time and explains how we have developed what we believe is a sound structure to collectively work on all the details of *The Plan* in 2023.

## §1.2 The Plan

*The Plan* defines Wararack's purpose, reason for being, and shows how we will work together as a coalition to create a climate-safe Mount Alexander Shire (aka Leanganook). *The Plan* envisages multiple changes in how we live, all of which require us to transition as a community. 'Regeneration' is a concept central to this transition.

Regeneration is a familiar term in reference to biological and ecological processes of renewal and restoration of living matter. The concept is applied to social transitions to emphasise the importance of enhancing relations between people and between human and extra-human life in becoming a climate-safe world. In this respect, relations and regeneration are central to the Wararack vision and process of our transition to living ecologically sustainably.

An holistic relational concept of transition draws from the Djaara Peoples perspective. 'We see our Country, people and creatures in a holistic way which survives and thrives through connection with each other,' writes Trent Nelson, Chairperson of the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation – from 2021 trading as DJAARA – Balaki Wuka (Giving to community) – (DJAARA, 2017: 4) 'Dja Dja Wurrung peoples see all the land and its creatures in a holistic way that is interconnected with each other and with the people.' This perspective is fundamentally relational, relations to one another and to Country.

The name 'Wararack' has been gifted to us by Uncle Rick Nelson and Aunty Julie McHale, facilitated by Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation, who granted us permission to use it. It is the Dja Dja Wurrung word for the silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*), the most commonly encountered feathery-leaved wattle in our region (Slattery et al., 2018: 23). Using its sap or gum as glue is one of this tree's many traditional uses. Wararack is the glue binding us together with Djaara Country, as such representing our spirit of collaboration and the common causes and places that bind us. Moreover, wattles quickly regenerate cleared areas by fixing nitrogen in the soil as nutrition for other plants to grow, and regeneration is central to the transition that Wararack has been tasked to hold and carry.

Wararack uses three holistic regenerative pillars to realise this transition: *znet*, *adapt* and *culture* (Figure 1). These pillars are distinct yet bonded and, in a practical sense, indivisible. As principles, foci and lenses, they encompass mitigation and adaptation, acknowledging that carbon neutrality, absorption (sinks) and emissions are all integral to our everyday activities in multiple direct, and indirect, ways. Cradled in a culture of caring for Djaara Country and community, social and ecological justice are key principles guiding our advance. Social solidarity and working with nature will be key to the ways we adapt to the impacts of more extreme weather events and climatic changes. So, we need to focus on *cultural adaptation and regeneration* to create a healthy and resilient environment and community. Simultaneously, our ultimate target is net zero ('znet') emissions by 2030.

“

**This is going to take a whole-of-community approach.”**

Climate Change Forum  
2019

## Our regeneration goals

Our goal is to collectively build resilience, equity and care for Country into our systems and culture while transitioning our shire to net zero emissions.

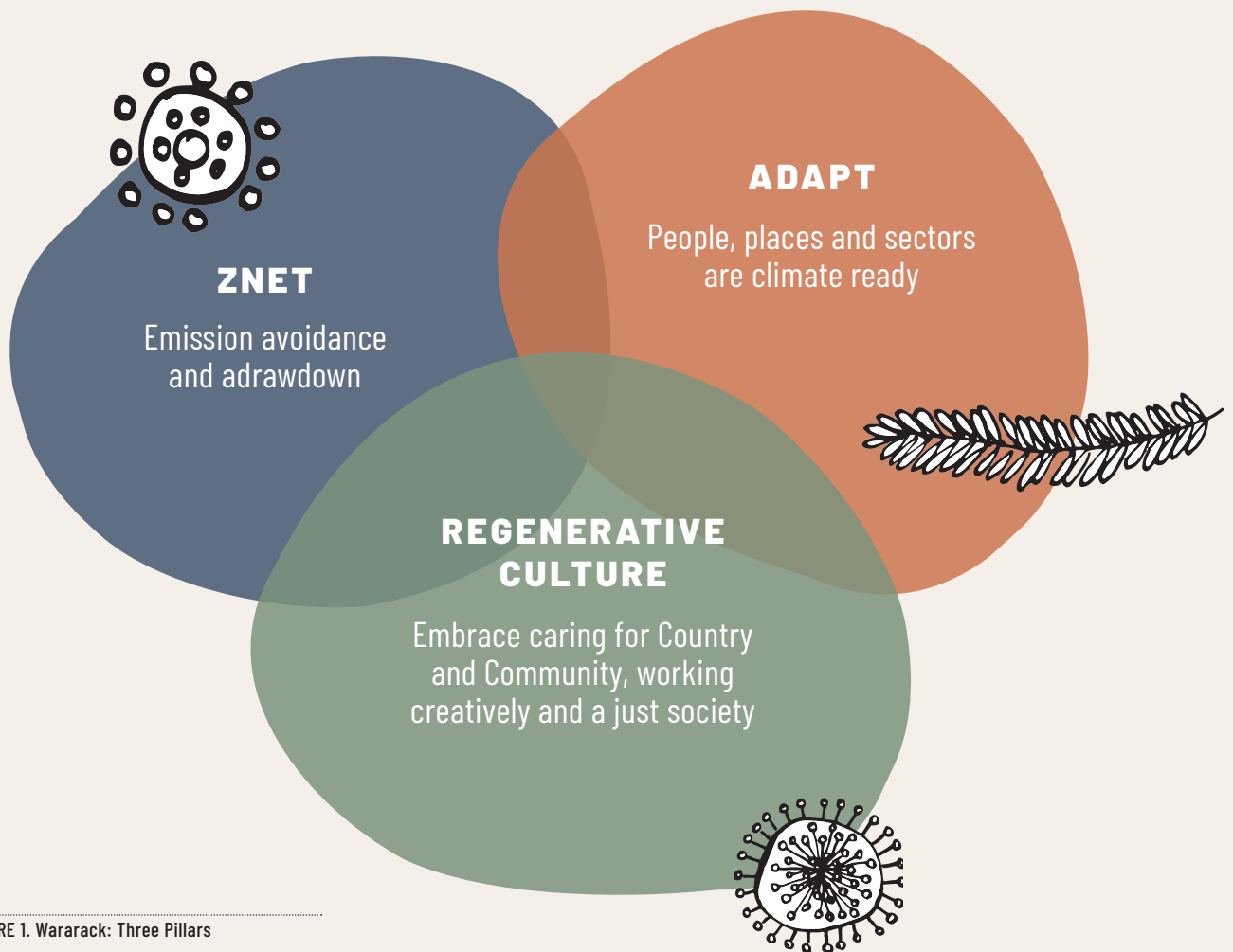


FIGURE 1. Wararack: Three Pillars



## §1.3 Outline of Document

Shires have proved a most effective scale for practical activities associated with climate action transitions, so the Wararack Transition Working Group has learned from other community-based plans. This first version of *The Plan* offers high level organisational strategies, principles and processes to achieve net zero emissions. We identify guiding principles and processes for this structure to hold the coalition, a holding structure that seeks to enhance whole-of-community connectedness and communication, and to oversee the transitionary process by tracking, monitoring and reporting on progress.

Section 2 (§2) briefly discusses the historical and contemporary context for *The Plan*. We offer an extract from a timeline of climate action and relevant work to date. After the pandemic delayed action, in 2022, momentum on semi-autonomous activities and working together on a holistic community transition plan resumed. We show how the community has been acting together and supporting one another in defining our diverse collective aspirations.

§3 scopes the community transition, addressing questions around the type of transition we plan, e.g. 'What will this transition look and feel like?' We detail how the three identified pillars (core areas) focus us on what needs to be done, and help us to work out how diverse and numerous groups and individuals will participate in *The Plan*, such as through Initiatives.

§4 outlines activities associated with establishing enabling structures, relations and processes for Wararack, which is key to holding and carrying the community transition. These activities are still emergent, especially in as much as we identify and discuss gaps in local actions. Yet we outline certain proposed ways of addressing these gaps.

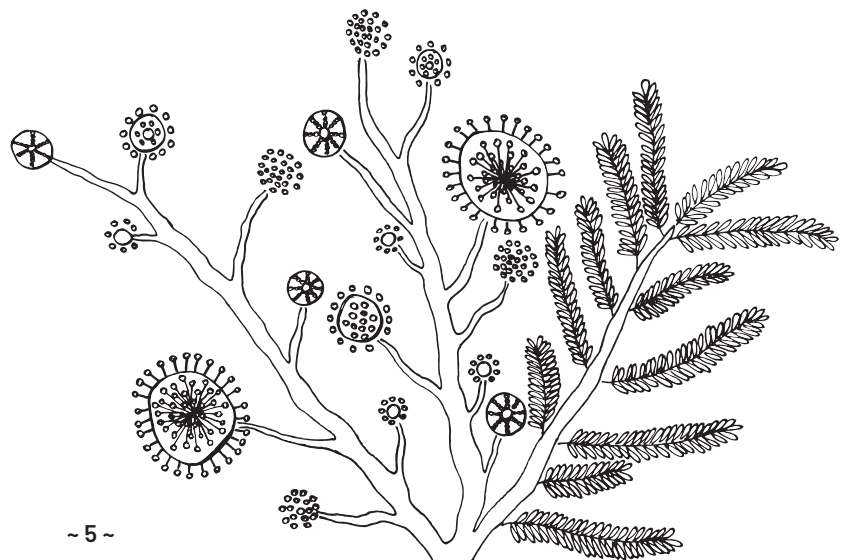
§5 offers a short conclusion.

Additional details and data appear in the Appendices.

“

**Respecting our  
local environment  
through  
regeneration.”**

Transition Workshop  
conversations  
7 December 2022





## §2. Background and Contemporary Context

This section offers background context for *The Plan*, and outlines current community aspirations and developments that have contributed to, and culminated in, the emergent Wararack coalition. As evident in the §2.1 timeline, numerous and various residents and groups in Mount Alexander Shire have advocated and campaigned for climate action for decades. §2.2 describes the current socio-political context for establishing Wararack. §2.3 describes the emergence of Wararack.

