

City of Greater Geelong DRAFT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY 2020-2030
and DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2020-2022
Community Survey Feedback
July 2020

Using this document

Discretion should be exercised in making decisions based on the data in this report. Kismet Forward was engaged to prepare this report based on feedback from a survey conducted by the City of Greater Geelong.

Significant effort has been made to accurately reflect the contribution of people who took part in the survey. This report provides an independent summary of the feedback received, which by its nature is subjective and not always consistent. It cannot necessarily be construed to be an accurate reflection of the weight of broader community or stakeholder opinion. The report does not provide recommendations or opinions of the consultancy team. No formal statistical analysis of data has been undertaken.

No responsibility or liability can be taken for errors or omissions, or in respect of any use of or reliance upon this report by any third party.

The following abbreviations, terms and acronyms have been used:

COGG	City of Greater Geelong
Council	City of Greater Geelong Council
ESO	Environmental Significance Overlay
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Class
SMART	Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely



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The amazing cover photo was accessed from the Geelong Advertiser
<http://cdn.newsapi.com.au/image/v1/6060cbcd5c7d0a870d00c8385099400c?width=1024>

Kismet Forward provides specialist advice and support in the areas of community engagement, facilitation, conflict management coaching, program logic, strategy, evaluation, training and project management.

Further information can be found at www.kismetforward.com.au

Executive Summary

The draft Environment Strategy 2020-2030 and draft Action Plan 2020-2022 were presented for community comment from 4 May until 29 June 2020.

Kismet Forward assisted and independently reported on the consultation opportunities, which entailed an online survey, submissions and online stakeholder discussions via Zoom. This report is focussed on the survey responses.

Forty people responded to the survey. This yielded a total of 194 comments providing feedback on seven consultation questions.

Survey questions focussed on both the ten-year strategy and goals and the short term action plan.

Strategy

Survey respondents were asked to rank the strategy goals from most to least important. *Goal 1: Move towards a zero-emission, climate ready city and region* was ranked as number one. Six comments noted that this goal affected all other goals. There was a strong call for Council to make and measure clear emission targets.

This was followed by *Goal 5: Achieve better integrated water management through planning and design*, *Goal 2: Create greener community spaces*, *Goal 4: Protect, enhance and restore our region's biodiversity*, and *Goal 3: Circular economy with less waste*.

Thirty-eight comments were received in response to the question asking for comments about the strategy. Of these, ten were positive, 16 were negative, and 15 relayed a neutral or undetected sentiment. Of those who responded negatively, four noted that the

strategy was inadequate and lacked progressiveness, and four comments related a concern that COGG was not sufficiently committed to the strategy.

There was a general theme among the positive responses that Council needed to simply 'get on' with the implementation of the strategy and the action plan.

'When do we start?'

When asked if anything was missing in the strategy, Goal 4 attracted the most comments including the importance of Council taking note of existing legislation and the vulnerability of flora and fauna and the need to protect it. Reducing the emissions of traffic and other transport was noted as missing from Goal 1 as was clear emissions targets.

Sixteen comments related to non-goal specific issues. There was a strong emphasis on the need for community engagement and partnerships including the importance of collaborating with Traditional Owners, the importance of clear, specific and measurable targets and the funding to meet them, and the role of Council in leading the process and implementing change.

Action Plan

Respondents were asked what they saw as the most important actions to undertake in the next two years.

The need for emissions targets and action to reduce emission impacts from traffic and transport were seen as critical in achieving goal one.

Programs to support private landholders in rural and semi-rural areas to join in the objective of the biodiversity goal was also seen as important as there is a belief that without the support of private landholders the biodiversity goal is unachievable.

When asked to nominate any actions that were missing from the plan, there was a call for strong and aligned planning goals and policies, and alignment between Council Planning and Environmental staff. Respondents also noted a need for increased community engagement and education.

Respondents were asked for additional comments about the action plan. Of the 20 comments received three were positive, eleven were negative, and six were neutral or of an undetected sentiment.

Of those who responded negatively, the prevailing sentiment was that the actions and goals were seen as timid and weak.

Overall Feedback

For those who were supportive of the strategy and action plan, there is a push for Council to get things moving and to ensure that the strategy and plan guide all future decisions within Council.

'The 10 year strategy needs to remain at the forefront of all decision making at the City of Greater Geelong.'



