

Victorian Climate Change Grants 2015

Final Milestone Report



Baw Baw Shire Community Responding to Climate Change

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Summary

Global warming and climate change are significant environmental issues induced by human contributions to greenhouse gas emissions. How large and how fast the impacts of climate change will extend will vary in different regions. Scientific understanding of climate change is sufficiently clear so that we can take steps now to slow its impact, and devise ways to adapt and transition to an environmentally sustainable future.

At the Paris climate change summit world leaders have agreed to reach a universal agreement to accelerate action and work to hold global warming below 2 Degree C. As scientists tell us, we know that unless the global temperature rise stay below 2 degree C, we risk abrupt and irreversible climate change. Climate change also presents another significant challenge, it represents a systematic financial stability risk, and it endangers our way of life and our economic prosperity.

All levels of government in Australia have widely accepted climate change is real and are in the process of developing programs and policies to mitigate the effects and adapt to them. Local government is the tier of government that touches people most closely therefore it can play an important role in promoting low carbon and clean energy future in the community.

Baw Baw Shire communities are feeling the impact of climate change and want to take action to both reduce the environmental impact of their resources use. However, there is a lack of expertise and knowledge at the broader community level to be able to take significant action to address this issue.

Energy efficiency is one of ways to reduce the impact of climate change. Energy efficiency about achieving more while using less energy, by being smart about the energy we use at home, in business and in government. Baw Baw Shire Council, in partnership with Baw Baw Sustainability Network (a Community Network), ran a series of training sessions to raise awareness about climate change mitigation and adaptation actions in the local community, businesses and amongst Council staff.

For **households**, energy efficiency means lower energy bills, a more comfortable home and doing our bit for the environment.

For **business and industry**, energy efficiency means increased productivity, lower energy and maintenance costs, increased competitiveness, improved amenity for staff and reduced exposure to fluctuating energy prices.

For **Local governments**, energy efficiency means leading by example, prudent management of taxpayer funds, improved energy security and a better environment for all.

The project reflected a whole-of-council response to the community's identified needs, with council providing an integrated approach from its executive leadership & environmental sustainability team. The project has also strengthened relationships between Council and the community and within the community more broadly.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project background

Addressing climate change will be one of the biggest challenges facing not only Baw Baw Shire Council and its community but also the world in general. We need to respond to the challenge of climate change by using our resources efficiently and reducing our everyday impact on our environment.

Baw Baw Shire communities are feeling the impact of increasing climate change and want to take action to both reduce the environmental impact of their resources use. However, there is a lack of expertise and knowledge at the broader community level to be able to take significant action to address this issue.

Both Baw Baw Shire Council and Baw Baw Sustainability Network ran a series of training sessions to raise climate change mitigation and adaptation actions in the local community, businesses and amongst Council staff. The specific programs are given below:

1.2 Project objectives

The project objectives are:

- Trained and accredited Home Sustainability Assessor in Baw Baw Shire
- Trained and qualified Business Energy Auditors
- Council staff undergone training on Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

1.3 Project partners

Baw Baw Shire Council in partnership with Baw Baw Sustainability Network and Council's Environmental Voice Group assisted the implementation of the project. Council also received full support from DELWP to implement the project.

1.4 Project budget and Expense

The project budget was as follows excluding GST:

- Victorian Climate Change Grant 2015 funding - \$10,000
- Baw Baw Shire Council's contribution - \$1,455
- Baw Baw Sustainability Network contribution - \$800
- Total project cost including in-kind contribution = \$12,255

The total expense of the project was as follow excluding GST:

- Training costs – Reduction Revolutions - \$10,000
- Room hiring and catering costs – \$640.46
- Course material preparation cost -\$124.63
- In-kind contribution - \$1,489.91
- Total expense to date - \$12,255

Note 1. Victorian Climate Change Grant 2015 funding received - \$9,000

Note 2. Victorian Climate Change Grant yet to be received - \$1,000

2. Project activities

2.1 Project activities

The major project activities were as follow:

- Develop and finalise project plan
- MOU signed between Baw Baw Shire Council (BBSC) and Baw Baw Sustainability Network (BBSN) to deliver the project in accordance with the funding agreement
- Meetings, BBSC and BBSN to set the dates, time and venue of the training sessions
- Communication to all members of the BBSN to join and attend the training programs
- The program was delivered as per the following details

1. Course in Home Sustainability Assessment (HAS)

Date – 2 and 3 Aug 2016, Time – 9am to 4.00pm, Venue – BBSN Office, Yarragon, Baw Baw Sustainability Network hosted the course and we had 15 participants attending the 2 day course in August 2016. This course along with prior self-directed learning by many of us increased our confidence to proceed with our plans to deliver home energy assessments to our members and the general public which we are now doing.