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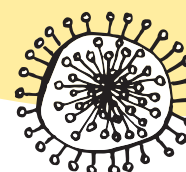
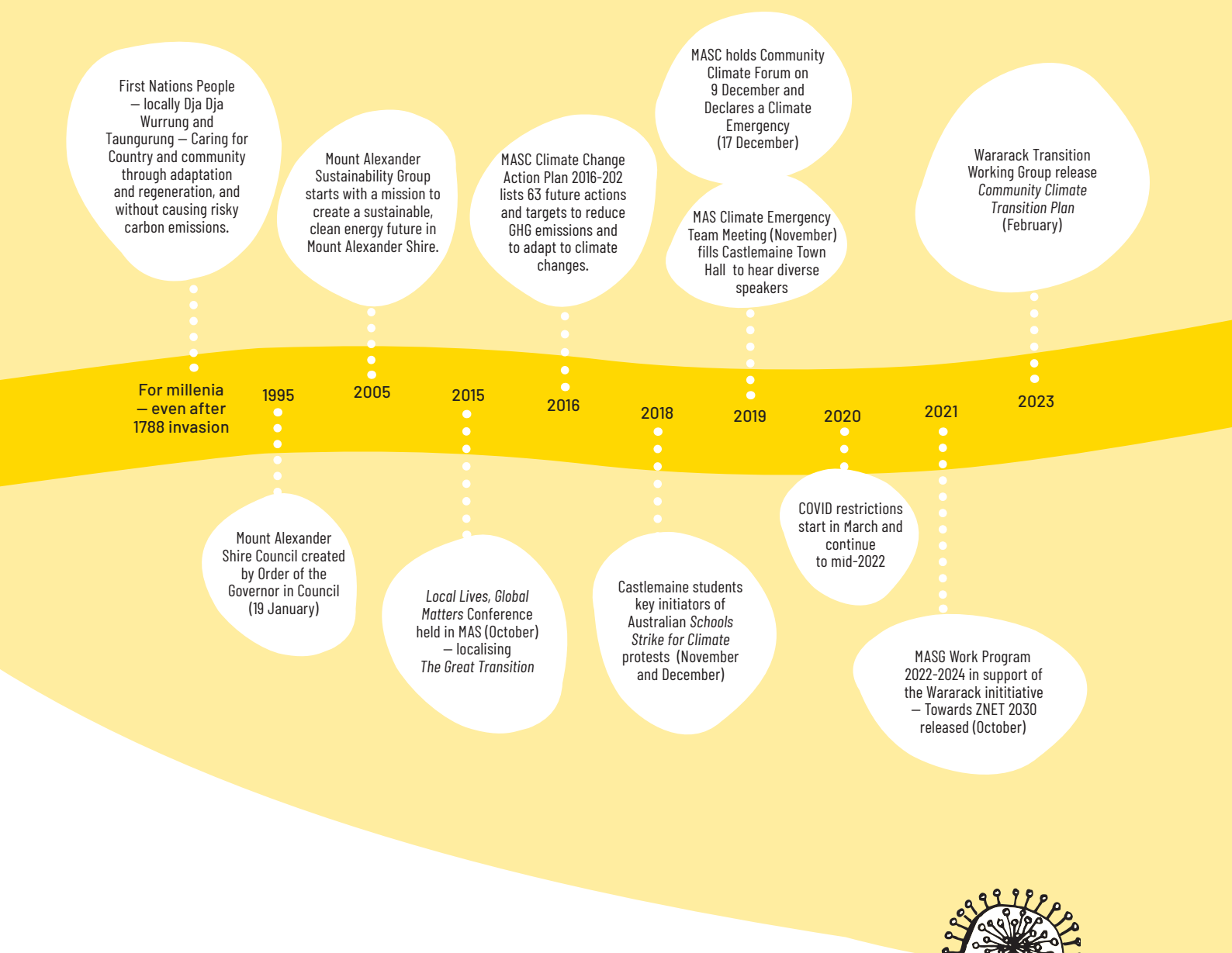
**Climate change  
does make  
people anxious.  
It certainly makes  
me anxious.”**

Climate Change Forum  
2019

### §2.1 Background: Timeline

A retrospective of key works and activities in Mount Alexander Shire (select actions, records and other outcomes that are key references and reference points) informs our otherwise prospective plan (Figure 2). A full, detailed, timeline is a task that we expect to work on in 2023 and post at the Wararack site as a graphic tool and online community database offering access to downloadable files and further details in references via URLs. The form of the timeline here is only indicative. Building the Wararack site timeline further will offer a task for community members to collectively contribute to the history of our transition, which has already begun, and to celebrate new additions as we achieve more. This timeline offers the spine for story-telling and visual art relating to where we have been and where we are going. It has the potential to be a monitoring tool with qualitative and quantitative dimensions.

FIGURE 2. Timeline (and Database) Extract



## §2.2 Climate Forum, 9 December 2019

In 2022, Mount Alexander Shire has more than 20,000 residents living within ecosystems featuring many distinctive animals and plants – from phascogales, wallabies, orchids and wattles to three majestic mountains and box ironbark forests (Appendix I). Within Victoria's central goldfields region, the shire is nourished, and sometimes flooded, by the Loddon and Coliban river system waterways. 'Dja Dja Wurrung Country is host to some of the most profoundly altered landscapes in Victoria,' highlights the Djaara peoples Country plan (JAARA 2017: 9). 'Farming, settlements and mining has left fragmented ecosystems and led to the loss of many species of plants and animals. Changed fire regimes have affected the cycling of nutrients and the composition of species, and led to increased fire fuel loads that pose dangers to people and ecosystems.' As topsoil has eroded, introduced species have supplanted Indigenous ones. Salinity and now climate change are among the 'challenges that we will need to address to heal our Country'.

Valuing Djaara Peoples knowledge and guidance, listening to and caring for our unique local Djaara Country, and an engaged and inclusive community, are foundational values expressed in the Climate Change Forum held on 9 December 2019, when Mount Alexander Shire Council was urged to declare a climate emergency. Views expressed at this 12-hour forum, where 49 speakers were each limited to a five-minute talk, consolidated concerns in 91 written submissions, and voiced in contemporary campaigns and activities – to do more, more quickly and together to meet the challenges of climate change. The key points relevant for this *Plan* were strong messages for climate action right now, community-led climate action, with Council called on to be a key partner in a whole-of-community plan.

The forum hosted a wide range of people from ecologists and environmentalists to church groups, farmers and disability workers. Twenty-five submissions came from committees, health and youth organisations, Landcare groups, banks and business networks, while 42 residents made submissions, with others from businesses and industries.

Subsequently, Malcolm Robins compiled a list of 747 concerns and recommendations for action offered to the forum, and Kyla Brettelle analysed the same to inform the constitution of Wararack (both available on request). The vast majority of submissions favoured declaring a climate emergency and, most significantly, a whole-of-community plan for achieving net zero emissions by 2030. They called not only for more sustainable housing, food security and disaster preparedness, but also for socio-political change focusing on greater participation and engagement. In an instance of clear and concerted community leadership, Council was called on to incorporate and share leadership in climate action.

As local Rob Law later recalled in a podcast: 'It was no longer about scientific facts or far off places, but it was about the dying box ironbark forests up on the hill, or the water disappearing in our creeks, or the vulnerable people in our town, or even just the simple psychological benefits of leaders acknowledging our situation.' To his and so many others' great relief, when a motion to declare a climate emergency was put by Councillor Bronwen Machin at the following Council meeting on 17 December, it passed, six votes to one.

Community voices  
have been strong  
and consistent:  
We need to act  
together now.

Historical details and further context in terms of climate change and climate action are analysed in a commissioned report by *Renew Context Narrative* (2020) based on a review of 33 relevant local documents produced 2006–2020. *Context Narrative* lists 22 local community organisations involved in climate change work, with a further dozen or so small town or neighbourhood-based support networks with, or with the potential for, climate action to adapt, care for community and Djaara Country and to achieve net zero emissions by 2030. Numerous achievements, current activities and future projects planned are set in the regional context of networks with organisations such as ADAPT Loddon Mallee (based in Epsom). Moreover, Council's Our Say platform was used to gather further community input, October 2021–April 2022, receiving over 200 contributions by around 60 engaged people.

In short, community voices have been strong and consistent: 'We need to act together now'.



## §2.3 Wararack in the Making

In 2020, Mount Alexander Shire Council convened a local think tank of community members to review the Climate Change Forum submissions. They envisaged a regenerative transition and project-based approach to achieving it. The Castlemaine Institute took over stewardship of the project and made preparations for the development of a community transition plan, launching as the 'Wararack Initiatives' in 2021. By August 2021 more than 100 Australian councils had declared a climate emergency, joining a couple of thousand worldwide, and Australia alone had more than 130 net zero carbon communities (Ironbark Sustainability and ICLEI, 2021: 3-6). But the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions (2020-2021) caused delays in activities working towards instituting our community transition plan.

Subsequently, in 2022, the task of advancing the project fell to a small group of volunteers (the Wararack Core Group) tasked with identifying, proposing and gaining support for an appropriate structure, principles and processes to hold and realise a community-based climate transition. The allied Wararack Transition Working Group collated and developed *The Plan*, the Core Group reimagining its character as a coalition and renaming it simply 'Wararack'. Wararack is forming as a coalition to regenerate Mount Alexander Shire in both social and ecological spheres, to effectively hold the necessary transition to a climate safe future. Beyond achieving net zero emissions, Wararack aims to support collectively built resilience, equity and care for Djaara Country into all our ways of living and relating to one another.

Despite delays in activity associated with the pandemic, community pressure for action has only increased since the declaration of a climate emergency. Recently, a Mount Alexander Shire Council survey of the local community, conducted to inform its 10-year Climate Change Strategy in the making, found calls for council to 'prioritise and lead on climate change', to respond in fair and equitable ways, to respect and prioritise First Nations knowledge and perspectives, and to acknowledge and collaborate with experienced and active community members already working to enhance community connection, to adapt to climate change and to reduce emissions (MASC, 2022). These calls were reiterated in two workshops, held by Council and the Wararack Transition Working Group on 7 December 2022, with 39 community members committed to tackling the climate emergency. The workshops were held to inform both *The Plan* and the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

“

We need to find holistic approaches for a circular economy — so we can solve multiple issues at once.”

Climate Change Forum  
2019



## WARARACK IN A NUTSHELL

The workshops consolidated the Wararack Transition Working Group's direction as follows:



Wararack is the glue that brings people and purpose together within this unique place.

Wararack promotes action that helps us collectively reach net zero emissions, better prepare for climate impacts, to embrace change and to forge new ways of doing and thinking. This transition to regenerative living is an holistic response to the climate crisis.

Wararack is tasked with holding this transition to a climate-safe future for the next generation and beyond.

Wararack is a coalition of those supporting a shire-wide, community-led effort towards regenerative ways of living in response to the climate crisis.



Wararack will support the shire community to prioritise areas for action, that are within the community's scope to influence, and that will have the quickest and biggest impact on our net zero emissions reduction target.



Wararack will adopt such priorities and promote them as areas for action. Wararack represents a growing shire-wide, collaborative, community-led response to the climate crisis.





### §3. Scoping the Transition

What *type* of transition is at the heart of the *Climate Community Transition Plan 2023–30*? The transition is relational in character and regenerative in its aims and outcomes. *The Plan* is holistic in terms of Djaara Country (within the shire) and works from our strengths. The transition aims to measurably reduce carbon emitting activities; to ensure security of everyday needs such as food and housing, and conviviality within the community as we adapt to an unstable climate; to grow in cultural ways of solidarity and sharing that support our relations with one another and with Djaara Country as we move to stabilise the climate.

So, what might success in 2030 look like? In terms of the atmosphere we will have reached net zero emissions, even zero emissions and be engaging in positive carbon activities. We will house, clothe and feed ourselves, as well as relate to and care for one another and Djaara Country in regenerative ways. We will care for and spend a lot of time in Djaara Country nurturing the soil and regenerating landscapes and river systems for greater biodiversity and water security. There will be greater social diversity and inclusion in our shire with open access to all. Diversity and inclusivity will characterise all the various economic activities within the shire and the whole range of services, including learning, health and creative services.

Wararack emphasises that the transition is fundamentally one of process, relations and regeneration. Wararack has a strong role as a key mobiliser in these change-oriented dynamics, creating spaces and time for discussion, supporting proposals, debates and decision making. As a shire community, we will need to stop and ask, think, discuss and debate many aspects of this transition again and again as we advance along the way. So, Wararack's theory of change centres on process, with the uncertainty of climate change met by the security of a joined community of diverse members and interests, all working to gain a shared understanding of different perspectives needing to be integrated into the process.

There is not one transition but many transitions working in various areas and on numerous levels – a tapestry of transitions with various community members and groups playing different roles. This variety is not without tensions and Wararack has a role in facilitating ways to address or resolve certain delaying or damaging tensions (§3.1). We explain the practical and positive meaning of the various ways that we will achieve success in transitioning through the three pillars – znet, culture and adapt (§3.2). Examples of future practices comprising the transition appear in §3.3, while existing and potential Initiatives are described and illustrated in §3.4.

