GOULBURN MURRAY CLIMATE ALLIANCE

Strategic Plan 2026–2030

Partnering today to build value, resilience, and a future our communities will inherit.

DRAFT — For member review

1. Foreword

[To be provided by the Chair / CEO of GMCA. Suggested content: a brief personal statement on why this plan matters, what has been achieved in the previous period, and what the next four years represent for the region and its communities. Approximately 200–300 words.]

2. About GMCA

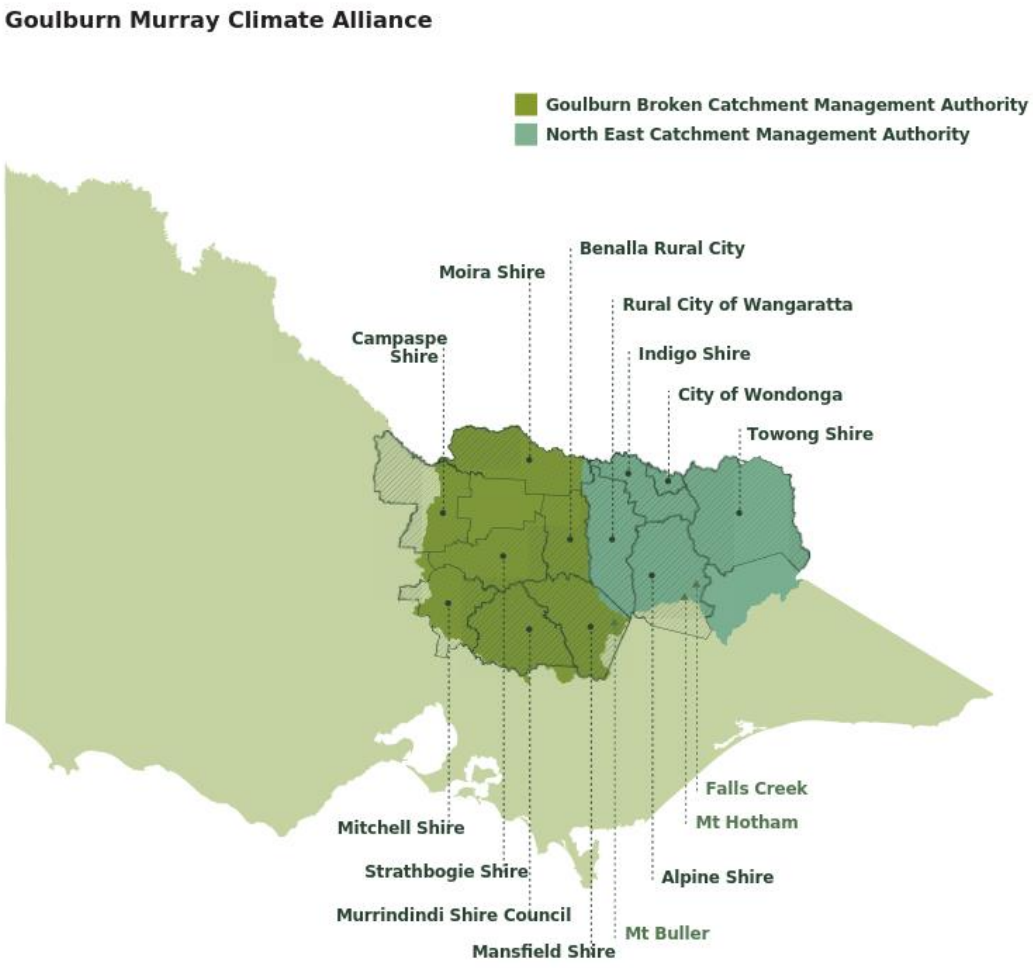
Who We Are

The Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA) is a regional collaboration of councils, Catchment Management Authorities, and partner agencies across the Goulburn Murray region of Victoria. We exist to enable our members to take meaningful, coordinated action on climate — sharing resources, knowledge, and partnerships to achieve outcomes no single council could reach alone.

