Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance

Strategic Plan
2022 – 2026

DRAFT

CONTENTS

Who We Are	1
About the GMCA	2
The Legacy of Action	4
Zero Emissions: The Sustainable Development Goals and the GMCA	5
Plan on a Page	6
Our Goals: Diving Deeper	7
Glossary	12

"Without additional mitigation efforts beyond those in place today, and even with adaptation, warming by the end of the 21st century will lead to high to very high risk of severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts globally (high confidence)".

IPCC 2014, Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report, Headline statements from the Summary for Policymakers, https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ar5_syr_headlines_en.pdf

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Fifteen years of regional collaboration on climate change and sustainability is a remarkable achievement worthy of reflection and celebration. It demonstrates the commitment by members involved in the Alliance, and the strength of the model that has now grown to cover most local governments across Victoria, and been recognised as a global best practice model for addressing climate change. The next 10 years will be a galvanising time for the Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA) as the region rises to the significant challenges and opportunities in tackling climate change. Our region is in the midst of a renewable energy boom and GMCA is well placed to help guide this transition for our members.

Through collaboration and partnerships we will strive to build our member's capacity to address key sources of greenhouse gas emissions in our region across a range of sectors, and address the needs of communities adapting to a changing climate and uncertain future. I look forward to working with our members and collaborators to achieve our vision and ambitions for the region.

Cr Rohan Webb
Mansfield Shire Council
GMCA Chair

WHO WE ARE

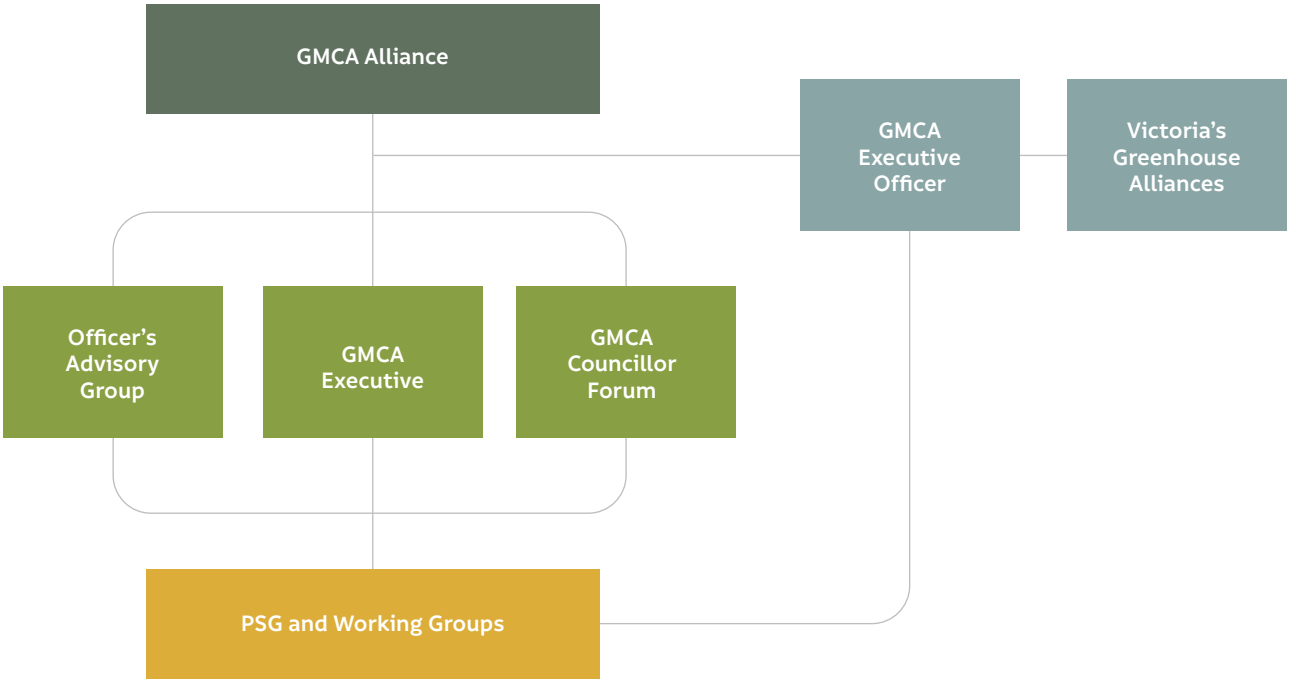
Alpine Shire Council
Benalla Rural City
Campaspe Shire Council
Falls Creek
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
Greater Shepparton
Hotham Mount Hotham Resort Management
Indigo Shire Council
Mansfield Shire
Mitchell Shire Council
Moira Shire
Mt Buller Mt Stirling Resort Management
Murrindindi Shire Council
North East Catchment Management Authority
Rural City of Wangaratta
Strathbogie Shire Council
Towong Shire
Victoria State Government Environment, Land, Water and Planning
City of Wodonga VIC