### §3.1 A Tapestry of Transitions

The variety in the tapestry of transitions is not without tensions. By way of illustration, in our Wararack Transition Working Group workshops on 7 December 2022, one of our team observed tensions. On the one hand, numerous community member participants see that climate change, as the driver of the climate crisis, requires an urgent response. Consequently, they neatly define and target a single lever for change, namely net zero emissions by 2030. Their approach is quantitative and staged. On the other hand, others see this 'silver bullet' approach as running on fear, say it is a 'patriarchal' and traditional approach to climate action. Instead, they seek to define desired futures to work towards in qualitative terms of well-being, suggest a multi-pronged approach to realise climate-safe futures, and focus much more on relationships and processes necessary to achieve adaptation and reduced emissions.

Wararack positions itself as a weaver of all such diverse sentiments. The challenges

The challenges we face require urgency, inclusion and holism.

we face require urgency, inclusion and holism. Many community tensions reflect contradictory complexities within the composite of challenges that we face rather than essential conflicts in values or even visions of endpoints. Wararack's role is like sap, running through and connecting all the parts, and acting as a weaver, as illustrated in the identification and definition of our three pillars which embrace various approaches and principles. So defined, a successful transition

will satisfy those simply wanting to achieve znet as soon as possible and those who appreciate that deeper cultural changes are necessary.

Another division in our shire community is around ways of conceptualising change and change makers. For instance, our shire encompasses a range of land uses, with both informal and formal activities that data providers such as Snapshot draw on selectively in terms of formal business-oriented 'sectors' — land use (agricultural and forestry activities), industries, commerce, transport, waste, buildings, energy (both renewable and non-renewable electricity and gas), and municipal infrastructure. At first glance, 'sectors' might appear to be a neutral term, and certainly needs to be used as appropriate. Yet, often, sectoral categories neither reflect where we are going nor encompass the appropriate stakeholders with whom we need to collaborate. By way of examples, in a climate-safe future, circular economy developments cluster firms right across sector silos, and sectoral data collection fails to incorporate food increasingly home-grown in climate-sensitive ways as well as certain regenerative agricultural activities, i.e. those that are not currently income-earning.

Moreover, Young People and First Nations Peoples will hold important seats at the table, and we want to ensure the whole diversity of shire communities are included. We see Wararack facilitating a range of measures and qualitative approaches to achieve zero emissions partly by encompassing intra-sectoral and extra-sectoral perspectives.

Working in collaborative ways, Wararack needs to integrate deliberative and horizontal forms of organising (such as sociocracy) rather than working in hierarchical and silo ways with divided powers. Wararack sees roles for all those working from the ground up, from top down and from side-to-side together in strongly participatory assembly-style gatherings that will enhance understandings of local needs and capacity, and facilitate community sharing in building mutual visions and stories for achieving the transition together. Bi-monthly gatherings and workshops in 2022 were conducted in this manner to great effect.

“

**First Nations led solutions in ways of being and doing.”**

Transition Workshop  
conversations  
7 December 2022



Wararack emphasises both qualitative and quantitative change, partly because our transition does not target residents as individuals but as members of a community. As individual consumers, residents rely on local infrastructure, services and markets, and many worker norms disregard public transport timetables and delays, or enforce plane flying. Consequently, it is only possible to embark on wide and deep transitions with momentum for change as a community, campaigning together for more public transport and changes to business expectations of workers; engaging in growing food together in cooperatives, and community and home gardens; realising bike trails in our area; sharing our knowledge and skills in community initiatives such as repair cafes; and planning together in climate conversations. Such community action is much more likely to result in reducing emissions than calling for structurally constrained individuals to use public transport more, to buy organic produce or repair rather than toss out clothes. Individual footprint measures and 'ought' talk, like dietary regimes, lead to anxiety and depression. Each person's circumstances are different, requiring a different 'menu' or options. Let's do it together and help one another all along the way!

There are other risks in *narrowly defined* goals, monitoring and ticking off achievements in purely quantitative ways. For instance, for reasons of data complexity, detail and unattainability, carbon accounting rarely includes embodied carbon of imported goods and services. Such imports are a major proportion of many residents everyday consumption and carbon emissions. The Global Footprint Network (2022) estimates that, in 2019, Australians global ecological footprint was almost five times the average global burden. Other existential challenges include the fact that, by 28 July 2022, humans as a whole had used up all the biological matter that Earth was capable of regenerating for that entire year. We as a species produce and consume Earth as if it were 1.75 times its actual capacity, an imbalance that has grown steadily worse for over 50 years (Global Footprint Network 2022). Many people in our community are not only concerned with achieving equity within our shire but also seek to address inequities beyond, doing our fair share to live within Earth's limits. Carbon emissions are just the tip of the ecological crises surrounding us and our transition aims to be holistic.

This *Plan* seeks to address ecological limits beyond carbon emissions, seeing regeneration and the importance of adjusting all our relations with one and other and Earth in holistic terms, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples do. Addressing these integrated challenges means doing as much as we can as quickly as we can, continuously reflecting on and fine-tuning all of our activities so we keep moving in appropriate directions. Our focus is on creating an inclusionary and connected community, which can support and be supported by, a strongly local economy which satisfies our basic needs while regenerating our local extra-human environment.



## §3.2 Three Principles: Three Pillars

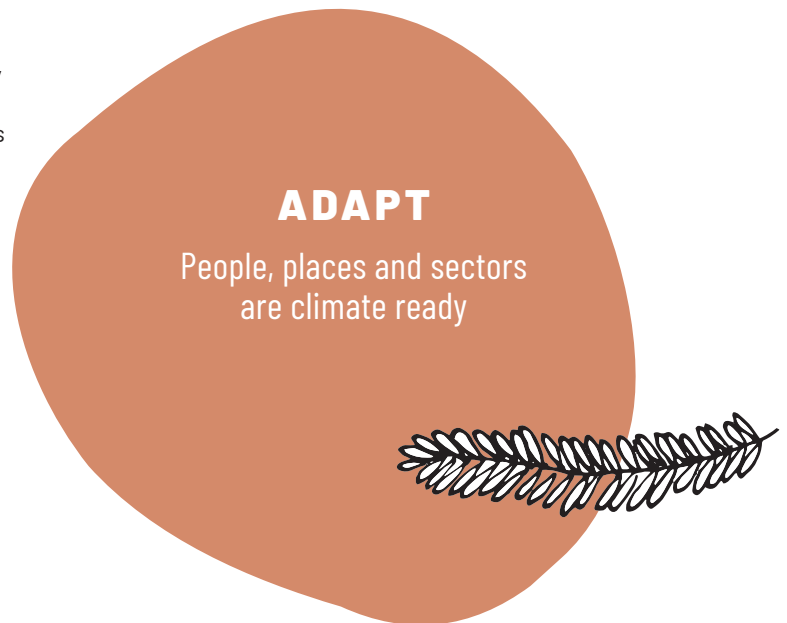
Our three main approaches and pillars offer a holistic response to the climate challenges we face. We need to adapt to create a healthy and resilient environment and community. Cradled in a culture of caring for Djaara Country and our community, social and ecological justice are key principles enabling our advance. Our ultimate target is *znet* (net zero) emissions by 2030.

### ADAPT

The principle and pillar 'adapt' points to enhancing our resilience as residents, the resilience of Djaara Country and the resilience of activities that support our everyday lives and livelihoods. Significant local concerns to adapt have been heightened by the impacts of climate changes that we are already experiencing, and by scientific forecasts that indicate further impacts. Such concerns have been voiced, for instance, in the shire-wide 2022 Climate Conversations (see §3.4).

Within the Loddon Campaspe catchment, the Mount Alexander Shire community is threatened by various trends building towards 2050 when, 35km north of Castlemaine, 'Bendigo's climate could be more like Shepparton's' (ADAPT Loddon Mallee, 2021: 11). These trends include maximum temperature increases up to 3°C; a doubling of days of 38°C+ heat; reductions in rainfall of 20mm; more intense rainfall and expansive floods; extended fire seasons and two-thirds more very high+ fire danger days (ADAPT Loddon Mallee, 2021: 11). With a widely distributed population of over 20,000 people, many in single and couple households (Appendix I), preparing for flood or bushfire in our shire is a practical and community-wide challenge. Our community acknowledges that pulling together at times of natural disasters is critical to a sustained and successful response to such challenges. Residents in urban neighbourhoods and small towns are already discussing and organising to be prepared for such future challenges (see §2.2. and Box 1). Moreover, there are frequent calls for more safe, green and cool community spaces for people to rest and revive in the heat.

Many local adaptive actions have already been taken with respect to more collective local food provisioning, a need highlighted in recent years when the pandemic and associated restrictions broke supply chains. Locally grown food enhances our food security. In the early 2020s, Castlemaine has developed weekly markets and small enterprises, including forms of community-supported agriculture, regularly supplying healthy food from locally grown organic and regenerative farming and gardening. Djaara Peoples are sharing indigenous plant knowledge, have stalls offering indigenous plants, and cater with such food. Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation has started a Bushtucker Farm, developing land at Me-mandook Galk, Bush Tucker resources, and a commercial native plant business. Nalderun also has a Food Program for families in need. Community gardens and grow-at-home learning opportunities provided by knowledgeable and skilled people improve locals capacity to contribute to collective food provisioning. Small local makers of cheese, beers, preserves, meat products and so on have emerged. These developments involve cooperative forms, in-kind arrangements rather than conventional land leases, sharing of products, knowledge sharing and cooperation between erstwhile business competitors, opportunities for local cafés and restaurants to feature locally grown food, and healthy food provisioning for schools, public events and community lunches.



Consequently, emerging environmentally-friendly initiatives in the food 'sector' are not limited to 'agriculture' as in conventional farmers supplying supermarkets. Rather, our local area and social processes are adapting with new types of growers, innovative renewal of traditional practices, and novel forms of distribution and consumer action. Manufacturing and construction illustrate similar changes with artisan metal workers and carpenters, sustainability-focussed tradespeople, repairers of second-hand clothes, bike making and repairing, and so on. Innovative forms of more sustainable and durable production often economise on waste and emphasise the artistic as well as qualitative dimensions of custom made products. Many adaptive practices, such as collecting water for household use, are allied with, and overlap with, 'culture', new ways of thinking and changing our everyday practices.

## CULTURE

Culture influences the ways we live and impacts on our climate. Wararack is evolving a relational structure to readily enable co-governing, making decisions to realise activities together and to influence makers of decisions which impact on our capacity to transition. We aim to collaborate in open, respectful and transparent ways to serve the interests of Djaara Country and community, both alive and continuously changing. Our processes model a culture of care, recognising that we are in a dynamic and interdependent relationship with all living things, understandings already evident in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ways of seeing, doing and knowing.

In this transition, all the shire's residents relate to a shared place and to shared spaces. The shire community has already shown its capacity to constructively suggest and discuss climate action proposals and plans. The creative aspects of our local culture have been strengths for at least a couple of generations. Wararack projects, such as the silver wattle clay currency project, which was initiated to stimulate discussions around more sustainable economies by local Carbon Arts, highlight roles for creative arts in adapting to climate changes and strengthening regenerative care for Djaara Country and community (Martin and Mirraboopa 2003).

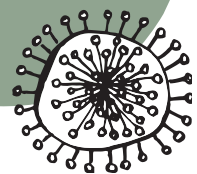
But we have much more to learn, especially from First Nations Peoples, in doing things and relating to one another in better ways for a climate safe future (360info, 2022). There is a strong sentiment supporting greater equity, novel policies such as minimum basic incomes, sharing work opportunities by all working fewer days per week to allow more time for everyone to be carers, do housework, cook and grow foods.

