



# Climate Change

## Carbon Neutral

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The Climate Change – Carbon Neutral Policy sets out how the Shire manages greenhouse gas emissions. The policy complements the range of policies, strategies and plans currently in place that address climate change and the built environment; it articulates the pillars of Council’s commitment to carbon neutrality and demonstrates to the community the Shire’s leadership on climate change mitigation.

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**The Climate Change – Carbon Neutral Policy is provided in detail overleaf.**

*This Policy shall be subject to review within 12 months of the next general Council election to be held in October 2016.*

<b>TYPE</b>	<p>COUNCIL</p> <p><i>A document that has been adopted by Council at a council meeting and relates to our external customers and/or community.</i></p>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<p>To set out how Mornington Peninsula Shire ('the Shire') manages <b>greenhouse gas emissions</b> associated with its operations and ensure that its net emissions are equal to zero annually.</p>
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>To demonstrate to the community Mornington Peninsula Shire's leadership on <b>climate change mitigation</b></p> <p>To contribute to <b>climate change mitigation</b> through the reduction of Shire's generated <b>greenhouse gas emissions</b></p> <p>To guide decision making and the Shire's integrated approach to responding to <b>climate change</b> as a shared responsibility across the organisation</p> <p>To promote a proactive approach to <b>greenhouse gas emissions mitigation</b> across the Shire's supply chain</p>
<b>SCOPE</b>	<p>This Policy will inform Council decisions that have an impact on the Shire's level of <b>greenhouse gas emissions</b></p> <p>This policy applies to all services, programs and facilities for which the Shire has <i>control</i> as well as being used where the Shire seeks to exert <i>influence</i> (e.g. community behaviour; advocating to other spheres of government).</p> <p>The policy will influence a number of related strategies and plans which reflect the policy objectives, including the procurement of services and activities.</p>
<b>DEFINITIONS</b>	<p><b>Biosequestration:</b> When trees or other plants grow (including marine plants), they 'sequester' (take up) carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This process is known as biosequestration, whereby the total atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases decrease.</p> <p><b>Carbon Neutral:</b> The state of being carbon neutral refers to an organisation's net <b>greenhouse gas emissions</b> being equal to zero. This is achieved through a combination of reducing emissions and purchasing <b>carbon offsets</b> to match the remaining emissions.</p> <p><b>Carbon Offset:</b> A carbon offset is a reduction of <b>greenhouse gas emissions</b> made to compensate for emissions elsewhere. Carbon offset products most typically involve projects that invest in renewable</p>

	<p>energy, <b>energy efficiency</b> or <b>biosequestration</b>.</p> <p><b>Climate change:</b> “A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods” (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992)</p> <p><b>Energy Efficiency:</b> Energy efficiency projects reduce to amount of energy used by employing better processes or technologies to generate the same output.</p> <p><b>Greenhouse effect:</b> The increase in the earth’s temperature caused by its atmosphere acting like the glass of a greenhouse; that is, allowing the radiant heat from the sun to pass through it and then trapping that heat. This is a natural process which maintains a temperature on earth that is suitable to sustain life.</p> <p><b>Greenhouse gas emissions:</b> The release of one of a number of gases found in the atmosphere that contribute to the <b>greenhouse effect</b>, particularly carbon dioxide. The higher the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the more intense the <b>greenhouse effect</b>; leading to global warming, or <b>climate change</b>.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Actions taken to lessen the severity of <b>climate change</b> by reducing <b>greenhouse gas emissions</b> and/or removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.</p> <p><b>Resilience:</b> The capacity to withstand negative impacts without compromising basic functions or fundamental identity.</p>
<p><b>POLICY</b></p>	<p>Mornington Peninsula Shire will provide robust and tangible leadership on <b>climate change</b>, with <b>carbon neutrality</b> as its central achievement. This Shire will seek formal <b>carbon neutral</b> accreditation from the federal government’s National Carbon Offset Standard – Carbon Neutral Program within five years of the adoption of this policy and continue to maintain this accreditation.</p> <p>As new Shire policies are developed, or existing policies reviewed, reference to this Policy will be considered and incorporated where appropriate.</p> <p>The Shire’s approach to achieving <b>carbon neutrality</b> will rest upon the following six pillars:</p>

1. A greenhouse gas emissions inventory

The Shire will maintain and review annually a **greenhouse gas emissions** inventory based on emissions related to its operation in accordance with the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) scheme.

Exclusion reporting will be included in accordance with NGER Scheme.