ABOUT THE GMCA

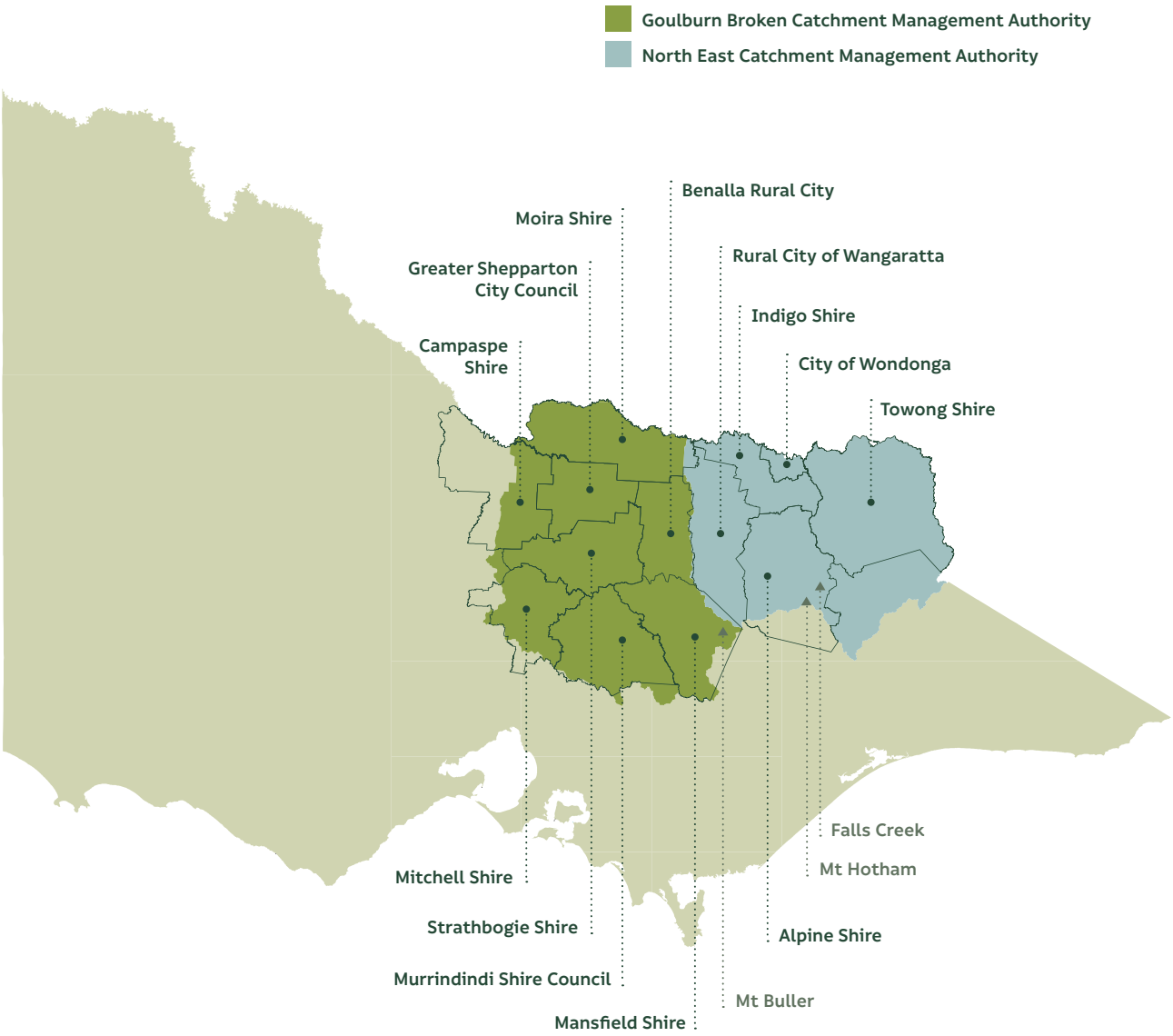
The GMCA is a member-based unincorporated Alliance comprising 13 local governments, the Goulburn Broken and North East Catchment Management Authorities, the Alpine Resorts of Falls Creek, Lake Mountain, Mts Baw Baw, Hotham, Stirling and Buller, and our Associate member DELWP Hume. The alliance catchment encompasses more than 14 million hectares of one of Australia's most prolific food producing regions, which includes the Goulburn Valley, as well as the Murray-Darling Basin's internationally significant Ramsar wetlands, and one of Australia's most significant tourist hubs in the eastern mountain ranges. Its municipal councils are highly diverse in size, location and focus covering over 120 postcodes, ranging from rural, to the large multicultural urban areas of Shepparton, Wodonga, and Mitchell on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne.