Our Members

GMCA brings together 15 member organisations across the Goulburn Murray region — spanning 11 councils, 2 Catchment Management Authorities, Alpine Resorts Victoria, and a rural city:

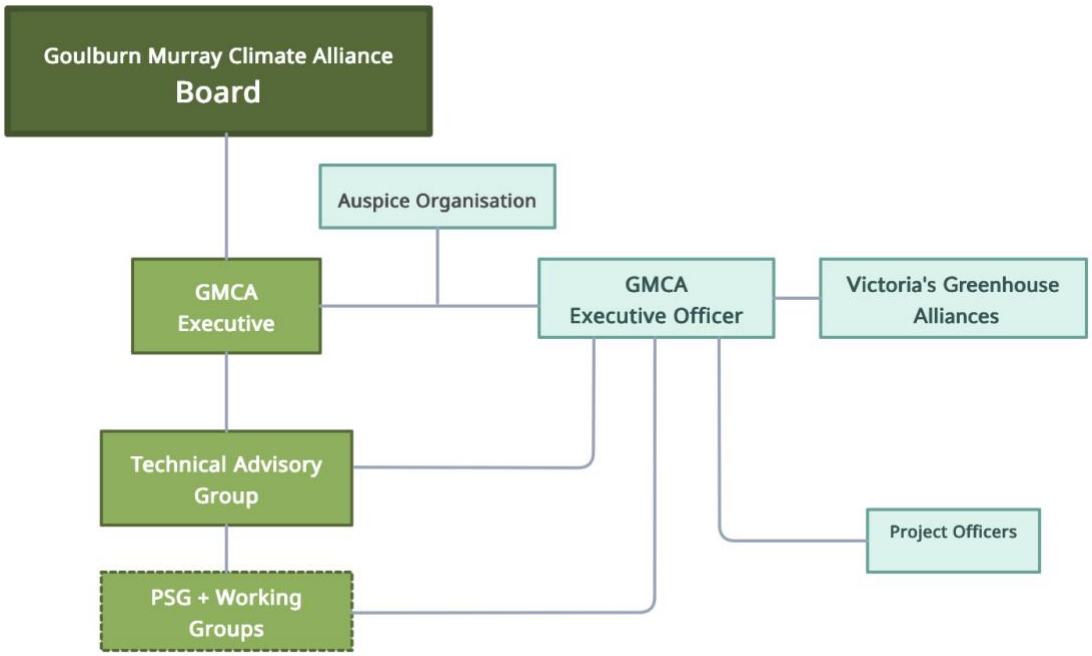
- Alpine Shire Council
- Alpine Resorts Victoria
- Benalla Rural City
- Campaspe Shire Council
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Indigo Shire Council
- Mansfield Shire Council
- Mitchell Shire Council
- Moira Shire Council
- Murrindindi Shire Council (Auspice Organisation)
- North East Catchment Management Authority
- Rural City of Wangaratta
- Strathbogie Shire Council
- Towong Shire Council
- Wodonga City Council



Our Governance

GMCA currently operates as an unincorporated alliance, auspiced by Murrindindi Shire Council. The Alliance is governed by a Board comprising representatives of member councils and partner organisations, supported by a GMCA Executive, a Technical Advisory Group, and Project/Working Groups that guide the delivery of specific programmes.

Day-to-day operations are led by the GMCA Executive Officer, who also maintains GMCA's participation in Victoria's Greenhouse Alliances (VGA) network and oversees Project Officers engaged for specific programmes.



3. Strategic Context

The Challenge

The Goulburn Murray region faces compounding climate risks — prolonged drought, increased flood frequency, bushfires, extreme heat events, and biodiversity loss — against a backdrop of constrained budgets and growing community expectations. The window for cost-effective, proactive adaptation is narrowing.

The Opportunity

Victoria's legislative framework — including the Climate Action Act 2017, the Local Government Act 2020, the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, and Planning and Environment Act 1987 — creates both obligations and opportunities for regional action. Federal and state funding streams, alternative finance opportunities, and growing community appetite for action all point toward stronger, more empowered GMCA members.

What Has Changed Since Our Last Plan

To come: changes in legislation, completed projects, new partnerships, changes in the funding landscape. To be supplied following consultation with committee.]

Legislative & Policy Alignment

This plan is grounded in and responsive to the following key legislative and policy frameworks:

- Climate Change Act 2017 (Vic)
- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- Renewable Energy (Jobs & Investment) Act 2017 (Vic)
- Emergency Management Act 2013 (Vic)
- Circular Economy (Waste Reduction & Recycling) Act 2021 (Vic)
- Regional Development Victoria Act 2002 (Vic)
- National Electricity (Vic) Amendment (VicGrid) Act 2024
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
- Planning and Environment Act (Vic) 1987

4. Mission, Vision & Values

Vision and Mission Statement

> A strong Alliance ~~of partners~~ across the Goulburn Murray ***acting today to build value, sustainability and a resilient future for our communities.***

Our Values

Collaborative – partnering within the GMCA and externally with private, statutory, state and federal governments to create true multilevel decision-making capability

Innovative – a creative, solution focussed Alliance that utilises the strengths of its members to create greater public value

Equitable – a just Alliance that has access to actionable tools to increase equity for the diverse communities of its members experiencing a regional climate transition.