Source: <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/parks/item/sparrovale.aspx>



Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=barwon+heads&client=firefox-b-d&sxsrf=ALeKk02SdTwmoymN3Pu98c9womB1ZLNolQ:1594083426806&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjtnpbD97nqAhVJzDgGHWukDI8Q_AUoAnoECBOQBA&biw=1272&bih=621#imgsrc=qaazudeobLygCM

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1. Introduction and Background

The purpose of The City of Greater Geelong Environment Strategy 2020–30 is to define and communicate how the City of Greater Geelong (COGG) will protect and improve the region’s environment and reduce its environmental footprint.

The Strategy contains five goals, each based on the following aspirations:

- Zero emissions and climate-readiness,
- Greener community spaces,
- A circular economy with less waste,
- Protected, enhanced and restored biodiversity, and
- Integrated water management.

The Strategy is supported by a shorter-term Action Plan, which will be updated every two years as progress towards the goals is achieved.

The draft Environment Strategy 2020-2030 and draft Action Plan 2020-2022 were presented online¹ for community comment from 4 May until 29 June 2020. COGG advertised the consultation period via its website and social media channels; community members were encouraged to complete a survey or lodge a submission via Zoom.

In addition, during June/July 2020, five stakeholder organisations were invited to discuss their views about the draft documents via 90-minute online discussions.

This report documents the feedback provided via the survey. Feedback received via the online discussions and submissions has been reported separately.

Notes regarding this report

This report mainly includes consolidated and summarised feedback. Some verbatim comments (shown in *italics*) are also included to demonstrate key themes and level of sentiment expressed. Some minor grammatical and spelling fixes have been made.

Some respondents provided information relevant to the project but not necessarily to the question asked. All comments have been consolidated under the appropriate theme in this report.

Some survey questions have been summarised to assist in report readability.

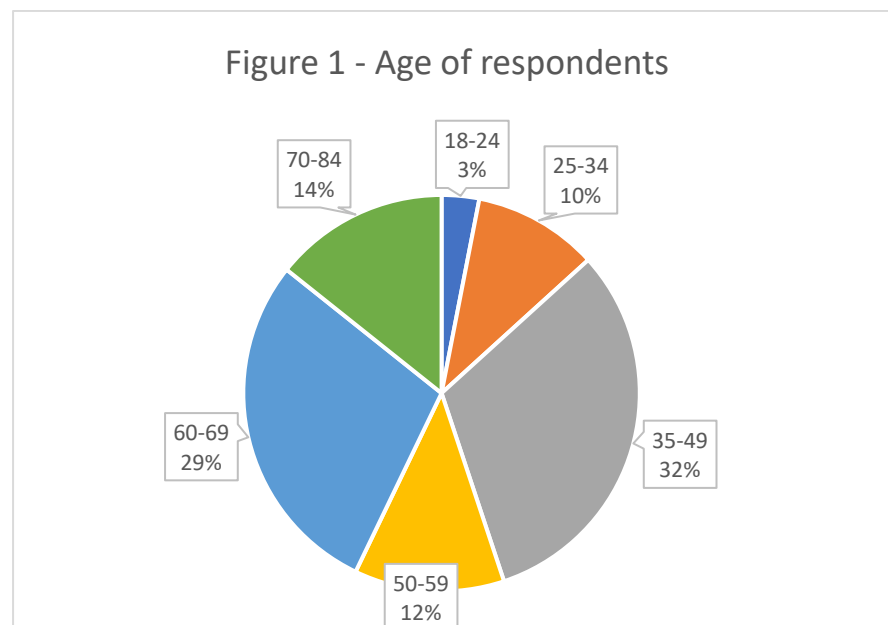
¹ <https://yoursay.geelongaustralia.com.au/DraftEnvStrategy-2020-2030>

2. Who contributed feedback

Forty surveys were returned, collectively yielding 194 individual comments across the seven questions. There was a 72.5% completion rate with 29 respondents fully completing the survey and eleven partially completing it.