Caring more stretches beyond households to neighbourhoods, to caring for Djaara Country. Regeneration of Country is a massive opportunity to bring our shire community together in neighbourhoods caring for the earth that is the source of our survival. Working together, listening, chatting and gaining trust are all important for strengthening our local democracy, local discussion and decision making which is more participatory and, therefore, more inclusive and likely to address most residents' interests.

Cultural change around how we think and do things have strong practical applications. For instance, we need to respond to our local housing crises by addressing how we make our housing more sustainable, affordable, and diverse to meet the various needs of distinctive households. Issues related to housing illustrate how cultural change is key to ensuring that the reasons for, and benefits of, znet by 2030 are widely understood and supported (§3.4).

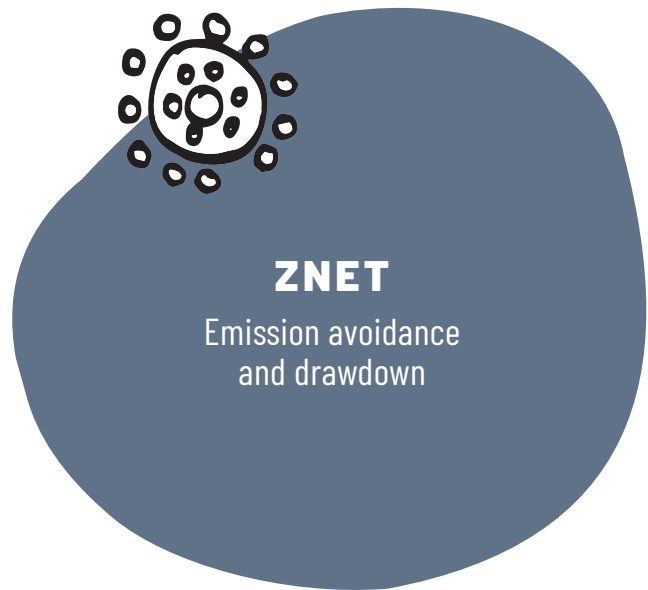
## REGENERATIVE CULTURE

Embrace caring for Country  
and Community, working creatively  
and a just society



## ZNET

The znet pillar focuses on a science-based target of zero net emissions by 2030. We plan to achieve this in a combination of distinctive efforts to reduce and stop emissions where they originate, and to capture and store emissions already released into the atmosphere through activities like regenerative agriculture and tree planting. Mount Alexander Sustainability Group (MASG) proposes ways for our municipality to achieve this target in *The Mount Alexander Sustainability Group Work Program 2022-2024 in support of the Warrarrack Initiative – Towards ZNET 2030* (MASG, 2021: v), which estimates total shire emissions at 283,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and indicates a pathway following the actions listed in Table 1.



Total emissions in '000 tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> (e)	283.0
Retrofit and electrification of gas at 2019 emissions standards for purchased electricity	-22.5
Electric vehicles and renewable fuels and other fuels	-16.6
Increased electrification electricity demand net of small-scale solar generation expansion*	-0.5
Bioenergy facility	-62.9
Regenerative Agriculture Program	-84.0
Land use changes	-11.0
Hydrogen Hub	-38.3
Victorian Government – Renewable Electricity Policy	-46.9
<b>NET</b>	<b>0.0</b>

\*Discrepancy due to rounding

TABLE 1. The ZNET Pathway: Outcomes, 2030.  
Source: Table E.2 (MASG, 2021: v)

Significantly, if successfully realised, the bioenergy facility and regenerative agriculture program achieve at least half of the emissions reduction target. Delays or fast-tracking of proposals depend on factors outside our community's control. For instance, the state renewable energy and storage target was recently raised to 65 percent, i.e. above the MASG estimate. The Victorian ALP (DEECA, 2023) also recently announced its aim to reach 95 per cent renewable electricity in the state by 2035, further supporting our znet target. Meanwhile, at the time of writing, a Don KR proposal to establish a 27-hectare 3.5 megawatt solar farm seems highly likely to proceed (Dalton, 2022).

MASG (2021) focuses on abatement within shire boundaries, i.e. reducing emissions that we generate, recognising that net zero emissions relies on consumers accessing *100 percent renewable energy*. MASG (2021) encourages Wararack to influence producers in the agricultural sector to reduce emissions, including substituting renewable (or potentially renewable) sources for non-renewable energy. This 'net' (carbon credit or carbon offset) side of the equation needs to be limited as far as possible and to local activities sequestering atmospheric carbon.

Looking at some 1050 businesses responsible for Shire emissions, MASG (2021: 8, 55) proposes focusing on the 30 responsible for 62 per cent of emissions – particularly six manufacturing firms responsible for an 'average non-ZNET ready emissions of 6,300 tonnes per business' – and electrification. A bioenergy plant for industry and housing retrofit program, including increasing solar panels, are key to reduce gas use. Transferring to electric vehicles (EVs) is necessary to reduce transport-related emissions. MASG (2021: 63) suggests a biomass hydrogen fund to offset some 47,500 tonnes carbon outstanding emissions. Land use change, say establishing wood lots on vacant or the least productive agricultural land could be used to produce hydrogen gas and biochar.

Note that MASG (2021: v) estimates total shire emissions during 2019 at 283,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. In contrast, this *Plan* foregrounds Snapshot (2023) Mount Alexander Shire data for the 2020–2021 financial year (Table 2). Significantly, Snapshot (2023) data for 2019, indicate total municipal emissions of 335,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. The differences in total emissions between these data bases are not simply due to different reference periods or source material but also differences in data classification, for instance with respect to 'transport'. Wararack will interrogate the differences in such measures and methods as it works with different data sources for distinctive applications.

Snapshot is the community climate tool developed by Beyond Zero Emissions and Ironbark Sustainability with data for every region across Australia. Consequently, Snapshot data has the merit of easy comparability with other municipalities, and the opportunity of partnering with Snapshot to advise and further service our data needs. Snapshot applies a common framework, so data consistency facilitates comparison, and is compliant with international protocols and practices. In as much as all municipalities are set within this framework their individual profiles taken altogether 'add up to the national emissions total, meaning that no emissions go unaccounted for' (see 'About' at Snapshot, 2023).

“

**Regenerative farming linking to community food stores.”**

Transition Workshop  
conversations  
7 December 2022

TABLE 2. Snapshot: MAS Carbon Emissions by Source and Sector (2018-21 Financial Years)  
 Source: Snapshot (accessed 27 December 2022)  
 snapshotclimate.com.au/locality/municipality/australia/victoria/mount-alexander/

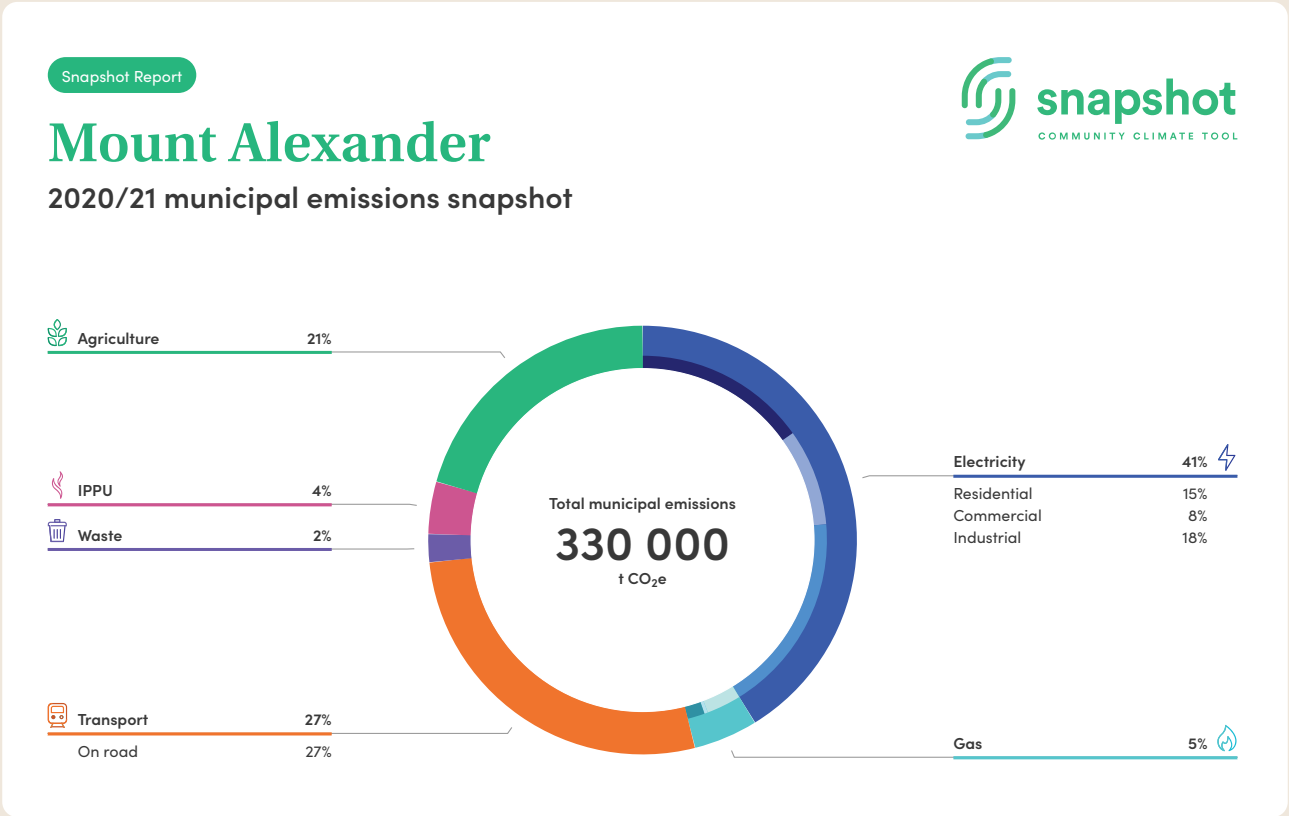


TABLE 2.1 MAS emissions for 2020-2021 financial year (and two previous year totals)

Source	Sector	Emissions (t CO <sub>2</sub> e)
Electricity	Residential	50 000
	Commercial	28 000
	Industrial	58 000
Gas	Residential	10 000
	Commercial	1 000
	Industrial	5 000
Transport		90 000
Waste		7 000
IPPU		13 000
Agriculture		68 000
Land Use		4 000

Land Use data is not used in the chart nor the displayed total municipal emissions.

#### Characteristics

Land area	1 530 km <sup>2</sup>
Population	20 054
Gross regional product	\$ 841 653 700
Climate zone	7

TABLE 2.2 MAS emissions for 2020–2021 financial year, sources within sectoral breakdown

Year	Source	Emissions (t CO <sub>2</sub> e)
2020/2021	Electricity	136 000
	Gas	16 000
	Transport	90 000
	Waste	7 000
	IPPU	13 000
	Agriculture	68 000
	Land Use	4 000
2019/2020	Electricity	143 000
	Gas	16 000
	Transport	94 000
	Waste	7 000
	IPPU	13 000
	Agriculture	59 000
	Land Use	4 000
2018/2019	Electricity	148 000
	Gas	15 000
	Transport	97 000
	Waste	7 000
	IPPU	13 000
	Agriculture	59 000
	Land Use	4 000

Land Use data is not used in the chart nor the displayed total municipal emissions.

#### Characteristics

Land area	1 530 km <sup>2</sup>
Population	20 054
Gross regional product	\$ 841 653 700
Climate zone	7

TABLE 2.3. MAS emissions for 2018–2021 financial years, sectoral breakdown

“

Waterways are slow to flood and slow to dry out because their catchments are like a sponge. Moisture stored in the soil helps keep the microclimate cool and maintain plant growth and shade year after year.”