Resourceful – an Alliance that actively develops opportunities for fiscal efficiency, alternative finance, and public value for its members.

5. Our Five Key Priorities

GMCA's 2026–2030 work is organised around five interconnected priorities. Together they form a comprehensive approach: building the financial structures and member capability to act, advocating for the right policy environment, adapting our region to unavoidable change, and deepening the partnerships that make all of this possible.

Priority 1

Regional Adaptation

Coordinating on-ground action to reduce and manage climate risk.

Priority 2

Capacity Building

Equipping members with the skills, tools, and knowledge to act.

Priority 3

Member Advocacy

Representing member interests to government and peak bodies to drive policy change.

Priority 5

Financing Resilience

Securing existing and alternative finance to fund climate action by our members.

Priority 5

Climate Action Partnerships

Building strategic partnerships that multiply impact across the region.

Priority 1: Regional Adaptation

Understanding and managing climate risk at a regional scale is essential. GMCA will coordinate regional risk assessments, adaptation planning, and on-ground resilience initiatives that individual councils cannot deliver alone.

Strategic Objective

To build a comprehensive picture of climate risk across the Goulburn Murray region and coordinate practical adaptation responses that protect communities, assets, and natural systems.

Key Outcomes by 2030

- Regional Climate Risk Assessments completed for all member councils
- A coordinated regional adaptation plan in place, aligned to individual council strategies
- Key managed aquifer recharge and water security opportunities identified and progressed
- Nature-based solutions piloted and scaled across the region

Projects & Programmes

Project / Programme	Timeline	Notes
Regional Climate Risk Assessments — Group risk assessment for all members, with individual Potential for a Regional CRA. LGA risk assessments as outputs	2027–29	New project. Cost: ~$700,000. Funding: DRF (tbc). Partner: Monash University.
Goulburn Murray Solar Savers – partnership with [X] councils to deliver community households and business trustworthy electrification and thermal efficiency services.	2026-2030	Program targeting low-income households with incentives. Partnership with SEC. Larger focus on the thermal resilience of households. $7000 per council with $X funnelled back into subsidies.
Managed Aquifer Recharge — CSIRO feasibility study on underground water storage opportunities in the region	2026–30	New project. Cost: ~$1,000,000. Funding: DRF. Partner: CSIRO.
VCRC (Victorian Climate Resilient Councils) — Regional Adaptation Officer hosted by GMCA (programme ends 2028)	Ongoing 26–28	Continuing. Cost: ~$5,000 pa to GMCA. Partner: WAGA.
Round 3 (Neighbourhood Batteries) — Build low-carbon resilience via stored energy reserves	Ongoing 26–30	Continuing and New. Funded: Victorian Government and tbc by Disaster Ready Fund. Partner: CVGA.
Regional Emissions Opportunity Analysis — Desktop gap analysis to map and prioritise projects by ROI and CO2 abatement	2029–30	New project. Minimal cost. Student / desktop study.

Circular Economy Opportunity Analysis — Understand and position GMCA members to benefit from circular economy initiatives	2028–29	Priority 3 project. Cost TBC. Will require funding.
Charging Goulburn Murray Councils — EV charging infrastructure, standardised permits, drawings, and regional network	2029–30	Priority 4 project. Tourism and economic development angle.

Metrics — Data to Supply

- Number of risk assessments completed
- Tonnes of CO2e abated across the region (annual)
- Volume of water potential secured through MAR feasibility work
- Number of councils with an active adaptation plan

Priority 2: Capacity Building

Members cannot act on climate if staff lack the skills, tools, and systems to do so. GMCA will deliver targeted capacity-building programmes — including those which influence a circular economy within the sustainable procurement sphere.

Strategic Objective

To improve the capability of members to plan, procure, and deliver on climate action — reducing duplication, enhancing budgets through economies of scale, and building a regional knowledge base that benefits all members.