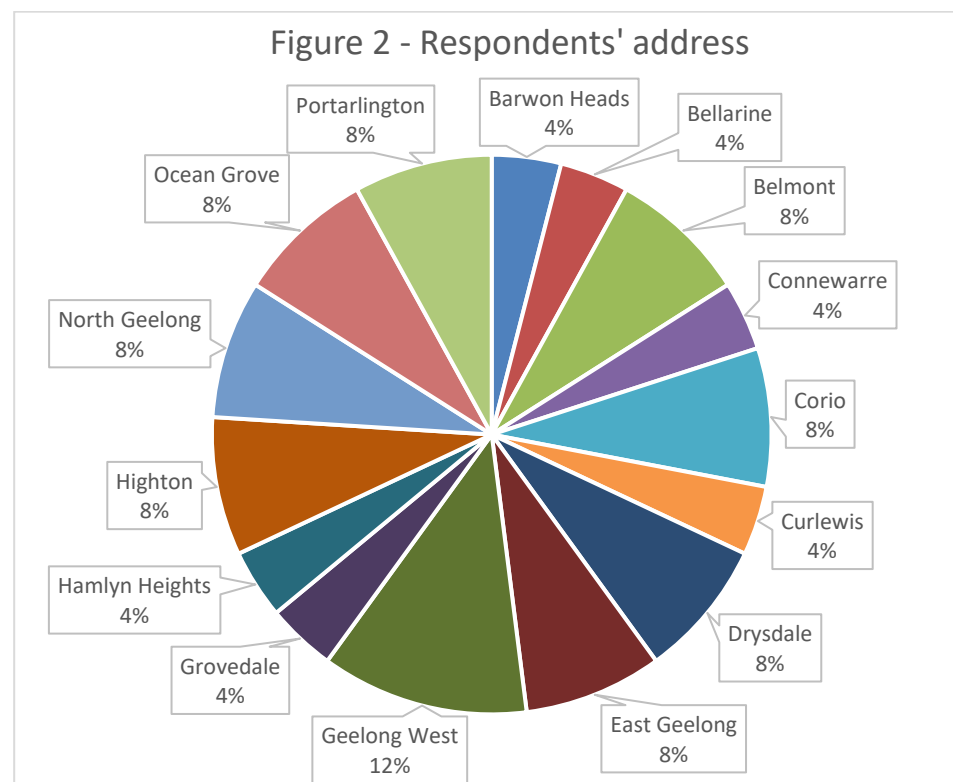
Age of survey respondents

Survey responses were received from all adult age groups, with approximately two-thirds of responses roughly split between the 35-49 and 60-69 age groups. (See Figure 1) Eleven survey respondents did not answer this question.



Residential location

86% (25) of the 29 respondents who answered this question identified as full-time residents of the City of Greater Geelong, and 14% (4) as non-residents. The suburb most represented was Geelong West with three residents followed by Corio, East Geelong, Highton, Belmont, Portarlington, Ocean Grove and North Geelong, each with two residents.



3. What we heard

Consolidated responses to the seven survey questions follow.

3.1 How would you rank the goals described in the Strategy in order of importance?

Strategy goals were ranked using weighted scores, based on the order of importance of goals as nominated by respondents.

Goal 1 (Move towards a zero-emission, climate ready city and region) was ranked highest, followed by Goal 5 (Achieve better integrated water management through planning and design).

The lowest-ranked goal was Goal 3 (Contribute to a circular economy by reducing waste).

Further commentary about the ranking of goals is provided on the following page, where responses to a related question are summarised.

All 40 respondents answered this question, however four answered it partially, only ranking some of the goals. (See Figure 3)



Goal 1: Move towards a zero-emission, climate ready city and region
Goal 5: Achieve better integrated water management through planning and design
Goal 2: Create greener community spaces
Goal 4: Protect, enhance and restore our region's biodiversity
Goal 3: Circular economy with less waste

3.2 Why was goal x your first preference?

The second survey question asked respondents to explain why the goal they had ranked as most important was their first preference. It seems that some did not understand the question, as many of the comments received referred to the goals they ranked second, third etc. These comments have been consolidated with others under the appropriate goals.

Thirty-five comments were received in response to this question.

Goal 1: Move towards a zero-emission, climate ready city and region

Twelve people nominated this goal as most important.

This goal affects all others

- Climate change is the most pressing issue and is likely to impact on other goals.
- Without drastic action over Goal 1, the remaining strategic aims may become redundant.
- Goal 1 will also drive the other goals.
- Without zero carbon emissions, we can't do the other things.
- This is a big picture goal that would have the largest impact on benefiting the environment and mitigating climate change.

'Acknowledging and acting on the climate emergency is essential.'

Commitment to the Paris Agreement

- Committing to a serious zero emission target is the number one action to mitigate climate change. It is now a worldwide goal via the Paris Agreement, which Australia has signed.
- Science is unequivocal that we must meet at least the Paris targets to avoid a high risk of tipping into an unliveable climate.
- This decade is critical in keeping global warming below 2 degrees, and this will mean cutting greenhouse gas emissions to zero in the shortest time possible.
- Any government Environment Strategy for 2020-30 would have to put this front and centre to have any credibility.