Transition Workshop conversations  
7 December 2022



### §3.3 The Transition in Practice

What will the transition look like in practice over the period 2023–2030? Community member participants in two workshops held on 7 December 2022 by Mount Alexander Shire Council and Wararack in partnership offered ideas, some of which are already being actioned. Participants (39) responded to questions around defining and describing our community climate transition strategy, vision, enablers and barriers.

Input clustered under the three pillars of *znet*, culture and adapt. Generic net zero ideas from community members indicates the considerable overlap in our three pillars to uphold the transition, a strongly community-based (rather than individualistic) focus, a local scale and very practical acts. By way of examples, community members called for:

- eliminating fossil fuel use
- minimising energy use
- living within the limits of our shire's energy generation
- community-owned and neighbourhood scale renewable energy supply
- electricity sharing between households
- equal access to power supplies
- widely accessible devices for real time feedback on generating emissions to drive changed practices (habits)
- affordable solar power, batteries and EV charging stations complemented with wind power plants outside towns
- using offsets as a last resort and only local offsets
- banning plastic and landfill
- encouraging composting and more regular and expanded repair cafes.



There was a strong emphasis on minimising transport emissions by:

- increasing walking and cycling (and paths, shade and lanes to do so)
- affordable and accessible electric-powered public transport
- making town centres car-free
- a car share electric-fleet shire wide with cars in every town, and more in Castlemaine
- car-pooling
- residents and businesses finding alternatives to flights in aeroplanes.

All these ideas show aspects of an endpoint vision — what the transition might look, and feel, like.

Community members discussed the overall approach to, the character and implications of the transition as well. They pointed to principles for socio-economic change. Some called for explicit recognition that net zero is critical for life ('saves lives') and that we would thrive with a revegetation-oriented community, rather than an individualistic consumer-oriented shire. This re-orientation involves greater awareness of embodied energy — say, in cars and houses, in materials such as aluminium, steel and concrete — and the need to preserve and extend vegetation (carbon sinks). Local collective sufficiency would involve regenerative farming producing for locals, and more markets and direct distribution, such as farm to neighbourhood points or to households.



Community members highlighted conscious producer and consumer actions towards net zero consumer goods and services, and circular economies to reduce energy and waste by closed loop, recycling and re-use markets. Similarly, they referred to Djaara Peoples led solutions, to localised, slow, minimalist (degrowth) living and connected communities. Work changes identified included increased online communication to minimise work travel, enabling remote e-work at home, and manager's acceptance of workers arriving and leaving according to public transport timetables. In achieving change, they raised the importance of reducing systemic disadvantage so that certain people were not left behind or circumstantially forced to bear an unreasonable burden. Equally deliberative decision making processes and festive celebrations (say seasonal) were identified as boosting community momentum for change.

### §3.4 Wararack: Initiatives

Encompassing the kinds of activities our community envisages (§3.3), the *Community Climate Action Transition Plan 2023-2030* is very practical and concrete. Wararack is actioning the three pillars across its work. All existing projects, programs and groups with regenerative activities that express the values and directions of the *three pillars* are invited to promote their activities as Wararack 'Initiatives'. How these autonomous Initiatives fit into the structure of Wararack is outlined in §4. Boxes 1 and 2 show two of the numerous existing transitional activities, some already posted at the Wararack site (<https://wararack.org/>).

These Initiatives form nuclei of the transition in action, showing how it will be achieved. Similar, externally funded and locally accountable, pilot projects have clear potential for being scaled up as their roll out and outcomes prove impressive. The Zero Net Retrofits and Climate Conversations pilot projects (Boxes 1 and 2 respectively) focus attention on practical activities driven by Wararack pillars – *znet* emission avoidance and drawdown (absorption or storage); *adapt(ing)* people, places and sectors for climate-readiness; and a regenerative *culture* embracing caring for Djaara Country and community, working creatively for a just society.



## Zero Net Retrofits

### Contact

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### Organisations

[Mount Alexander Shire Council](#)  
[Mount Alexander Sustainability Group](#)  
Lord Mayors Charitable Fund.  
Forest Creek Housing Cooperative  
Sustainable Australia Fund  
Common Equity Housing Limited

### Themes

[practical action and outcomes](#), [pilot programs](#),  
[reducing carbon emissions](#)

*This Pilot project, called Zero Net Retrofits for Vulnerable Communities, shows how low-income rental properties can be retrofitted to zero net emissions - while making houses warmer in winter, cooler in summer and cheaper to run all year round.*

With the support of the occupants, the project aims to demonstrate how ten local homes can be retrofitted to a zero net standard by increasing energy efficiency, insulating floors, ceilings and walls, sealing gaps and cracks, switching from gas to more efficient electric appliances, shading exposed windows and installing solar panels.

The project has been initiated by the Mount Alexander Sustainability Group, supported by the Sustainable Australia Fund and the Mount Alexander City Council and the retrofit works funded by Common Equity Housing Limited, community housing provider in Castlemaine.

#### ZNET: emission avoidance and drawdown

- Reducing household emissions through direct retrofitting, ensuring housing stock uses renewable energy, increasing passive energy potential, using appliances that are repairable and use less power.
- Supporting those disadvantaged by the current systems to reduce emissions

#### ADAPT: people, places and sectors are climate ready

- Improving the thermal comfort of the home help protects against heat related illnesses and conditions
- Creates jobs in energy auditing, energy efficiency, and solar installation, helping industry sectors to transition

#### REGENERATIVE CULTURE: embrace caring for Country and Community, working creatively and a just society

- Supports those systemically cast as vulnerable in the community

[← Previous Initiative](#)

[Next Initiative →](#)



Our sincere gratitude to Daikota Nelson, who created the original artwork of the Wararack / silver wattle for this logo.

We would also like to thank The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and Uncle Rick Nelson for granting us permission to use the word 'Wararack'.

[GET INVOLVED](#)

Creative Commons 2023 Wararack Initiatives - Graphic Design by Elizabeth Geddes | Web Concept & Design by Kyla Brettie & Greengraphics, and build by Greengraphics & Sharon Dunn

BOX 1. Zero Net Retrofits.  
Source: <https://wararack.org/initiative/zero-net-retrofits>

[About](#)
[Goals & Approach](#)
[Initiatives](#)
[Organisations](#)
[Themes](#)
[Get Involved](#)

## Climate Conversations

**Contact**

Caroline Neilson

**Themes**

[pilot programs](#) [discussion, learning & capacity building](#)

**Organisations Involved**

[Mount Alexander Shire Council](#)  
[ADAPT Loddon Mallee](#)  
[Castlemaine Institute](#)  
Central Victorian Primary Care

*The Climate Conversations project builds relationships and connections with a diverse range of community groups. It gives participants an opening to discuss their fears and concerns about climate and develop collective climate action.*

Climate Conversations is an activation and community relationship building project where volunteer facilitators support community groups to consider the impact of climate change on their group's activities. Using ADAPT Loddon Mallee's 'climate conversation tool kits' as a starting point, volunteers lead groups through a conversation that encourages them to think about what the group values most, how this is impacted by climate change and how the group intends to respond. The facilitators can also link the groups into other local regional initiatives and with other groups with similar common priority actions.

The Climate Conversations project began in 2022 and thirty conversations are planned extending through 2023. The project has had support from local council, the Central Victorian Primary Care Partnerships program and ADAPT Loddon Mallee. Key to developing the project further is to recruit volunteer facilitators through the conversation process, enabling the project to reach further into parts of the shire community not usually represented in decision making and or not engaged in community climate change discussion and action.

**ZNET: emission avoidance and drawdown**

- Sharing knowledge and ideas about how to reduce emissions

**ADAPT: people, places and sectors are climate ready**

- Helping community groups and members to consider and plan for potential impacts of climate on their group activities and key locations.
- Disseminating accurate, relevant information about the impacts of climate change in our region and current adaptation actions undertaken.
- Reaching out to communities under represented in climate decision making
- Working towards establishing a deliberative processes of community engagement to ensure community representation in decision making and climate change action

**REGENERATIVE CULTURE: embrace caring for Country and Community, working creatively and a just society**

- Encourages embedding of Indigenous self determination in climate change adaptation
- Encourages holistic thinking around understanding and responding to the climate emergency
- Having respectful conversations with community members who may not prioritise climate change and challenging silence and taboos around openly discussing the severity of climate change
- Supports the community being proactive and taking ownership of place based climate responses

[← Previous Initiative](#)

[Next Initiative →](#)

Entries on these Initiatives at the Wararack site show networks of organisational support for such initiatives, and the functions they perform within the context of a regenerative transition. Initiatives – and the site content more generally – are being themed so that various cross-connections can be made, as such multiplying ways that initiatives can be clustered and categorised, worked with and integrated within Wararack's portfolio of activities. Perhaps most significantly, Initiatives offer all members of the Mount Alexander Shire community opportunities to become actively engaged in the transition according to the vast array of residents' interests, passions and concerns. This key function of Wararack, of connecting community efforts, is reflected in our current list of themes (Box 3).

BOX 2. Climate Conversations.  
Source: <https://wararack.org/initiative/climate-conversations>





This section on the character of the community-based climate action transition aims to show the implications of the transition(s). It is clear from Snapshot data and MASG (2021) analysis that industrial, commercial, farming and governmental players are prime actors in altering their practices compared with residents' share. At the same time community members are anxious to live in ways that reduce carbon emissions and engage in regenerative practices, to influence players who are responsible for carbon emissions and to put effort into creating more appropriate economic and work-based practices. As such, the social change at the heart of the community climate transition is both relational in character and regenerative in its aims and outcomes, holistic in terms of Djaara Country, and works from strengths — as illustrated in the Initiatives. To measurably reduce carbon emitting activities, we need to have everybody on board and ensure that every resident has security of everyday needs. Inclusion is paramount as we move to adapt and change our ways, our culture, to stabilise the climate.



## §4. Holding the Transition

The Wararack Transition Working Group decided, in the latter half of 2022, on proposed structures, principles and processes to enable Wararack to hold the community climate action transition. As a coalition, it is acknowledged that governance will need to shift and change over time, to reflect the work rhythms of Wararack's component parts and its closest independent allies within Initiatives and as Guardians, Partners and Critical Friends. The simple, clear form of co-governance proposed has a flat structure of peer-to-peer relations between a Wararack Core Group, various Home Groups and Action Groups, and other special relationships outlined in §4.1, with an associated governance decision making table presented in Appendix III. Key relationships, namely the enduring one with Mount Alexander Shire Council and some tentative partnerships, are discussed in §4.2. Resourcing is explained in §4.3. Finally, the next steps for Wararack, during 2023, are discussed in §4.4.

## §4.1 Processes and Structures to Hold this Transition

Wararack needs to be transparent, open, accountable and trustworthy, modelling the types of relations needed for a regenerative transition.

### PROCESSES

What principles and processes enable the broadest participation possible in decision making while maintaining efficiency in a whole of shire context? Key common approaches to all roles and responsibilities follow.

- We support action and effort for the community climate action transition
- We work to include all people and activities aligning with our shared vision for change
- We strive to achieve outcomes, neither acting as the leader nor as the sole authority
- We do not seek to own and control but to serve the community and align all our efforts
- We celebrate and encourage a diversity of opinion in discursive and collaborative processes that are safe and respectful
- We focus on outcomes and impacts, not specific projects or programs
- We influence and advocate using opportunities, and the power and authority of others, as needed to progress our community's combined efforts
- We learn what works as we go, so we will be kind to each other as we move forward
- We support localised decision making on the basis of subsidiarity, i.e. as close to the relevant action and impact as is feasible.