2. Best value actions

The Shire will implement **greenhouse gas emissions** reduction actions in accordance with a best value and best practice emissions management principles. Actions that provide a reasonable payback to the Shire or provide community benefit or increase community **resilience** will be prioritised.

For example, actions that should be considered a higher priority based on the best practice emissions management hierarchy are those that avoid emissions being generated in the first place. This may include the purchase of more efficient vehicles, integration of Ecological Sustainable Design principles in the building construction and waste avoidance measures.

The actions will be reviewed annually and reported on in accordance with the NGERS and National Carbon Offset Standard – Carbon Neutral program.

3. Minimising emissions

Where avoidance of **greenhouse gas emissions** cannot be achieved, the Shire will consider efficient technologies or better **energy efficiency** purchases such as renewable energy or more **energy efficient** products or services.

4. Offsetting emissions

After exhausting efforts to avoid and minimise **greenhouse gas emissions**, the Shire commits to working towards offsetting all its remaining emissions through projects within its municipal boundaries.

This includes options such as **biosequestration**, renewable energy generation or other technologies as appropriate. The Shire will transition to offsetting completely within its

	<p>boundaries as opportunities become available and economically viable.</p> <p>The Shire will seek opportunities to drive the market for local <b>carbon offsets</b> through its operations.</p> <p>When local <b>carbon offset</b> opportunities are not available or viable, the purchase of independently verified <b>carbon offsets</b> will be used. Victorian based <b>carbon offset</b> will be preferred to Australian or international products based subject to a competitive tender price for the products.</p> <p>The Shire will tender to offset purchase every two years.</p> <p>5. <u>Community and stakeholder engagement</u></p> <p>The Shire commits to continuing a process of ongoing, purposeful, participatory, inclusive and accessible community engagement on <b>climate change</b> to support community <b>resilience</b>.</p> <p>This Shire will encourage and support community led initiatives that aim to work towards <b>carbon neutrality</b> through shared learning.</p> <p>6. <u>Responsiveness and innovation</u></p> <p>The Shire recognises that an effective response to <b>climate change</b> demands flexibility and a commitment to innovation. The Shire accepts this responsibility and is committed to being responsive and innovative, including by working in partnership with other groups and organisations to investigate new technologies and best practice approaches to emissions management.</p>
<p><b>PROCEDURE</b></p>	<p>The Shire will develop programs and procedures to implement the policy including a five year implementation plan, reviewed annually. The implementation plan will be referred to the annual budget process.</p> <p>The Shire will seek formal accreditation through the National Carbon Offset Standard administered by the federal government. Associated auditing, reporting and planning will be completed in accordance with the Standard's requirements.</p> <p>Reports will be published on the Shire's website and available for</p>

	inspection at its municipal offices.
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<p>Responsibility for the implementation of this policy is shared across the organisation, consistent with the Shire’s integrated approach.</p> <p>The Shire’s Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee (CCAAC) has a particular role as a forum for discussion on the organisation’s approach to <b>carbon neutrality</b>. It serves as a co-ordination vehicle and is involved in reviewing progress, opportunity identification and forward planning.</p> <p>The Manager, Renewable Resources is the principal owner of this Policy.</p>
<b>RELATED POLICIES / STRATEGIES / PLANS</b>	<p><u>Mornington Peninsula Shire:</u></p> <p><i>Council policies (public):</i></p> <p>Shire Strategic Plan</p> <p>Draft Municipal Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Plan</p> <p>Energy and Greenhouse Management Improvement Plan</p> <p>Bicycle Strategy: Peninsula Ride Safe</p> <p>Footpath Construction Strategy</p> <p>Economic Sustainability Strategy</p> <p>Sustainable Infrastructure Asset Management Policy</p> <p>Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement</p> <p>Procurement Policy</p> <p><i>Organisational policies (internal-use only):</i></p> <p>Motor Vehicle Policy</p> <p><u>State of Victoria:</u></p> <p>Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan</p> <p>Plan Melbourne: Metropolitan Planning Strategy</p>

<b>RELATED LEGISLATION</b>	<p><i>Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act (2007) (Cth)</i></p>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<p>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (1992). Article 1, Definitions. Available at: &lt;<a href="http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/background/items/2536.php">http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/background/items/2536.php</a>&gt;</p>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Climate Change, Energy and Water Team
<b>APPROVED</b>	By Council 8 February 2016
<b>REVIEW</b>	This Policy shall be subject to review within 12 months of the next general Council election to be held in October 2016.