In recent years our Members and their communities have been severely impacted by drought, bushfires, floods, storms and the COVID pandemic. The GMCA is committed to the business case of addressing climate change with collective action that delivers on climate risks, unites and builds upon associated climate action, and brings new opportunities to the Goulburn and Upper Murray regions.

The GMCA is governed by a Member committee of senior staff and elected councillors, and an Executive of experienced representatives who meet monthly and advise on the organisation's governance decisions. There is also an Advisory Officers Group, and various project-based working groups. The Alliance has one full-time employee in the Executive Officer, a shared ESD Planning Advisor, plus contract staff who work on an as-needs basis. The GMCA actively participates in advocacy and projects with another six Alliances similar to itself across Victoria.



Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance



OUR PURPOSE

VISION

Our region is net carbon positive and prepared for the impacts of climate change.

MISSION

The GMCA will facilitate collaboration opportunities for significant emission reductions and improved resilience across our membership and beyond, and engage investment, innovation, advocacy and capacity for projects.

THE LEGACY OF ACTION

The many successful initiatives undertaken by the Alliance since it began in 2007 to date have cumulatively avoided the production of 70,500 tCO2-e, at a combined value of $11.5m. This has returned to Members either through avoided costs or direct efficiency, savings of over $16.5m. 70,500 tCO2-e of active emissions reduction is no small feat. It sits with Victoria's largest ever emission reduction activities, and equates to the carbon sequestration value of a forest of 1.15 million trees planted and growing for a decade .

In addition, the non-financial values of the GMCAs work are incalculable. The initiatives and wins for community that has arisen from extensive collaborative advocacy, capacity building for members, knowledge sharing and ground-breaking research, facilitation of partnerships, funding access, and ideas networks, reach well beyond the boundaries of mere economics. Our actions have reduced and anticipated major risks to communities, increased council and community wellbeing, and restructured how members manage key portfolios in the face of rapid, extreme change.

The role of the GMCA will continue to evolve, facilitating professional, and decision-making roles in the local sphere of climate action.

ZERO EMISSIONS: THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE GMCA

The 2022-2026 GMCA Strategic Plan recognises the urgent need to take action and to reach net zero emissions globally by 2035 to avoid more than 1.5 degrees of warming. The GMCA has communicated via its many projects and partnerships a strong commitment to scaling mitigation, and adaptation efforts across our region.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), embrace accountable action, and transparent reporting into non-partisan national and international domains. It also channels targets and indicators into areas where action is most valuable. This is indeed the next logical step for our Alliance, who for the last 15 years have planned, researched and implemented climate actions with unexpected, but very satisfying success. The SDGs provide a platform that aligns global activities through common targets, indicators and reporting. These are flexible enough to be locally shaped, which is indeed what the GMCA have done with the seven climate change related SDGs within this Strategic Plan.

It is important that the targets and indicators pursued by the GMCA are applicable to all our members. Local government make up the majority of the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances, but the GMCA is unique in that it embraces other climate actioning organisations, such as the Catchment Management Authorities, and Alpine Resorts. This enables GMCA to broaden its climate focus to include direct action within areas such as NRM or tourism.

Each GMCA member has its own programmes and targets to reach net zero emissions, and to adapt to climate change. In their continued membership with the GMCA they have affirmed their desire to collectively act to scale their individual efforts across mitigation, adaptation, advocacy and building the capacity of both staff, decision-makers, and their communities through the Alliances.