### STRUCTURE

The Wararack **Core Group** is the contact point for external Partners, Collaborators and other Supporters (such as Wararack funders) and serves as an internal connection point for Home Groups, Action Groups, Initiatives, Climate Emergency Guardians and Critical Friends. The Core Group expects all relevant activities, advice and decisions to be reported to it, to facilitate knowledge and skills sharing among the community. However, the Core Group is neither a gatekeeper nor a decision maker with respect to semi-independent relations between all these groups, who are all comprised of independent community members. We expect fluid and nimble communications between all these people and groups. See Figure 3, for a graphic representation of Wararack's governance structure and the table in Appendix III for details on scope and roles of decision making for all, including the whole shire community.

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**Citizens assemblies and community deliberation to create culture of self-determination”**

Transition Workshop  
conversations  
7 December 2022

# Wararack

## Governance Structure

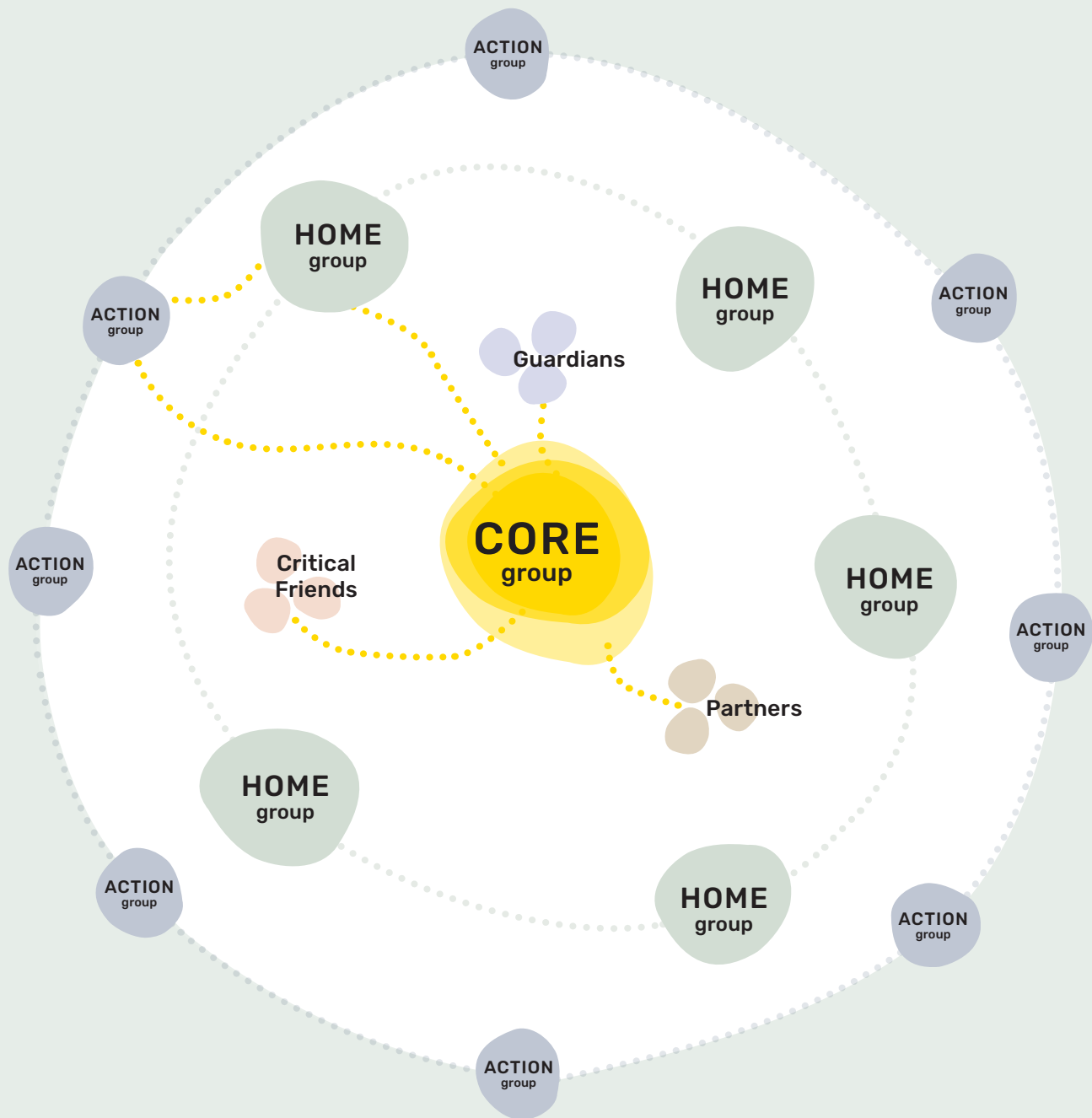


FIGURE 3. Wararack Governance Structure

Wararack is committed to strengthening connection to Djaara Country and community. Critical to this is learning from Djaara Peoples knowledge, skills, ways of being and doing. Wararack will constructively respect the voice and cultural wisdom of the Dja Dja Wurrung in all we do as **Climate Emergency Guardians** of the transition. In recognition of their critical role in calling the climate emergency in Victoria, nationally and worldwide, Young People in our community are also acknowledged as Climate Emergency Guardians of Wararack. Wararack is committed to listen deeply, to be guided and informed by our Guardians' distinctive wisdoms. As currently integrated, these invited custodians of *The Plan* are active, by negotiation, in distinctive and appropriate ways, and key to strengthening our community culture, which is being built for an inclusive, shared and equitable transition. Indeed, Wararack respects all living beings – Country, the living planet – as an ethic and Guardian of our work.

The Core Group facilitates and negotiates delegation of roles and functions among **Home Groups** and **Action Groups** with a responsibility for representing the whole community. Home Groups and Action Groups are comprised of both specially invited people and people who self-nominate. Home Groups, nominated in Figure 4, are likely to be permanent. The Core Group will facilitate the formation of the more likely temporary Action Groups for specific short-to-medium-term functions, such as for a bushfire or flood emergency or the Democracy Action Group already forming to establish inclusive and participatory democratic practices for informing and actioning the transition plan (see §4.4). The Core Group might be best understood, and even refereed to, as a co-governance action group.

As mentioned, Djaara Peoples and Young People are distinctively identified as Guardians. Moreover, the Core Group will nominate and work formally with a range of individuals known as **Critical Friends** (or useful dissenters) and advocates of *The Plan* and the work it drives (as in Figure 3).

The Core Group works closely with both Home Groups and Action Groups with two-way reporting mechanisms. As of early 2023, these groups with specific delegated functions are in formation. Tasks of Home Groups will morph over time, their form following their key functions, as succinctly listed in Figure 5. Home Groups and Action Groups will each have a member who is a Contact Point for the Core Group and wider community. This is a rotating role with the Action Groups selecting their own representative/s as the Contact Point.



FIGURE 4. Home Groups



Resource & Finance	Align & Network	Research & Build Capacity	Track & Evaluate	Engage & Mobilise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek external funding</li> <li>• Develop regenerative projects</li> <li>• Support groups and individuals to apply for grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run regular informal networking and discussion events</li> <li>• Host workshops and bring projects together to discuss common themes</li> <li>• Support existing projects, newsletters and discussion forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support existing learning programs</li> <li>• Commission research and develop shared knowledge</li> <li>• Assist iterative development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop methods and processes for measuring our efficacy</li> <li>• Report to the collective on how we are tracking</li> <li>• Identify procurement gaps in the circular supply chains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share what we learn with others</li> <li>• Seek to connect with communities the Wararack isn't reaching</li> <li>• Represent our collective work externally</li> </ul>

FIGURE 5. Home Groups: Functions

The **Engage and Mobilise Group** shares Wararack learnings with others locally (and beyond) and seeks to connect with shire residents and groups that Wararack is not reaching (inclusion). In mobilising, members of this group apply movement building frameworks such as the concentric 'circles of commitment' approach with core members in the bull's eye, the committed (frequently active) in the next most central circle, the contributors (less frequent or partially active) in the surrounding circle, crowd/supporters (friends, who turn up to events) in the even wider circle, and the community at large (those still to pull into the movement) in the greatest circle (Pulsford, 2014; BZE, 2020: 16).

Among other functions, the **Wararack site** is designed to function as a vehicle to promote and facilitate the Engage and Mobilise Group's role as a movement builder, inviting people to join the coalition by subscribing to the mailing list, by participating in our networking events, following Wararack on social media, and becoming involved in the growing number of Wararack Initiatives (<https://wararack.org/get-involved/>).

As such, the Engage and Mobilise Group works closely with the **Align and Network Group** in jointly running certain informal networking and discussion events, such as the current bi-monthly gatherings open to all at the Taproom. Independently, the Align and Network Group will host workshops and bring project teams together to discuss common themes and complementary forward plans; support existing projects, newsletters and discussion forums.

The **Research and Build Capacity Group** supports existing learning programs, and encourages new ones where gaps appear; commissions research and builds shared knowledge across the community; and assists with iterative developments. In certain senses, the Research and Build Capacity Group functions as a community of practice, and promotes such models within Wararack.

The **Track and Evaluation Group** develops methods and processes for measuring our efficacy within and across the pillars of znet, adapt and culture; reports to the collective on how we are tracking; and identifies barriers to progress. They will work with Initiatives and across the multiplicity of data collection bodies and contribute to the Resource and Finance Group's task of producing a Supporter Impact Report annually.

In short, the **Resource and Finance Group** is tasked with seeking resources and funding, developing regenerative projects and supporting groups and individuals to apply for grants. This group's work is detailed in §4.3 on resourcing Wararack.

“

Be brave – role model world's best practices and beyond.”

Transition Workshop conversations  
7 December 2022

In short, the Core Group, Home Groups and Action Groups function to convene, facilitate and maximise diversity in the shire; to facilitate transparent and effective communication across transition activities; to apply a shared management framework, and align resources for the transition. In these ways Wararack provides governing principles and processes to hold the transition. Wararack facilitates and responds to community-based decision making and interventions, but it does not make decisions on the transition independently of the shire community, which it serves. The already mentioned principle is to support localised decision making on the basis of subsidiarity, i.e. as close to the relevant action as is feasible.

As an overarching process, Wararack and *The Plan* earn their legitimacy in evolving from, and being called into existence by, the shire community. Wararack is needed to research and build capacity across the range of existing Initiatives and organisations. The timeline database, which will appear at the Wararack website, is intended to grow and contribute to mapping community voices and action. The Track and Evaluate Group will adopt, adapt and develop a shared measurement framework to define carbon and other relevant regenerative and biodiversity indicators, in order to monitor progress. A key model here will be the exemplary Zero Emissions Byron Bay plan developed and applied in association with Beyond Zero Emissions (Appendix II), with whom we intend to investigate a partnership. Our transition is necessarily experimental and experiential so there will need to be a lot of analysis of both action and impacts from a test, try and learn perspective.

The Wararack transition strategy aims to integrate, and go beyond, steps outlined in the *Zero Carbon Communities Guide 2020* (BZE, 2020: 14ff) by engaging the community inclusively, through storytelling, seeking endorsement from Mount Alexander Shire Council, identifying comparative baseline emissions and an aspirational target, reviewing and reporting, building on existing activities, and seeking adequate resources to support this journey. Most significantly, the Wararack pillars and structure emphasise regeneration and relationships, with transitional functions spread through dedicated Home Groups, Action Groups and Initiatives while the Core Group encourages and supports their tasks and promotes their achievements. As detailed in §3.4, **Initiatives** are autonomous regenerative activities occurring in our shire. All projects, programs and groups with activities that express the values and directions of the three pillars are invited to promote their activities as such Initiatives.