Key Outcomes by 2030

- A comprehensive suite of shared tools, templates, and training available to all members
- Regional procurement frameworks reducing per-council cost of climate-related goods and services
- Measurable improvement in staff confidence and capability across member councils
- [X] staff trained across the alliance per year

Projects & Programmes

Project / Programme	Timeline	Notes
Brief Ezy: ESD Tender Tool — Roll out the ESD tender tool developed by SECCCA for GMCA members	2026–27	New project, built on existing SECCCA work. Cost TBC. Partner: SECCCA.
Goulburn Murray Sustainable Procurement Guideline — Working group, tools, and webinars for circular economy procurement	2028–29	New project. Cost TBC.

Concrete & Bitumen Low Carbon Impact Tool — Tailor Hume CC's tool to the GMCA region and train staff	2026–27	Partner: Campaspe Shire Council, Hume City Council. New project. Cost TBC.
Naturally Cooler Towns 2 — Regional procurement of drought-tolerant species; establish Regional Arborist Network	Ongoing 26–30	New project. Rotating coordination model across members. Procurement partnerships with council teams and CMAs.
VGA Annual Conference — Build knowledge, networks, and goodwill across the VGA climate world	Ongoing 26–30	Continuing. Cost: ~$2,000 pa. Coordinating Partner: NAGA.
A Resilient Public Estate — Recharge tools, training, and review	2026–27	Continuing project. Minimal EO resourcing (0.02 EFT).
Additional capacity-building workshops / webinar series	2026-2030	Arising as required
Councillor / Executive professional Government lobbying training	2027	Annual

Metrics — Data to Supply

- Number of training sessions / webinars delivered per year
- Number of member individuals trained across member councils
- Surveys reporting high level of satisfaction with training
- Cost savings from shared procurement ($)
- Member uptake of shared tools and templates

Priority 3: Member Advocacy

GMCA has a role to play in representing the interests of rural and regional councils on government policy — ensuring that state and federal frameworks are fit for purpose and that funding flows equitably to regions that need it most.

Strategic Objective

To be a credible, evidence-based voice for member councils in policy and funding discussions at state and federal level — securing policy settings and funding that enable regional climate action.

Key Outcomes by 2030

- GMCA recognised as a leading voice for rural and regional climate interests within our membership and region
- [X] policy submissions lodged on behalf of members
- [X] wins directly attributable to GMCA advocacy
- Members reporting that GMCA advocacy reflects their priorities

Projects & Programmes

Advocacy projects are currently being developed. The following framework is proposed:

Project / Programme	Timeline	Notes
State Election Advocacy with Victorian Greenhouse Alliances	2026, 2030	GMCA to supply current advocacy priorities.
Submissions (climate, planning, emergency management, local government, transport)	As required	GMCA to supply current active submissions.
Regional energy transition advocacy (AusNet, VicGrid, Regional Energy Accord)	2026–28	Possible link to Goulburn Murray Energy Transition project (Priority 5).
Federal advocacy programme	TBC	GMCA to advise on federal engagement priorities.

Priority 4: Financing Resilience

Members face a declining pool of funding relative to the scale of climate risk. GMCA will strengthen research into alternative finance with commonwealth, state, business and legal entities, and its role in facilitating this. It will work with grants, the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances and governments to bring financial value to members through avoided costs, partnerships and advocacy.

Strategic Objective

To establish GMCA as a trusted intermediary that can attract, structure, and deploy climate finance on behalf of its members — reducing the cost and complexity of accessing investment.

Key Outcomes by 2030

- GMCA review the governance and capacity to facilitate climate investment by GMCA's next MoU
- All member organisations accessing training such as climate finance literacy webinars
- Apply for applicable grants as they arise
- Climate-related logic investment mapping facilitated by GMCA and preparation of appropriate investment portfolios
- Members reporting confidence in the direction of a GMCA facilitated alternative finance program.
- A broadening of potential investment sources for GMCA members

Projects & Programmes

Project / Programme	Timeline	Notes
Restructure of GMCA into an entity that will include as a part of its mission, facilitating alternative finance focussed on funding climate resilience for members and to enable identified climate risks to be managed cost effectively and efficiently.	2026–30	New project, with partners across universities, state and federal governments.
VGA projects: VECO (Victorian Energy Collaboration)	2028–30	Ongoing project (avoided costs varied across councils)
Street lighting changeovers (via EDPR)	2027-31	New project outcome from EDPR
Organisational Fleet Transition - Prepare councils for statewide LGA fleet project	2027-	New project with MAV
Investing in Nature - local carbon offset economy: partner with GBCMA and NECMA in coordinating a COP to explore further.	2026	New project with NECMA and GBCMA

Metrics — Data to review

The following metrics are recommended for this priority. Baseline data to be supplied by GMCA:

- Total external investment attracted ($)
- Number of projects co-financed
- Number of grants attained ($)
- Average cost savings per council from shared financing mechanisms
- Member satisfaction with GMCA's investment facilitation role

Priority 5: Climate Action Partnerships

No single organisation can address regional climate change alone. GMCA will build and maintain strategic partnerships — with universities, state and federal agencies, industry, and other alliances — that multiply the impact of our work and open access to expertise and funding that members could not access individually.

