



7 October 2013

**Submission re Draft Yarra Environment Strategy 2013-17**

YCAN appreciates the opportunity to comment further on the Yarra Environment Strategy (YES). YCAN commends both the considerable commitment and human resources invested in the YES and acknowledges that this is a more visionary document than the previous Strategy.

1. YCAN has identified that in an urban context two of the most important aspects of climate change action are energy generation and transport. It is therefore heartening to see the City of Yarra's continuing commitment to increasing use of renewable energy in the form of solar panels, and expansion of sustainable transport through its Bicycle Strategy and its campaign for public transport priority over car-based projects.
2. The range of proposals under the heading of Community Empowerment and Local Action are positive steps YCAN supports. We are pleased to see that Council is now endeavouring to increase community engagement and recognises that community groups and residents as potential allies, rather than a nuisance to be kept at bay (as has been the perception in past years). Some of the initiatives that we are looking forward to being implemented include Yarra Sustainability Outreach Program, Neighbourhood Sustainability Connect Program and Environmental Education and Cultural Change (Sustainable Consumption) Campaign.

3. One of the issues we highlighted in our earlier submission was that of the huge amount of organic waste going to landfill. We are therefore very pleased to see that Council is now proposing to review its approach to organic waste, and investigate tackling this problem with initiatives such as organic waste hubs that involve both residents and businesses, and waste to energy technology.
4. Extending the operations of the Roseneath St 24-hour recycling facility is also a welcome move. The proposal to seek partnerships with charities to reuse unwanted household materials, and the establishment of an enterprise to rebuild and repair items for resale are both good ideas.
5. Seeking a solution for the safe disposal of toxic household waste in Yarra is something that is long overdue and, we are glad to see that this issue has at least been retrieved from the too-hard basket.
6. Urban agriculture is an activity that YCAN has been actively involved in and we are glad to see that Council is continuing to investigate ways of expanding food production in Yarra.
7. Plenty of rain falls in the City of Yarra, but most of it drains into our waterways. In the Water Wise City section of the Strategy, we feel there should be more emphasis on harvesting stormwater and treating it so that it is available for watering parks and gardens etc during dry periods.
8. Built environment is the one area where plans seem sketchy. We understand that Council has to adhere to State planning legislation, which limits what it can do, however Council needs to identify the areas where it is able to act. Transformational planning is required to allow innovation, precinct planning and targets for residential properties.
9. Finally with regard to Council's improved carbon management, we are pleased that Council is planning to investigate opportunities to invest in local renewable energy offsets and create a partnership with an energy producer outside Yarra, such as a Victorian wind farm.

As you know YCAN does not support the use of gas cogeneration. We note

that there is mention of planning to transition away from the use of gas in the future.

We look forward to the development, resourcing and implementation of the Yarra Environment Strategy at the fullest level of interpretation and we will, of course, be keeping a close eye on these endeavours to ensure that Council stays the course.

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Local Action Coordinator

On behalf of YCAN members