## §4.2 Emergent Partnerships and Actions

The network of organisations regenerating Mount Alexander Shire and supporting Wararack include the Castlemaine Institute, Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation, Mount Alexander Sustainability Group, the Hub Foundation, MainFM, ADAPT Loddon Mallee, Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA), Sustainability Australia and WWF Australia. Wararack has a special relationship with Mount Alexander Shire Council and emerging partnerships with national organisations keen to partner with Wararack in terms of its transitional endeavours. These partnerships are discussed given that they are expected to be key to developments in 2023 and beyond.

### MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL

Wararack looks forward to maintaining and expanding an efficient and effective collaboration with Mount Alexander Shire Council, especially given its strategic objective to listen to the community and integrate residents' concerns and opinions on decision making relevant to them (*Council Plan 2021–2025*). Alongside the partnership with Council, the Democracy Action Group is currently being formed under the guidance of members of the pre-existing Mount Alexander Deliberative Engagement (MADE) and Democracy for Dinner, incorporating lessons from the local Climate Conversations pilot project (Box 2). With the main function of designing how we make decisions as a community, Wararack and the Democracy Action Group welcome MASC's objectives to:

- Deepen our deliberative engagement protocols and practice
- Develop a deliberative engagement strategy
- Initiate a deliberative engagement project on the complex challenge of climate change.

(*Council Plan 2021–2025*)

A critical step in our partnership was holding two jointly run Wararack Transition Working Group and Council workshops (7 December 2022) with Wararack exploring the transition planning and Council consulting on their climate strategy (Let Me Be Frank, 2022). Among a host of ideas raised and opinions voiced, these workshops indicated that the community wanted a close and complementary role with Council, with two-way engagement and respect in order to negotiate and delegate advocacy, leadership and authority according to their respective responsibilities, powers and positions. Wararack is particularly well-placed to continue working with Council in such ways to leverage community interests, in sharing data, trouble-shooting and by nurturing initiatives that are particularly promising in terms of aligning Wararack's concerns. There is an ongoing commitment from Council as partners to contribute across Wararack structures and processes.



The Wararack Transition Working Group and initial Wararack Core Group (2022–2023) had the critical advantage of Council's provision of administrative and secretarial services, as well as free venue use, to the group during 2022. Wararack will benefit greatly from Council continuing such support in the future. We see a strong role for such in-kind arrangements, this one enabling council to be directly informed about Wararack's operations, facilitating collaboration, and optimising possibilities for mutual support. Wararack and the wider community work for close, effective and efficient relationships within which a regenerative transition has great potential.

## COALITION OF EVERYONE

Wararack has an emerging partnership with the Australian organisation, Coalition of Everyone for the Regeneration of Everything (CoE) (<https://www.coalitionofeveryone.com/>). Wararack has scoped, and is actively negotiating, to become a CoE pilot bioregional community knowledge and governance hub, to enhance local place-based regenerative economies via civic empowerment and community participation. CoE's approach to such pilot programs is one of partnership and co-learning, of listening and being responsive, nurturing and supporting. CoE networks widely with many regeneration groups in and beyond Australia so a partnership has the benefit of fast-tracking Wararack learning and networking with other Australia-wide groups and net zero activities relevant to us. In particular, CoE's operating framework seems to fit with Wararack's holistic regenerative approach and emphasis on Djaara Peoples and youth perspectives.

## ETHICAL FIELDS

Wararack has an emerging partnership with Ethical Fields, an association that solicited our inclusion in their Place Based Capital Program (Ethical Fields, 2022). This pilot program includes 15 communities, some council-based, others supported by non-government organisations. Impressed by the dynamism of transitional planning and activities existing in Mount Alexander Shire, Ethical Fields sought to partner with Wararack, in particular due to its strong community-based character. By working with these 15 communities, joined as communities of interest and as a community of practice within the program, Ethical Fields aims to develop successful models for growing local participation, local assets, local economies and raising councils' awareness of importance of mutual organisations for cohesion and sustainability. The program directly addresses challenges we are grappling with, such as accessing financing of novel transitional initiatives, seeking reliable sources of funding, and ensuring local organisations and people control and receive the benefits of local economic and development activities.

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At the moment most of the climate risk is being carried by individuals. It would be great to shift some of that risk to government – and even better, to companies who are responsible for emissions. And shift it to the collective.”

Transition Workshop conversations 7 December 2022

## §4.3 Resourcing Wararack

As Wararack moves to a deeper phase of its establishment, the emerging Resource and Finance Home Group will reflect transitional directions, including supporting new economic approaches in a net zero emissions environment. A range of novel economic perspectives and practices are evolving to support a transition to a climate-safe world – highlighting reduced consumption, social and ecological values, and solidarity-framed caring and sharing practices. As such, they modify monetary values and market-based practices with novel forms of in-kind exchanges, and preferences for part-time work and collaboration.

The term ‘resourcing’ is foregrounded because we not only seek monetary financing but also such in-kind contributions that can be more significant and feasible in enabling projects. Moreover, Wararack is evolving as a *resourcing* institution in and of itself, only having advanced this far due to a vital mix of volunteering and paid work, gifted and paid services. Our shire is full of exciting projects advancing the transition of residents to live with lighter ecological footprints. Yet, performing the functions of community glue, enhancing inclusion, voices, discussion and learning – all within the context of its three strong pillars – Wararack is key to an effective, coherent, swift and successful community-based transition.

The primary role of the Resource and Finance Group is to support Wararack to function as a Core Group with Home Groups, facilitating certain activities of Action Groups and partnerships within and outside Mount Alexander Shire. This Home Group is tasked with forming strategies and facilitating the raising of very substantial amounts of money for Wararack's first crucial five years to support a big and bold whole-of-community approach to net zero emissions. Forming a budget is a key next step for Wararack. We prefer to build a sustainable funding profile supported by diverse sources with optimal opportunities for ongoing support, and acknowledge a continuous role for in-kind contributions, on which this preparatory stage has depended.

The term ‘resourcing’ acknowledges the variety and significance of in-kind contributions that typify ways that members of communities collaborate. For instance, Wararack has benefitted from free access to space facilitated by Mount Alexander Shire Council and private venue managers, and gifts of goods and services from community organisations and local businesses. While Wararack requires serious financing, monetary contributions will neither be the only nor necessarily the most significant. At the same time, under-resourced volunteers and community activities can be easily thwart unless there is due diligence in ensuring that their projects are feasible, establishment often requiring at least small amounts of money.

The secondary role of the Resource and Finance Group is to finance key work in research, communication and engagement projects within Core Group and Home Group portfolios and certain Action Group activities. The intention is to support trials or pilot projects that show great promise. While Wararack is open to scope and facilitate resourcing and financing options for Initiatives, it cannot directly fund such activities right now. But external funding and resources will be sought to investigate, trial and develop approaches to supporting a productive ecosystem of project-based work. Finally, the Resource and Finance Group will be tasked with producing a Supporter Impact Report annually, to showcase the results of both in kind and monetary contributions to those who have supported Wararack in various ways. The role of the Resource and Finance Group is fundamental to the feasibility of Wararack.



## §4.4 Next Steps

Wararack's next steps, during 2023, are resource dependent and difficult to schedule precisely given the emphasis on building Wararack in solid and effective ways rather than simply to a timetable. However, we have identified our main tasks and priorities. In 2023, a primary task for the whole of the involved community – especially the Core Group and all Home Groups – will be to decide on specific objectives and when to schedule them within a 2024–2030 plan, to be finalised by the end of 2023, in a second version of this plan.

### ESTABLISHMENT PHASE

In the first half of 2023 the Wararack Transition Working Group will oversee the establishment of the Core Group and Home Groups. The specific priorities of each group will be formalised with reference to supporting change, constantly identifying needs and defining ways to fill those needs. In this first year the emphasis is on consolidating key ways of moving forward, specific details of our targets and mobilising support for the transition. This will involve opening communications, movement building, a website launch, regular events and gatherings, along with expanding promotion of on ground activities, namely Initiatives.

### TARGETS AND MAPPING

The Track and Evaluate Action Group is charged with defining and sharing measurement approaches – aligned across the fields of adapt, culture and znet – with other Home Groups and Action Groups. They will focus on collating information and proposing options for fulfilling targets – similar to the Zero Emissions Byron Plan summarised in Appendix II – for inclusion in *The Plan* version 2 due at the end of 2023. These options will involve existing Initiatives, and indicate the need for future Initiatives, preparation for open shire community discussion facilitated by a range of groups, such as the Engage and Mobilise Group, the Democracy Action Group and the Research and Build Capacity Group.

This initial version of the *Community Climate Transition Plan 2023–2030* has adopted a zero net emission by 2030 target. However, as already mentioned, this needs further definition, refining and even redefining according to the practicalities and concerns of the shire community now, in 2023, four years on from the when the Climate Emergency was first declared and this target was floated. Is '2030' still feasible? Would a '2035' target be more appropriate, especially given the detail won't be worked up till the end of 2023? If so, how will annual targets align with the specific projects and programs that constitute *The Plan*?

Another key question for the Wararack coalition to address in 2023 involves whether it is more sensible and practical to set a 'zero emissions' target instead, as Byron Bay has, and as is now becoming commonly known as best practice (Hinchliffe, 2023). As indicated in MASG (2021), 'zero net' is a malleable target with respect to the 'net' or offset side of the equation. So far there has been no specific maximum set for 'net', simply an implied preference for as few offsets as possible and only local offsets. The detailed revised plan due at the end of 2023 needs to grapple with and rationalise decisions made about targets.

The Research and Build Capacity Group will identify 'test, try and learn' sites, including by integration of the results of other group tasks. Certain Action Groups will be tasked with initiating key mapping activities: 'energy hot spots' and gaps will be mapped by collecting data together in a Social and Community Engagement mapping exercise; and, an Ecological Mapping Action Group will engage with our partner the Coalition of Everyone to identify key characteristics to map ecological layers across the shire. An Economic Action Group will engage in a similar mapping exercise, involving Ethical Fields, dependent on financing.

Throughout all these developments the Core Group will be acting as key data repository, contact point, facilitator and coordinator. The Core Group has a key external partnership function, notwithstanding that representatives of all groups can act semi-autonomously with, say Council Officers and Councillors, as well.

## **PARTNERS**

A working relationship with Council will be consolidated throughout 2023, developing clear processes, and well-defined collaborative and delegated tasks and projects. Externally, our aspirations for the Coalition of Everyone and Ethical Fields partnerships include securing finance and other resourcing for Wararack and other community activities, along with seeking relevant data and mutually supportive collaborative networks within climate action, transitional and sustainability oriented activities nationally.

## **COMMUNITY-WIDE CHANGE**

Our website is a key organising, informing and promotional tool for Wararack and, as such, will be a priority site of action and support moving forward. Initiatives and other activities community-wide will be mapped to reveal strengths and gaps for attention, increasing our visibility as we conduct this task and report via our site. Another priority is to develop discursive and decision making models for whole-of-community momentum and action.

We envisage that the Democracy Action Group comprised of Democracy for Dinner and Mount Alexander Deliberative Engagement (MADE) will be key in developing appropriate discursive models for the shire community. The whole of community change required is not, and cannot be, spelled out for once and for all in *The Plan*. We expect continuously evolving opportunities, innovations and discoveries that will inform and revise our plan, including via community-wide deliberations. As communities across Australia and the rest of the globe confront the same problems that we address here, more solutions-oriented options evolve. The Research and Build Capacity Group and the Engage and Mobilise Group will work with the Democracy Action Group to inform and process local thinking and decision making over such developments.