2. Business Auditor Training Course – Baw Baw Sustainability Network (BBSN) and Baw Baw Shire Council (BBSC)

Date – 4 Oct 2016, Time – 9am to 4.00pm, Venue – BBSN Office, Yarragon, BBSN again hosted this 1 day course in October with a mix of people who had attended the home assessment course and those who had not. There were 6 participants. This course, though shorter, provided more in depth detail of how to perform a more technical energy audit in a business setting and was well received by the group. As a result we have formed another small working group aiming to provide audits for small to medium businesses. We are in the process of performing some training audits and hope to be successful in providing audit services in the recently announced Sustainability Victoria business audit program. In understanding how businesses consume energy and how energy efficiencies can drive down consumption and costs. Our advantage lies in our ability to leverage energy data and the insights it provides about your energy consumption; our best in class customer relationships and service; and having the solutions that businesses like yours need.

3. Sustainability /Energy Efficiency Course – BBSC

Date – 5 Oct 2016, Time – 9am to 11.30am, Venue – BBSC Warragul BBSC hosted this half day session course in October with a mix of staff from different departments such as Community Assets, Customer Services and Planning and Economic Development. There were 15 participants. This course provided useful information on waste minimisation, energy efficiency, greenhouse gas emissions reduction and water conservation in office environment.

- Development milestones and final project report including financial report

2.2 Key activities required under the Knowledge Transfer Plan

	Engagement activities - sharing of key learning's
<p>Objective/s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness to our community about energy efficiency and low carbon growth and simple actions to minimise greenhouse emissions. • Get help to reduce energy, water and waste bills • learn about technologies to optimise the use of resources • build stronger relationships with community and local government 	<p>The main activity undertaken to achieve these objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To train community members to undertake home sustainability assessments in the shire and assist household to reduce energy, water and waste. Take simple actions for sustainable living. • To train business members to undertake business energy audits so that business can take part to reduce their energy consumption and reduce energy costs. • Make Baw Baw Shire staff aware of sustainable living, reduce energy and water consumption. Target to reduce waste to zero by recycling and composting. • This program involved a range of activities designed to educate, inform and generate discussion about energy efficiency and sustainable living. • Baw Baw Shire Council formed a partnership to deliver the project funded by DEWLP.
<p>Target audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baw Baw Shire residents • Baw Baw Shire business community • Baw Baw Shire Council staff 	<p>The target audience will benefited in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A home energy audit, also known as a home energy assessment, is the first step to assess how much energy your home consumes and to evaluate what measures you can take to make your home more energy efficient. An assessment will show you problems that may, when corrected, save you significant amounts of money over time. • Improving energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective ways a business can use to manage rising energy costs and reduce environmental impacts. • Workplace, after all contribute to the consumption of large quantities of energy, water and other resources producing greenhouse gas emissions in the process. Council must lead by example to support climate change programs.
<p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home sustainability assessment – the training program will assist the community to make sound sustainable household decisions. • To promote Climate Change impact and sustainable living • To promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and low carbon growth in Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baw Baw Shire Council supports communities to respond to climate change and build community resilience through training, information session, tangible projects and programs. In the face of climate change and environmental health concerns, the training program assists all communities to reduce their contribution to climate change and therefore help preserve our precious environment. • Both BBSC and BBSN should aadvice and resources to help residents use water and energy wisely, reduce waste, recycle, choose energy efficient appliances and save money. It should also tailored programs, management tools and training services for businesses working to reduce energy consumption, overheads and costs. Help spread the word about actions we can all take to reduce our impact on the environment.