Other comments

- Moving to zero emissions is necessary to stabilise climate change.
- Re-tooling our city to zero carbon will create the conditions for the sustainable growth of the city and create new, green industries.
- Inaction on climate will significantly cost the region in adaptation, lost economic opportunities and reduced quality of life.
- Set green standards for all new housing, including the type of garden, housing orientation, solar energy provisions, and water tanks.
- Clean air for future generations.
- The recent catastrophic bushfires are a clear indication that the environment is moving towards a tipping point, and we need to act now.

'It's extremely disappointing COGG has not yet declared a climate emergency and set itself on a path of zero emissions and 100% renewables.'

Goal 5: Achieve better integrated water management through planning and design

Nine people nominated this goal as the most important.

- Goal 5 will help achieve goals 2 and 4

Goal 2: Create greener community spaces

Seven people noted this goal as most important.

- Resources are finite; we need to conserve what we have.
- As a municipality, we have failed this. Given Council has allowed levels to drop to 5% (or less) it should be a priority. Take ownership of it.
- Unless COGG preserves additional community spaces today, there will be no opportunity to dream about 'greener community spaces'.
- Greener city spaces will be needed to demonstrate the viability of local food production as global food supply chains become unreliable due to the impacts of climate change and economic contraction related to debt and rising energy costs.

Goal 4: Protect, enhance and restore our region's Biodiversity

Five people ranked this goal as number one with ten comments

Biodiversity underpins everything

- Everything starts and stops with biodiversity
- Healthy biodiversity is fundamental to a healthy community and is a unique part of our natural heritage.
- The other goals can be addressed at the same time as the biodiversity goal. The biodiversity goal is harder to address and is more likely to be ignored if not prioritised, as there is no immediate economic / business advantage in this goal.
- My order of preference is based on where COGG can achieve real improvements for the local community. Caring for and enhancing native vegetation needs a higher awareness by both council and the community. Zero emissions is last because it is dependent upon an international and national response.

Other comments

- Biodiversity is not understood by COGG Planners, and there appears to be no connection between the Planners and the Environment Officers of COGG.
- Concerned about the continuing encroachment of urban development which leads to the decline in the quality and extent of habitat for native species, fragmentation of flora and fauna corridors, weed and pest animal infestation and the compromised condition of the Moorabool River.
- The protection and enhancement of biodiverse habitat and intact ecosystems, which includes all remnant vegetation, is of critical importance.
- The Honey Woodland, immediately south of the Dog Rocks Flora and Fauna Sanctuary, should be designated as a Geelong bio-site and possibly acquired and protected in perpetuity. It should be

protected by a significant buffer zone from the proposed new development at Batesford South. The plans for a new urban landscape should take into account urban ecology and include strict regulations regarding cat enclosures and dog management, appropriate plantings of climate-resilient indigenous species in the design process of street landscapes.

- Our biodiversity is on the brink of disappearing. Strong proactive action is a must, or it will be too late.

Goal 3: Contribute to a circular economy by reducing waste

Four people nominated this goal as the priority.

- Developers are fast encroaching on farmland areas with token parks installed back in their place, which offer little to no environmental benefit.
- We do not have an overall sustainable waste process.
- Most urgent given climate change and out of control population and housing in Geelong.
- Establish a food organics waste facility in COGG local government area as a top priority to reduce the amount of landfill.



Source: <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/parks/item/sparrovale.aspx>

Other feedback

Some comments did not fit neatly under any of the goals:

- Plant fruit trees as street trees instead of ornamental species.
- Priority 1 is the most closely connected to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion and collaboration

3.3 Have we have missed anything in the strategy?

Thirty-two respondents answered this question, collectively providing 55 comments.

The following Word Cloud indicates the words or phrases most commonly referred to by respondents as they answered the question. Words featured were mentioned 4 - 14 times.



Feedback has been grouped under the Goal with which it was most closely aligned.

Goal 1: Move towards a zero-emission, climate ready city and region

Transport and Traffic (5 comments)

- More regular bus services.
- Electrified/bullet trains to Melbourne.
- Safe, maintained bike lanes and other cycling infrastructure.
- Replacing the Queens Park bridge.

Emissions and Climate Change (6 comments)

- Aim to reduce agriculture-related emissions as a priority.
- Clear targets needed for cutting emissions.
- Advocate for more action federally and at the state level on global warming.
- Retention of existing old vegetation and blue carbon protection and values.
- Incentivise residents to reduce their emissions, for example, free or reduced-cost bulk buy solar schemes.