Strategic Objective

To establish GMCA as a valued partner to a diverse range of organisations, creating a network that accelerates climate action and brings external resources into the region.

Key Outcomes by 2030

- Formal partnership agreements in place with [X] strategic partners

- At least [X] co-funded projects delivered through partnership
- GMCA recognised by partners as a reliable, high-value collaborator
- Members reporting that GMCA partnerships open doors they could not open alone

Projects & Programmes

Project / Programme	Timeline	Notes
Goulburn Murray Energy Transition — Take the Alliance through the Regional Energy Accord (REA) and become signatories	2026–27	New project. Cost: nil. Partner: Energy Charter.
Investing in Nature — Local carbon offset economy: partner with GBCMA and NECMA to explore a COP framework	Ongoing 26–30	New project. Cost: ~$5,000 pa. Partners: NECMA, GBCMA.
VECO (Victorian Energy Collaboration) — Ongoing VGA collaboration on energy	Ongoing 26–30	Continuing. Minimal EO resourcing (0.01 EFT pa).
VGA collaboration programme	TBC	GMCA to advise on VGA collaboration priorities.

Metrics — Data to Supply

- Number of active partnership agreements
- $ value of co-funded projects delivered through partnerships
- Number of joint publications / submissions lodged with partners
- Partner satisfaction rating

6. Resourcing Overview

The table below summarises the estimated EO staff resourcing (in EFT) across the plan period, drawn from the project data. These figures will need to be reconciled with GMCA's operating budget and any new resourcing required for the governance restructure.

Category	26–27	27–28	28–29	29–30
Total EO EFT (from project data)	0.79	0.97	1.08	0.66
Additional resourcing required (to be confirmed)	*TBC*	*TBC*	*TBC*	*TBC*

Note: EFT figures above reflect project-level estimates from the draft project list. They do not include core operational resourcing (general administration, etc.). A full resourcing and budget table will be developed by GMCA as part of the Implementation Plan each year.

Funding Sources

Projects within this plan draw on a range of funding sources, including:

- Disaster Resilience Fund (DRF) — primary source for major new projects
- Council member contributions — shared costs across participating councils
- Other Commonwealth funding
- Energy distributor co-funding (post EDPR)
- External research partnerships (Monash University, CSIRO)
- Potential Green bonds/loans, sustainability bonds, and other alternative finance instruments (to be developed under Priority 1)

7. Measuring Our Performance

GMCA will report against this plan annually. The following framework sets out our approach to monitoring and evaluation.

Reporting Cycle

- Quarterly: operational progress updates to the GMCA Board
- Annual: public progress report against strategic outcomes
- Mid-term (2028): formal plan review and refresh
- End of term (2030): comprehensive evaluation and lessons learned

Headline Indicators

[to confirm baseline data and targets for each indicator. The following cross-cutting indicators might also be good:

- Member satisfaction with GMCA (annual survey) — target: [X]%
- Total external funds won ($) — baseline: $[X]
- Tonnes CO2e abated across member councils (annual aggregate) — baseline: [X]
- Number of projects delivered on time and on budget — target: [X]%
- Staff capability index across member councils — baseline and methodology TBC

Data to be reviewed

need to supply:

- *Baseline performance data for each indicator*
- *Agreed targets for 2028 and 2030*
- *Confirmation of data collection methodology and responsibility*
- *Any existing reporting frameworks or templates to be carried forward*

XX. Next Steps

Do we want a workshop?

The following items are outstanding and required before this plan can be finalised for Board endorsement:

Item	Owner	Due
Foreword from Chair / EO?	GMCA Chair	*TBC*
Vision statement and organisational values (Board ?)	GMCA SP C'ttee	*TBC*
Advocacy priorities (Priority 3)	GMCA EO	*TBC*
Performance baselines and targets for all indicators	GMCA EO	*TBC*
Governance structure narrative (Section 2)	GMCA	*TBC*
Full budget and resourcing table	GMCA EO	*TBC*
Board endorsement of final plan	GMCA Board	*TBC*