3. Key findings

The key findings of the project modules:

1. A home sustainability assessment (HAS) can help to identify where you can make the biggest water and energy savings in your home and save money. The assessment will involve an inspection of major water and energy systems, heating and cooling, lighting and, refrigeration. The assessor will also examine water efficiency. Council should encourage all the ratepayers living in the shire to undertaken HSA to minimise their impact on climate change.
2. Business energy efficiency is more than just reducing your impact on the environment. It can help your business become more resilient and productive, save on costs and give you a distinct competitive advantage. Businesses with an eye on their triple bottom line - their environmental, social and financial impacts - are able to make better decisions, compete effectively, build a more loyal customer base, and attract and retain staff.
3. Workplace, after all contribute to the consumption of large quantities of energy, water and other resources producing greenhouse gas emissions in the process, yet, majority of Austrian believe actions to combat climate change is critical to the nation's vital interest.
4. Both Baw Baw Shire Council and Baw Baw Sustainability Network are in a unique position to continually educate local communities and visitors to the shire on water and energy efficiency measures, which can be easily incorporated into everyday living.
5. Program also assists the *Gippsland Regional Plan*, which aims to assist the community to transition to a low carbon future.
6. By obtaining funding and empowering community to improve energy efficiency, this program may reduce the financial burden on these groups ensuring they can deliver their vital community services into the future. It has also strengthened relationships between Council and the community and within the community more broadly.
7. The program has demonstrated Council's leadership and provided triple bottom-line benefits and assisted community about energy efficiency and sustainable living.

4. Project evaluation

4.1 Overview of evaluation findings

The project has contributed enormously to putting local community on a sustainable path and it is vital to set out actions for driving better sustainable outcomes including economically, socially and environmentally. Helping local community understand energy use and the ways to reduce it will assist innovative energy efficiency practices.

- Home sustainability assessment training course has assisted community members to implement energy efficient solutions. There is increasing interest in home sustainability assessment in response to government initiatives and the heightened concerns about their domestic energy and water usage and waste and emission levels.
- The training program provided in the information on “Why to make home more be energy efficient and sustainable”? It pays to make your home energy efficient. By improving the efficiency around the house, residents can, save money by reducing energy bills, increase the comfort of home; make the most of advances in technology and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and needless waste. Even small changes in your home can make a difference. And by using innovative new technologies, you can reduce the amount of energy you use without reducing your quality of life.
- The Business energy efficiency offers advice on how to keep employees interested in an energy efficiency program, with a strong focus on employee ownership of the program. This program was more suitable for small-to-medium organisations. Business to develop energy-efficient procedures and discuss the potential impact of changes and the solutions that could help mitigate difficulties.
- The business energy efficiency program provided information on “Why be energy efficient in commercial buildings”? If you own or manage commercial property, it pays to be energy efficient. For building owners and managers, improving the efficiency of your property will, improve asset value by reducing the costs to operate and maintain your building, attract more tenants, more quickly and reduce tenant turnover, deliver higher rents and help address your goals for corporate, social and environmental responsibility
- The Sustainability/Energy Efficiency session provided information on why make our local government buildings energy efficient and sustainable? It pays to make local government buildings across Australia energy efficient. Improving the efficiency of schools, hospitals, offices, prisons, sporting and arts facilities can reduce energy consumption and save money on energy bills, freeing up scarce government resources, improve working conditions for employees, meet community expectations and environmental targets, create local employment and build capacity to deliver efficiency in the private sector and demonstrate leadership in energy productivity, energy efficiency and sustainability
- The majority of the staff believe in climate change and sustainable programs relating to energy, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, water conservation and waste minimisation principles.

4.2 Project success measures

The project success measures are as follow:

- **Save money** - reduce energy consumption, generate renewable energy, cut back on water use, and buy recycled and second-hand goods. It'll save money – and help the environment.

- **Be healthier** - be more sustainable by walking and cycling instead of using the car sometimes, buy and prepare good quality locally-produced food, and eat less meat. All of these actions are great for your wellbeing.
- **Reconnect with your community** - sustainable living relies on people working together. Whether you're buying locally-produced goods or getting involved in a community project, you'll make connections with new people.
- **Grow your knowledge and skills** - as lifestyle becomes more sustainable and residents do things differently by developing new knowledge and skills. Sharing that experience is a great way to inspire others to do the same.
- **Improve your quality of life** - every effort you make to live more sustainably adds up, and you'll soon notice the difference to your life. Whether you have more money, feel healthier, feel more productive or more in touch with where you live, your quality of life will have improved in some way, and so will your contribution to our planet's future.