'The emphasis on climate change and carbon emissions misses broader points about sustainability... the collapse of soil productivity and other systems we rely on to produce food and fibre, and \$250 trillion of global debt that represents claims on future economic output.'

Goal 2: Create greener community spaces

Land Acquisition (2 comments)

- Acquisition of land to support reservations through planning processes such as subdivisions and mandatory 'developer contributions'.
- Inadequate targets for conservation reserves.

Goal 3: Contribute to a circular economy by reducing waste

Incentives (2 comments)

- Helping residents reduce their emissions, e.g. compost food wastes.

'Why doesn't COGG have combined green/compost bins yet? So many councils have these already.'

Goal 4: Protect, enhance and restore our region's biodiversity

Species Conservation/Protection (5 comments)

- Emphasis is only on threatened species - consider all species to ensure the viability of healthy systems.
- Emphasis should be for endemic species.
- Protecting and enhancing all indigenous flora and fauna.
- Provide opportunities to conserve and connect remnant vegetation on private lands to remnants on roadsides and in COGG reserves.
- Attracting bird life back into Geelong.

Legislation (4 comments)

- Many threatened species within the COGG boundaries have management requirements under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
- Responding to the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, the COGG Strategy should address the following: specific policy on protecting biodiversity on road reserves, grasslands protection (particularly vulnerable to clearing), protection of scattered trees especially hollow-bearing trees, (the Honey Woodland, Moorabool River), and localised strategies for habitat connectivity (Batesford to Barwon bio-link).
- Specific policies should be drafted into local planning policies in the planning scheme.

Incentives (2 comments)

- Incentivise the restoration of privately owned sites via rate reductions, direct grants or leasing of habitat to Council.

'The target to add 50 hectares to the area of conservation reserves by 2030 is totally inadequate for the genuine restoration and preservation of biodiversity, and public open spaces for an increasing population.'

If COGG can look at the strategic acquisition of land outside of the planning processes, purchasing land or preserving land to restore some connectivity between isolated fragments of habitat, this provides the opportunity.'

Other Comments (5 comments)

- Need to explain how COGG will encourage appropriate land use near high-value biodiversity sites.
- Define 'high biodiversity area', provide an appendix with details.
- Engage the community.
- Provide direction for the rural and coastal landscapes.
- Failure to undertake detailed studies for biodiversity on the remaining reserves, e.g. Mt Duneed Recreation Reserve (refer to work of Phil Hunter - Geelong Environment Council).

Goal 5: Achieve better integrated water management through planning and design (5 comments)

- Restore the natural vegetation along our waterways to ensure cleaner runoff and to enhance corridors for the movement of wildlife.
- Promote the adoption of recycled water as the source of potable drinking water in preference to a desalination plant.
- Waterways are part of vital natural infrastructure, and all need protection, restoration and enhancement.
- Creation of new systems with no support to existing systems.

'Water management is not the only area that would benefit from being considered in planning and design in an integrated manner. If the other goals were factored into an integrated approach, ... (we could) ... solve more than one problem at once.'

General (19 comments)

Community Engagement and Education (5 comments)

- Engage with local residents to run community planting days.
- Involve the community and support them to act on climate change.
- More education on developing zero waste practices for homes and businesses/more education for children

'Residents would surely be excited to lend a hand for a couple of hours if it was scheduled in their local area.'

Collaboration and partnerships, including with Traditional Owners (4 comments)

- Collaboration with other councils and organisations e.g. Cities Power Partnership.
- Partnering with organisations with community expertise
- There is a need for collaborative partnerships with the community, including the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, and engagement focused on the exchange of information, ideas and educational initiatives.
- More input and collaboration from First Nations Australians.

Targets, Goals and Funding (5 comments)

- Need for close alignment with global and national, state strategies and goals like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

- Importance of clear, specific and measurable targets and the funding to meet them.
- The actions do not clearly relate to the targets, directions or principles. There is no transparency regarding how anything will be achieved.

'It is not clear that there will be adequate funding to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity for schools, property owners, community groups and Landcare groups.'

Role of Council (2 comments)

- Council must take leadership beyond its direct footprint.
- Commitment to mainstreaming environmental sustainability across all of Council.

Miscellaneous (3 comments)

- There may be a need to review again in 2025, depending on how we are achieving targets.
- Food security.
- Current estate-based private development is both driving population growth and does not support green initiatives.

Two people answered that nothing had been missed and two had positive comments about the overall plan and goals.

'The document seemed well researched and was surprisingly detailed. As ever the implementation of the action plan will be the test ... for any glaring holes.'