Through our Goals and Action Plan the GMCA recognises the need for urgent, rapid action. We have a number of central programmes that we will be focussed on long-term for this Strategic Plan:

1. **Transformative Zero Emissions transition**
2. **Net Zero Certification**
3. **Climate Resilient Councils**
4. **Employing for Climate**
5. **Climate Investment Partnerships**
6. **Sustainable Subdivisions Framework**
7. **Naturally Cooler Towns**

2022-2026 PLAN ON A PAGE

LONG TERM OUTCOMES 2035

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

MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES 2022-26

The GMCA will facilitate collaboration opportunities for significant emission reductions and improved resilience across our membership and beyond, and engage investment, innovation, advocacy and capacity for projects.

GOAL OUTCOMES 2022-26

- A Resilient Public Estate Project
- RMIT-ARENA Microgrids Project
- All Electric Councils
- Regional Solar and Storage Programme
- VECO: Additional Initiatives
- Sustainable Subdivisions Framework
- Naturally Cooler Towns Phase 2
- Planning for a Safe Climate Campaign
- Regional CO2-e Reduction Opporunities Review
- Regional Hydrogen Pilot
- Charging the Regions Phase 3
- Ausnet Public Lighting Changeovers
- Main Road Streetlighting
- Victorian Climate Resilient Councils
- Annual VGA Conference
- Net Zero capacity building
- A Resilient Public Estate Project
- Employing for a Changing Climate
- Regional Environmental Market Project

OUTPUTS AND INDICATORS

An increase in support from partnerships, funding, investment and recognition for the GMCA and its activities.

An increase in actions to reduce non-renewable energy emissions, monitor and report GHG emissions.

An increase in proactive adaptation and resilience activities, projects and programmes.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
- 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
- 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
- 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
- 13 CLIMATE ACTION
- 15 LIFE ON LAND
- 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

OUR GOALS: DIVING DEEPER

1. ADVOCATE

Influence, inspire, and advise those who legislate and lead to make decisions enabling rapid decarbonisation and stronger communities.

GLOBAL TARGETS	LOCALISED TARGETS	LOCALISED INDICATORS
SDG 17 PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS		
17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships Data, monitoring and accountability.	By 2026 create effective public, public-private and community partnerships, building on the experience and strategies of the GMCA members, and Victorian Greenhouse Alliances. (17.17)	Amount in AUS$ (including cash and in-kind) committed to public, public-private and community project partnerships supported/ facilitated via the GMCA per financial year over 2022-2026. (17.17)
		Number of members publically pledging their support for the GMCA and implementation of major local, regional, state and national climate action (ie GBCMA RCS, UNSDGs, Net Zero Corporate and Community, Climate Emergency, Take 2) (17.17).

2. MITIGATE

Use the power of the Alliance to scale regional efforts to dump and sequester carbon.

GLOBAL TARGETS	LOCALISED TARGETS	LOCALISED INDICATORS
SDG 7 AFFORDABLE & CLEAN ENERGY		
7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.	By 2030 substantially increase the share of renewable energy across all corporate members organisations, and their communities.(7.2)	Increase in annual regional renewable energy share 2022-2026, and number of collaborations to increase renewable energy uptake (7.2)
7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.	By 2030 substantially decrease the energy intensity of energy use across all GMCA member organisations (7.3).	Decrease in energy intensity in terms of primary energy of Members 2022-2026 via collaborative energy efficiency partnerships (7.3).
SDG 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES		
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.	By 2030 transition to new zero emission energy sources particularly in the heavy industries sectors such as transport (11.2)	Number of partnerships with key State and National agents, facilitating regional zero emission energy opportunities and pilot new technology (11.2)
	By 2026 have an informed and practical regional analysis of the lowest cost emission reduction opportunities defining the role of members in facilitating initiatives for communities.	Number of members publically endorsing a regional zero net emissions strategy.
11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.	By 2030 have an integrated Victorian land use planning system that incorporates climate change impacts and mitigation (11.3)	Number of subdivision developments taking up the Sustainable Subdivision Framework (SSF). (11.3)
11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.	By 2026, strengthen GMCA partnerships, initiatives, and strategic pathways to protect cultural and natural heritage (11.4)	Increase in EFT (shared or other) addressing NRM compliance and enforcement across the GMCA region 2022-2026 (11.4)
SDG 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION		
12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.	Develop sustainable procurement policy practices in partnership with Members for shared and partnered procurement initiatives, including transport, construction. (12.7)	Number of members endorsing a sustainable procurement policy, strategy or initiative as at 2026. (12.7)

3. ADAPT

To partner with the intellectual, financial, and communal resources that will create stronger, safer spaces and places.