4.3 Relationships formed during the project

Baw Baw Shire Council (BBSC) recognises the need to integrate sustainability into all aspects of community life, so that living sustainably forms part of what we all do every day. BBSC is developing creative and engaging ways to both educate our community and deliver its services and programs to promote energy efficiency and sustainable living. Sustainability is about making sure the social, economic and environmental need of our community is provided for now and into the future. Baw Baw Shire Council's Environment Voice Advisory Committee developed working relationship with the BBSN (community network) in a way for Council to engage with the community on issues regarding environmental sustainability and low carbon future.

4.4 Project legacy

The project legacy is to:

- Environmental sustainability- the home is designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save water and energy usage, and reduce waste.
- Social sustainability - the home has built-in safety features to prevent injuries, as well as security features to reduce crime and improve the occupants' sense of security. Universal design features are used so everyone, including children or people with limited mobility, will be comfortable.
- Economic sustainability- the home is designed to save money and avoids the need for major renovations. Costs of energy use, water use and maintenance will be reduced.
- Assist Council in understanding community issues and concerns regarding the environment;

4.5 Alternative future if this project wasn't funded

The project has provided the triple bottom line benefits to the community. Council would have missed the opportunity to the local community but also through its commitment to delivering community education program for energy efficiency, sustainable living and moving towards low carbon growth.

Many households may balk or defer initiating practical energy and water saving improvements due to not being aware of what they are and how simple some are to implement. The assessment allows households to fast track these improvements, cutting your energy and water bills and reducing your household's impact on the environment.

5. Recommendations and future directions

The main recommendations and future directions are:

1. A home sustainability assessment can help residents, community to identify where you can save money through reducing energy and water usage. Council should encourage its residents to undertake HAS to help environment.
2. Council must lead by example on climate change mitigation and adaptation and encourage its community, developers and business to follow. The experience and knowledge gained by Council through its own programs should be shared with the community and encourage ongoing action.
3. Council should implement the “Triple Bottom Line (TBL)” Capacity Building Program and incorporate TBL principles and practices into decision-making, planning processes and reporting processes for the council plan, operations, planning scheme, sub-divisional standards and annual budget process.
4. Council should mail regular newsletters to its residents and report in council meetings the highlights of current council projects, program and initiatives. Council could develop an online based communication system to provide further community leadership on HAS, Business energy efficiency and sustainable living. This will be reflected in an annual report
5. Council will provide resources to implement environmental and climate change programs including community education programs. An annual review should be conducted to ensure council is on track with the actions.
6. Council must support capacity building in the planning sector and local community networks and provide information and tools to assist them in managing the risk arising from low carbon economy.
7. Council plays a critical role in reducing emissions and managing risks to their own operations and to their communities in response to the impacts of climate change. Council must implement a program to reduce energy consumption from the Council and community buildings. All other Councils must plan similar program to reduce the energy consumption for their and community buildings.
8. There is a strong desire among local communities to understand how to measure and manage on greenhouse gas emissions in a consistent and effective manner and how to best to transition to a low carbon economy. Local Government should assist the communities to develop tools needed to manage carbon emissions and play active role in mitigating climate change.
9. Council must support vulnerable communities to understand, respond and adapt to the impact of climate change and strengthen community resilience to climate change.
10. Council must advocate on behalf of the community for improved sustainable living and move towards low carbon future.
11. Council continue to establish partnerships with government, the local community groups and work collaboratively on various projects such as solar power, energy efficiency and low carbon future.

Appendix 1: Project Financial Report

The financial report is as per the Deed of Grant.

. The project budget was as follows excluding GST:

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- In-kind contribution - \$1,489.91
- Total Expense to date - \$12,255

1. Climate Change 2015 Grant Funds - \$10,000
GST - \$0
Total - \$10,000
2. Council's contribution - \$1,455
GST -\$145.50
Total - \$1,600.50
3. BBSN contribution - \$800
GST -\$80
Total - \$880
4. In-kind contribution - \$1,489.91
GST – \$0.00
Total - \$1,489.91
5. Total Project Cost - \$12,255
GST - \$1,225.50
Total - \$13,480.50

Appendix 2: Project Plan/ Project Logic

The project plan was implemented in accordance with is the Project plan submitted.

The project logic is as follow:

Description	Scheduled finish
Milestone 1: Project Plan	27 June 2016
Course in Home Sustainability Assessment	2 and 3 August 2016
Business Auditor Training Course	4 October 2016
Sustainability/Energy Efficiency Course	5 October 2016
Milestone 2: Final report	11 November 2016

Photographs – Training programs delivered at BBSN Office.