Source: <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/parks/item/sparrovale.aspx>

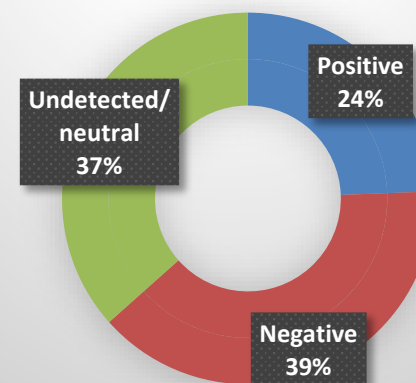
3.4 Any other comments about the 10-year strategy?

Twenty-seven people responded to this question, and 41 comments were received. Ten were positive, 16 were negative, and 15 relayed a neutral sentiment (or their feeling was not clear).

The following Word Cloud indicates the words or phrases most commonly referred to by respondents as they answered the question. Words featured were mentioned 3 to 10 times



Figure 4 Sentiment of Comments



Positive sentiment (10 comments)

There was a general theme among the positive responses that Council needed to simply 'get on' with the implementation of the strategy and the action plan.

- Focus on biodiversity, green space and sense of the uniqueness of 'place' here is good.
- This is a great document; however note there is no reference to grassland nor bushland, especially in the Executive Summary.
- This is a comprehensive well-structured and well-developed strategy. The document is well produced, clear and implementable.
- The 10 year strategy needs to remain at the forefront of all decision making at the City of Greater Geelong.
- Let's push for this to happen.

'Just get on with it!'
'When do we start?'



Negative sentiment (16 comments)

Of the negative comments, four noted that the strategy was inadequate and lacked progressiveness, and four were concerned that COGG was not sufficiently committed to the strategy.

- There is a lot of vague rhetoric, but very little real commitment to achieving measurable and meaningful results.
- Lacks a genuine sense of commitment and leadership.
- Council has to take a leadership role within the community, and the 10-year strategy on the environment has to reflect this. The strategy can't afford to be toothless, or 'business as usual'.
- It appears that Council isn't serious about its commitment to invest in environmental sustainability which underpins the economy and quality of life in our region.
- It is timid and inadequate, apparently paring environmental needs to suit economic and political ones.
- It does not go far enough - all Environmental Significance Overlays need to be reviewed and strengthened - ESO 1's do not go far enough to protect remnant and biodiverse landscapes, particularly in Council, held parcels of land. Native vegetation offsets are a misnomer - once it is removed, it is gone forever.
- Like the COGG, it's not nearly progressive and urgent enough for the climate emergency we are in.

- It lacks a consistent structure and language. There is no consistency in scale of actions within goals or between goals.
- It is very urban-centric.
- Principle 2.3 does not address inappropriate activities for some of the proposed spaces and may hinder the desired biodiversity outcomes if the appropriate restrictions/planning controls are put in place.
- Definition of sustainability not in alignment with the key One Planet Living Sustainability principle.
- Need to do better at consulting, acknowledging and highlighting Indigenous Australians heritage and knowledge of the environment



Neutral or undetected sentiment (15 comments)

Suggested actions

- Need for specific actions and milestone reported against throughout the plan's life.
- The document warrants clarification on the definition of 'nature'. Nature can be a natural system or human-made environment. We should be emphasising natural systems always.
- Eliminate conservation of roadside areas and encourage the planting of indigenous species by roadside private landowners.
- Be strong. Be radical. Make bold choices for the future generations of COGG.
- Artwork around town that celebrates the local environment.
- Stop medium and high-density housing in current urban areas

- Enhancing nature strips in front of private homes with indigenous plants.
- Explore and develop links to Australian owned and appropriate products for options for use.

Goal specific comments

- Goal 1 figures should be updated, 2015 figures should not be in this document as they are not the current state of play.
- Principle 2.2 is confusing as it implies vegetation is infrastructure.
- Principle 2.3 implies opening up vegetated areas for more people.
- Principle 3.2 should contain a statement of use of appropriate materials where those materials themselves do not provide detriment to the natural environment
- Principle 5.3 places emphasis on creating systems and not maintaining or enhancing existing systems - create implies human-made.

Other comments

- Good enforcement of necessary waste reduction policies will be difficult and potentially costly.

'It will take a concerted 10-year effort to achieve a sufficient change of awareness and commitment from the community to reverse the trend of careless destruction of significant native vegetation in the face of "development" culture.'



3.5 What is the most important thing we can do in the next two years to help us achieve your priority goal?

Twenty-eight comments were received from 28 survey respondents.