GLOBAL TARGETS	LOCALISED TARGETS	LOCALISED INDICATORS
SDG 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION		
6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity	By 2030 substantially increase understanding of, and preparedness for water scarcity events in the GMCA region. (6.4)	Increase of GMCA projects and partnerships demonstrating water security and whole-of-catchment water resilience. (6.4)
	By 2026 increase shared Traditional Owner environmental water governance particularly within the Murray Darling Basin .	Number of GMCA projects/events integrating and/or showcasing Traditional Owner strategy and governance.
	Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water management via land use planning. (6.b)	Percentage of members collaborating in sustainable land use planning initiatives (6.b.1)
SDG 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES		
11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.	By 2026, significantly decrease regional economic vulnerability to climate change and disasters.	Number of projects, that engage and strengthen community and member's knowledge, empowerment, and implementation of an equitable regional climate transition (11.5, 6.6, 6b.1)
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.	By 2026 increase the capacity of members to create and maintain resilient, climate-adapted urban forests throughout the Goulburn Murray (11.7)	Commencement and maintenance of robust participation in a Goulburn Murray Regional Arborist Network (11.7) Continued high use of a relevant and contemporary Naturally Cooler Towns web resource (11.7).

GLOBAL TARGETS	LOCALISED TARGETS	LOCALISED INDICATORS
SDG 13 CLIMATE ACTION		
13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters (13.1)	Number of members with working Asset Vulnerability and Financial Assessments in place by 2026 (13.1).
13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning (13.3)	Number of members committing to support, participate in, and activate the Victorian Climate Resilient Councils initiative (13.3)
		Number of Members and partners participating in adaptation education, capacity building, and impact reduction initiatives (13.3).
SDG 15 LIFE ON LAND		
15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts	Strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of local agricultural communities with stronger connections to environmental markets (13.1)	Number of members, community and agencies participating in the 'Getting Value from Environmental Markets' project.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

15 LIFE ON LAND

4. BUILD CAPACITY

To strengthen regional capacity to implement, through funding, training and partnerships.

GLOBAL TARGETS	LOCALISED TARGETS	LOCALISED INDICATORS
SDG 17 PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS		
17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships data, monitoring and accountability.	Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and community partnerships, building on the experience and strategies of the GMCA and Victorian Greenhouse Alliances. (17.17)	Number of Members attending a GMCA facilitated leadership, training session, conference, knowledge sharing event relevant to a GMCA Target.
		Increase in EFT (shared or other) addressing climate change preparedness and impacts across the GMCA region | 2022-2026 (17.17)
		Report annually at a national and international level on behalf of the GMCA membership to the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) via the Global Compact Network Australia.
		Amount in AUS$ (including cash and in-kind) committed to public, public-private and community project partnerships from the private sector supported/facilitated via the GMCA per financial year, 2022-2026. (17.17)
		Number of Members actively monitoring and reporting on greenhouse gas emissions and water use (17.17)

GLOSSARY

GMCA	gmca.org.au
Global Compact Network Australia	As a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, with over 15,000 participating business and 3,8000 non-business organisations based in over 160 countries and 69 Local Networks.
GBCMA RCS	Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority – Regional Catchment Strategy goulburnbroken.rcs.vic.gov.au
NRM	Natural Resource Management
Net Zero	A target of completely negating the amount of greenhouse gases produced by human activity, to be achieved by reducing emissions and implementing methods of absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
UNSDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. sdgs.un.org/goals
Victorian Greenhouse Alliances	The Greenhouse Alliances are formal partnerships of local governments driving climate change action across Victoria's 79 municipalities. The Alliances work across their networks, communities and partners to deliver regional mitigation and adaptation programs. This includes the implementation of joint initiatives that provide economies of scale and enable projects typically beyond the reach of individual councils. Our project work is complemented by targeted advocacy, capacity building activities and regional partnerships. victoriangreenhousealliances.org