A key role for Wararack is to ensure that we see evidence that a movement for change is being embedded more and more widely in the community. Here we will be guided in the initial instance by the Track and Evaluate Group. We will forecast and broadcast such change (through the website and so on), promoting and encouraging the shire community with data showing reductions in emissions and by highlighting shifts in culture showing that we are changing our practices. In all such ways Home Groups, Action Groups, Initiatives and the Core Group will all act in discrete and connected ways to develop appropriate processes and models for deep engagement and concerted action to support sustained change addressing climate change impacts, reducing emissions and developing a regenerative culture.

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There is a  
flourishing  
sharing  
economy”

Transition Workshop  
conversations  
7 December 2022



## §5. Conclusion

This initial version of the *Community Climate Transition Plan 2023–2030* outlines practical processes and principles, a structure, and the resourcing needs of Wararack in its crucial role of holding a regenerative and relational transition. A transition that can only be realised by the Mount Alexander Shire community as a whole, a transition to radically reduce carbon emitting activities for a climate safe future.

As a working-document, the *Community Climate Transition Plan 2023–2030* will alter over time to reflect new challenges and opportunities. Meanwhile, the Wararack Transition Working Group has already started to initiate the establishment of the Core Group, Home Groups and Action Groups, each with a special place, role and functions.

We present *The Plan* as attainable, structured as it is on simple and straightforward yet nimble, efficient and enabling processes to adapt to new circumstances. We aim to have Wararack resourced and funded as soon as possible so it can operate as a dynamic life force. A key function for Wararack is to make local achievements and works-in-progress visible to the community and to provide spaces and activities where discussion and debate, barriers and opportunities can be identified, resulting in forever-changing organisational regeneration. In these ways, just as sap feeds trees vital functions, Wararack can nourish the community.

The Wararack narrative of change emphasises relationships, ecological and social regeneration, inclusion, justice, collectivity, connection and collaboration. As such, we envisage Wararack to be the ‘wind beneath the wings’ of the Mount Alexander Shire community as it adapts to the impacts of climate change, develops a culture of strong inter-community relations and relationship with Djaara Country, advancing to znet by 2030.

## §7. References

Please note all URLs were current at the time of the document's completion 30 January 2023.

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## §8. Appendices

### APPENDIX I.

Latest Census (2021) Key Settlement Statistics for Mount Alexander Shire

Mount Alexander		
2021 Census All persons QuickStats		
Geography type <a href="#">Local Government Areas</a>		
Area code LGA25430		
	<b>People</b>	<b>20,253</b>
	Male	49.9%
	Female	50.1%
	Median age	51
	<b>Families</b>	<b>5,449</b>
	Average number of children per family	
	for families with children	1.7
	for all households (a)	0.5
	<b>All private dwellings</b>	<b>10,124</b>
	Average number of people per household	2.2
	Median weekly household income	\$1,252
	Median monthly mortgage repayments	\$1,432
	Median weekly rent (b)	\$300
	Average number of motor vehicles per dwelling	1.9
(a) This label has been updated to more accurately reflect the Census concept shown in this data item. The data has not changed.		
(b) For 2021, median weekly rent calculations exclude dwellings being occupied rent-free.		

APPENDIX I. Latest Census (2021) Key Settlement Statistics for Mount Alexander Shire

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Accessed 29 December 2022

<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA25430>



## APPENDIX II.

### Zero Emissions Byron Plan

#### **ZERO EMISSIONS BYRON**

Zero Emissions Byron (ZEB) has one of the most ambitious emissions reduction goals in Australia. The Byron Shire Council and community are working in partnership to reduce emissions to zero in all sectors across the region within a timeframe of ten years.

Action planning began with key stakeholder forums, where industry bodies, businesses and organisations from each sector came together to compile and assess mitigation actions. ZEB is implementing core projects, particularly focused on community education and engagement.

ZEB holds a major event each year. In 2018 Professor Will Steffan presented the Big U Turn, which has been seen by over 30,000 people around the world.

#### **Energy**

Stationary energy consumption from fossil fuels accounts for over half of the emissions in the region. Mid to large scale solar farms and the rollout of rooftop PV will likely be the primary source of new renewable energy. Reopening the old hydro power station at Laverty's Gap is being investigated, as is the development of a bioenergy facility. ZEB is encouraging and monitoring renewable energy projects in Byron Shire. There is about 12MW of large-scale solar projects in the pipeline in 2020, equivalent to one-third of Byron Shire's current energy use. ZEB aims to encourage the take-up of batteries when the NSW Government's low-interest loans become available.

#### **Buildings**

Households have great ability to contribute to emissions reduction as energy efficiency measures can reduce electricity consumption in homes by up to 50 per cent. Whilst old houses can be retrofitted, it is important that new houses are designed for low energy consumption. RePower Byron Shire is a partnership between ZEB, Enova Community Energy and COREM, a local renewables group, to promote household energy efficiency, ethical energy providers and solar panels. Commercial building owners in Byron Shire are also being encouraged to improve efficiency and consider building retrofits.

#### **Transport**

The Byron Shire is a large regional area, with 44 small towns across >560km<sup>2</sup>, meaning a small and dispersed population. In 2019 ZEB initiated the first Northern Rivers EV Forum to highlight the future use of electric transport options and electric equipment. This ground breaking event featured a forum with industry experts, councils and local EV owners. The new and privately-owned electric vehicle display included electric bikes, electric motors and even an electric rickshaw! ZEB aims to make the Northern Rivers EV Forum the annual go-to event in the Northern Rivers. A section of railway from a local resort into Byron Bay has been restored with an electric solar train and there are many other solutions including improved public transport, train and bicycle infrastructure, electric buses and electric car hire fleets for the 1.8 million visiting tourists.

#### **Land Use**

Byron Shire is ideally placed to reduce land emissions to zero and beyond through reforestation. Carbon sequestration potential in the area is high and carbon farming can increase vegetation whilst also providing economic resilience to farmers. The main source of land use emissions in our region is from enteric fermentation from cattle for the beef and dairy industries. Manure management in the pig and poultry industries can reduce emissions and biochar can act as an organic fertiliser, and also aid significantly in carbon storage and drawdown of greenhouse gases.

RePlant Byron is a project of ZEB aiming to plant 1.8 million trees between 2020 and 2025 in Byron Shire. Launched in October 2019, 8,500 trees have been planted to date. The objective is to draw down and store atmospheric carbon in trees and soil, while restoring biodiversity and habitat. A carbon drawdown database is being created to include trees planted by other groups.

**Waste**

The main focus in waste for ZEB is organic waste which generates emissions in landfill. Significant improvements have been made in organics waste management, led by Council, including the introduction of a residential 'green' bin service for food and garden waste, and the processing of garden waste for compost at the local tip. The local waste management business Richmond Waste has introduced an organics bin for businesses. Improvements were made to the local Myocum tip to reduce emissions by flaring gases. Current waste from Byron Shire is sent to a landfill in southeast Queensland where greenhouse gases are captured in a bioreactor. Community education in waste avoidance, particularly single use packaging, is important in reducing emissions from the energy used in the recycling and transportation of waste.

**ZERO EMISSIONS BYRON – LESSONS LEARNT**

When ZEB commenced, limited work had been done in Australia on reducing community-wide emissions. ZEB has pioneered and developed strategy as it progressed and has learnt many lessons which can be of aid to other communities now engaged in this work.

**Community involvement**

Community volunteers with expertise in various sectors have underpinned ZEB's success. In working groups, these volunteers have undertaken much of the work to date. There has also been a strong emphasis on wider community consultation, including key stakeholder forums.

**Strategy**

Strategic planning should be undertaken regularly, detailing the goals, objectives, key actions, timeline, and key performance indicators. Specific yearly action plans should be created, which should measure and report on success against these.

**Council cooperation**

Both Byron Shire Councillors and council staff have been key in driving the zero emissions process. Council commitment to the transition includes: a formal resolution; commitment of funds; commitment to pursue funds externally; commitment of staff time; development of action plans for council operations; undertaking reporting; and engaging with other Australian and international councils, governments or organisations.

**Collaboration**

Organisations, businesses or groups can help implement specific projects or actions. Partnerships with complementary skills are wonderful, for instance, Beyond Zero Emissions provided technical skills and expertise to establish ZEB and provide ongoing support.

**Governance**

It is vital to consider internal operations including: who is driving the project (council, community or combination); the different roles of groups and individuals; the organisational structure needed (e.g. informal vs. incorporated organisation); the decision making structures; communications structures and protocol; paid and volunteer contributions.

**Resources**

It can be difficult to source funds for internal operations and administration. In 2016, ZEB incorporated as a non-profit organisation to obtain and manage funds and to cover internal operations, such as development

## APPENDIX III.

### Wararack Decision Making: Roles and Scope

Governance Structure	Roles	Decision making scope
<b>Guardians</b>	<p>Inform culture through guiding wisdom</p> <p>Inform ways of working</p> <p>Inform was of thinking</p> <p>Inform ways of being.</p>	<p>Ensure Wararack's values and behaviours align with Djaara Peoples and Young People's approaches and concerns, and show deep respect and concerns for all nonhuman living beings (Djaara Country).</p>
<b>Core Group</b>	<p>Ensure Wararack's work is community led</p> <p>Set the holding environment for the work – principles, structures, processes and decision making</p> <p>Hold common ways of working across all Wararack work</p> <p>Manage the operational budget for Wararack</p> <p>Identify systemic strengths and issues across all efforts to inform decision making across Action Groups</p> <p>Hold the overall transition planning process</p> <p>Align advocacy and influence across Wararack work, and with partners and key external bodies.</p>	<p>Annual budget</p> <p>Transition planning</p> <p>Ensure Home Group frameworks and processes are in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align and network</li> <li>• Engage and mobilise</li> <li>• Resource and finance</li> <li>• Research and build capacity</li> <li>• Track and evaluate</li> </ul> <p>Communication across all Wararack work and externally.</p>
<b>Home Groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Align and Network</li> <li>– Engage and Mobilise</li> <li>– Resource and Finance</li> <li>– Research and Build Capacity</li> <li>– Track and Evaluate</li> </ul>	<p>Define frameworks for each of the Home Group's functions through community gatherings, and according to the Home Group's content and context expertise.</p>	<p>Decide on how Wararack will hold each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment and networking</li> <li>• Engagement and mobilising</li> <li>• Resourcing and financing</li> <li>• Researching and building capacity</li> <li>• Tracking and evaluating</li> </ul> <p>Decide on delegated and shared functions across work necessary for the transition.</p>
<b>Action Groups</b>	<p>Each fulfills a key task directed towards achieving our goals, such as mapping existing ecological or social or economic efforts within our shire</p> <p>Each defines necessary innovation and projects to meet their contribution to our ambitious agenda, grounded in data, echoing the community and evidence</p> <p>Each supports innovation as needed to drive the change agenda within community</p> <p>Each identifies strengths, barriers and obstacles impacting on progress</p> <p>Each utilises work of the Home Groups to hold efforts uniformly between all other Action Groups.</p>	<p>Each group decides on how to contribute to achieving an aspect of our shared goals</p> <p>Each group decides on what innovation and projects need to happen to achieve our shared goals.</p>

<b>Governance Structure</b>	<b>Roles</b>	<b>Decision making scope</b>
<b>Critical Friends</b>	Provide content expertise as needed Offer constructive criticism Advocate and influence.	Critical Friends are not decision makers but inform decisions of others across Wararack
<b>Partners</b>	Contribute to the ambitious agenda within their own missions.	Negotiate with Wararack their role in its community change agenda Decide how they will resource their participation.
<b>Whole of Community</b>	Inform, and be informed by, the work of Wararack, and all the transition plans and processes.	Decide on what needs to change, and how we will know we have achieved that change.