Goal 1: Move towards a zero-emission, climate ready city and region (13 comments)

Clear targets

- Set targets for reducing emissions throughout the municipality, with a goal of zero carbon emissions by 2040.
- Commit to a science-based target such as zero emissions by 2040 for the whole population of Greater Geelong (see Mornington Shire Climate Emergency Plan for practical examples).
- Sign up to the climate emergency principles and campaign state and federal governments to also sign up.

‘Make an unequivocal commitment to reduce the region's emissions in line with science and community expectations.’

Reduce traffic-related emissions

- Subsidise electric vehicles charging stations in the homes of ratepayers with the ability to use battery to grid technology from vehicles to add supply when wind not blowing and the sun not shining.

- Focus on reducing emissions in the fleet and Council buildings.
- Electrify train line to Melbourne and ensure bullet train built.
- Improve public transport and bike lanes to reduce emissions from traffic.

Miscellaneous

- An incentive for businesses to reduce carbon emission.
- Create local solar power plants using rooftop solar. Subsidise installation of rooftop solar with the power plants as a basis for recouping the investment.
- Highlight and reduce consumption of food products that have high emissions.

Goal 2: Create greener community spaces (1 comment)

- Require all new developments to have 20% open space/ parklands.

Goal 3: Contribute to a circular economy by reducing waste (1 comment)

- Clean up litter.

Goal 4: Protect, enhance and restore our region's Biodiversity (9 comments)

Encourage participation of private landholders

- Programs to support private landholders in rural and semi-rural areas to join in the objective of the biodiversity goal.

- Provide stewardship incentives to private landholders to look after and enhance their remnant native vegetation.

Planning controls

- Focus on making private housing development more sustainable - density, infill, transport connections, micro-power generation, sustainable design and build methods.
- Ensure guiding principles and directions proposed in the Council-wide Biodiversity Strategy will also apply to the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the North West Growth Area. This includes the review of complete environmental assessments and using planning control processes to identify, protect and manage existing biodiversity values and identify new opportunities for nature reserves.
- Have stronger planning controls that support government policy and legislation.
- Review all areas with ESO overlays and employ expert independent ecologists to ground-truth the level of protection and upgrade the levels to better protect what is remaining, particularly in public reserves.
- Educate and organise council staff to effectively manage existing overlays.

*Absolute protection of wetlands, forests and parklands.
Put an end to building on vulnerable areas.*

Goal 5: Integrated water management

No comments were received for this goal.

Other comments (4 comments)

- Collaborate with the local indigenous community.
- Support local communities to develop urban and peri-urban food growing initiatives to address growing anxiety about future food supply chain failures and to create fulfilling, meaningful work as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Establish a food organics trial at least with the goal to move towards permanent facilities.
- Stop all further residential and associated commercial developments.

3.6 Have we missed any actions?

Fifteen comments were received in response to this question. The majority of comments related to planning controls and the necessity to include or develop other complementary or guiding plans. Community engagement was also noted as an important action.

The following Word Cloud indicates the words or phrases most commonly referred to by respondents as they answered the question. Featured words were mentioned 2 to 7 times.



Planning Controls and Inclusion of other Plans

- Stronger planning controls, update the Municipal Strategic Statement, commitment to protect and enhance any remaining remnants.
- Include a criterion in tender submissions for cafes in COGG managed buildings regarding how they propose to manage and reduce their waste.

- Require greater open spaces and more natural spaces in any new development areas.
- Don't allow infill developments on land parcels less than 300m².
- Strategies to effectively manage existing vegetation overlays.
- Urban Greening Plan.

'There is no mention of an Energy Decent Action Plan. In the absence of guaranteed funds for a large scale renewable energy system with dispatchable power, the decline of existing grid infrastructure and the collapse of global oil and gas capex, we may be left with an unreliable electricity supply and liquid fuel rationing.'

Community Engagement and Education

- Regular clean up Geelong or your suburb family days.
- Education in schools and communities about the importance of protecting and enhancing our natural heritage. A good persuasive advertising campaign to raise its profile is well overdue.
- Providing opportunities for all of the community to come on board with the plan.

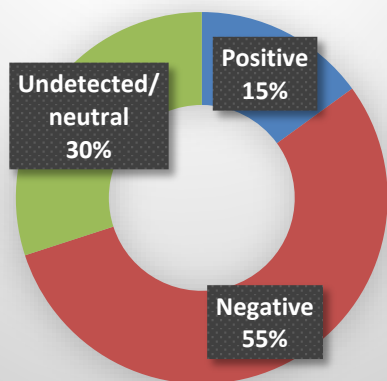
Other comments

- Collaborate with the local Indigenous community
- An action that links community green spaces with restoring indigenous biodiversity. Why not achieve both goals at the same time?

3.7 Do you have any other comments about the action plan?

Of the 20 comments received three were positive, eleven were negative, and six were neutral or of an undetected sentiment.

Figure 5 - Sentiment of Comments



Positive Sentiment (3 comments)

'Council are to be congratulated on taking initiatives to protect and improve our environment.'



Negative sentiment (11 comments)

Targets and actions are weak

- Actions are timid and inadequate, considering the urgency of restoring our biodiversity and addressing climate change.
- Needs more ambition and vision/ not audacious enough.
- Need broader, more aspirational targets to effect a step-change in building environmental sustainability and resilience.
- Targets are too weak - need additional targets, much more ambitious targets, commitment to audit and adapt.
- Action Plans need SMART targets, not broad general statements.
- Needs to strengthen and reflect an adequate level of reform and not simply facilitate a business-as-usual approach.
- Only low hanging fruit and non-controversial pieces will be implemented. For example, it's easy to plant trees to reduce urban heat island effect, but it's never going to counter the thousands of cars driven through Geelong daily.

Other comments

- Plans need to be community-owned if they are to be effective - more community education is needed.
- Don't punish homeowners in developed suburbs with high-density housing projects.
- It lacks a consistent structure and language - no consistency in scale, scope of actions within each of the goals or between goals.

- Goal One: It's concerning that the state government had to intervene to stop the council ripping up the cycle lanes in the CBD earlier this year as it shows that Council may be lacking enthusiasm over its plan.



Neutral or undetected sentiment (6 comments)

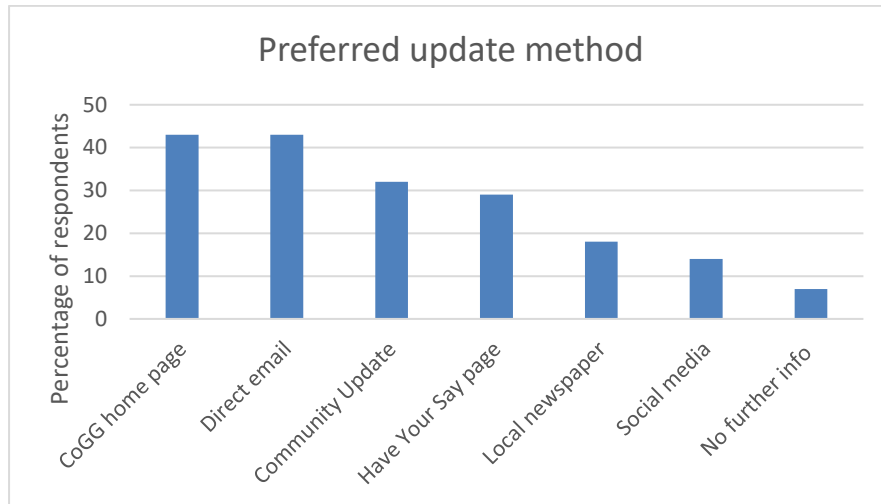
- Lead the way in purchasing electric vehicles and planning electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- The pandemic rush on seeds, compost and local veg box delivery raise real questions about our dependency on imports.
- Compulsory acquisition of 120 Russell's Road and apply an ESO4 over the very significant and healthy remnant patch of EVC class 175. No offsets available in COGG for this site, it is the only site left on Geelong's Southern Boundary, and it cannot be offset.

- Appreciate the efforts of community groups that are protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- Needs a heavy focus on making private housing development more sustainable -density, infill, transport connections, micro-power generation, sustainable design, and build methods.

'The detail of this type of plan is crucial to its success – it needs to be visionary and integrated with the other action plans of the Council and other groups.'

Appendix

Preferred method of receiving updates



Twelve respondents asked for updates via the COGG website home page, and 12 respondents preferred direct email. Nine people asked for updates via the COGG community newsletter Community Update, and eight via the COGG Have Your Say webpage. Five respondents requested information through their local newspaper, and four through social media channels. Two respondents require no further updates.

Preferred Newspapers

- Geelong Independent
- Geelong Advertiser x 2
- Armstrong Creek Times
- Talking Heads
- The Age

Preferred Social Media sites

- COGG sites
- Facebook x 3
- Twitter x 2
- LinkedIn
- Instagram