



**BALLARAT  
RENEWABLE  
ENERGY  
AND ZERO  
EMISSIONS**

Ballarat Renewable Energy and Zero Emissions  
PO Box 1301, Bakery Hill, VIC 3354

20 May 2022

**Submission on City of Ballarat Draft Budget 2022/23  
made on behalf of the BREAZE Inc. Board**

On behalf of Ballarat Renewable Energy and Zero Emissions (BREAZE Inc.), thank you for the opportunity to have input into the 2022/23 Draft Budget.

BREAZE Inc. is a volunteer run incorporated association formed in 2006 with the goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2030. BREAZE Inc. aims to facilitate, encourage and educate the wider Ballarat community towards this goal, via advocacy, installation and provision of renewable energy sources and improved energy efficiencies across the residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and transport sectors.

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On 21 November 2018 City of Ballarat Council voted unanimously on a motion put by Cr Belinda Coates, seconded by Cr Daniel Maloney, endorsing the climate emergency.

RESOLUTION: That Council

1. Notes the recent October 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on climate change.
2. Notes the successful motion to the Municipal Association Victoria (MAV) May 2017 to recognise that we are in a state of 'climate emergency' that requires urgent action by all levels of government, including local councils.
3. Acknowledges the 'climate emergency' and the need for urgent action by all levels of government, including local councils.
4. Acknowledge the need for priority resourcing of the carbon neutral and 100% renewables action plan and prioritisation of initiatives that move us towards carbon neutrality and 100% renewables.
5. Councillors receive a briefing from officers on how to best act on this 'climate emergency' acknowledgment and ensure that this is embedded into the 'carbon neutrality and 100% renewables action plan', council plan review and future strategies.

BREAZE Inc. commends Council for having taken this position and for continuing to implement those actions detailed in that motion, in both its subsequent *Carbon Neutrality and 100% Renewables Action Plan* (2019) which has a 2025 net zero target, and in its current development of a Plan for a community-wide net zero emissions target by 2030, endorsed in March 2021 - the *Zero Emissions Ballarat Plan*.

The *Carbon Neutrality Plan Progress Update*, tabled in Council at the 23 February 2022 meeting indicates, that much has been achieved in terms of the actions outlined in the Plan – that of the 61 actions, 3 have been completed, 44 are ongoing and 14 yet to commence. We note, however, that the timeline for effective action outlined in IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (that global emissions must peak at 2025) offers much reason for accelerating the actions and timeline outlined in the Plan. BREAZE Inc. would like to see completion of the *Action Plan* and other actions addressing the Climate Emergency, noted as priorities for any discretionary allocations that have been included in the Draft Budget, or that may arise from spending efficiencies.

While understanding the need for road infrastructure to keep up with growth, we believe allocation of \$800,000 for footpaths and cycleways needs to be increased. Well-built cycle paths that separate the cyclist from the road in addition to benefiting health, have the potential to reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions. We note too, that new housing developments in the west of Ballarat are largely on flat ground, that would lend itself well to cycling as a means of transport to schools, shops, work and public transport and (in conjunction with frequent, accessible public transport) thus having the potential to alleviate families' needs for two cars.

We also note that approximately 3% of the Council's planned expenditure for 2022/23 has been allocated to climate and environmental related matters. Around Australia 3-5% is currently considered good practice. The EU however, has budgeted 25% for climate action [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/eu-action/funding-climate-action/supporting-climate-action-through-eu-budget\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/eu-action/funding-climate-action/supporting-climate-action-through-eu-budget_en)

BREAZE suggests that to respond adequately to the Climate Emergency, budget allocations apportioned to climate mitigation actions, need to be accelerated each year and that 5% should be the baseline.

Following the order of Council Goals in the Draft Budget outline, BREAZE Inc makes the comments/recommendations below - as per page references.

***Goal 1: An environmentally sustainable future - p. 17.***

BREAZE notes that data from *Council's Carbon Neutrality Plan Progress Update* (23 February 2022) indicates that emissions are not falling at the timeframe forecast in Council's *Carbon Neutrality Action Plan* (2019). Although there has been a noticeable decline in GHG levels from 39,660 tCO<sub>2</sub>-eq in 2018 to 34,917tCO<sub>2</sub>-eq in 2021, this is a long way from the level set in the original *Action Plan* - of 28,398 tCO<sub>2</sub>-eq by 2021. The *Update* notes no reductions from fleet upgrades, which admittedly the *Plan* itself anticipates will not occur to significant levels until 2025. BREAZE suggests this upgrade should happen sooner, if at all possible, and be listed as a priority for any discretionary spending in the Budget.

The Climate Emergency is also reason for acceleration of Council's emissions offsetting, the Urban Forestation plan to double tree canopy by 2040, to 2030, which BREAZE would again like to see as a priority for any discretionary funds or spending efficiencies.

***Goal 2: A healthy, connected and inclusive community - p. 20***

*Re 2.1 - Socially equitable* - we urge Council to prioritise streets in low socio-economic areas of the municipality, which are particularly tree poor, for tree planting under the Urban Forestation Plan - doubling the tree canopy.

*Re 2-2 – 2.3 - Supporting vulnerable communities, and improving community learning, health and well-being* – we urge Council to ensure that sufficient funding has been allocated to engage communities in participating in emergency management, given increased risk of storms, high winds and fires as a result of the climate emergency (pages 22-23)

*Emergency Management page 27* - We note the explanation for reducing the budget in this FY, but respectfully suggest that given the escalation of extreme weather events as a direct impact of the climate emergency, the incidence of storms and high winds in particular (as experienced in October 2021), as well as fires and flooding in some parts, will increase and the community needs additional emergency management resources to deal with these.

### ***Goal 3: A city that fosters sustainable growth - page 30***

*Re 3.4 - Ensure environmental sustainability outcomes are embedded in all new developments.* This should include ensuring that existing wildlife habitat is left intact in greenfield developments, with subdivisions working around the existing forestation/vegetation and waterways. A sustainable environment requires that wildlife habitat is also accommodated and biodiversity protected – as well as open space and recreational reserves for human residents' well-being.

*Re 3.5 - Ensure better quality sustainable design outcomes in both the City of Ballarat and private developments.* Greater investment is needed in driving ESD in greenfield developments, whether through an increase in staffing to work with developers on the *Sustainable Subdivision Framework* pilot project, currently under development, or budgets to assist those Planning Scheme amendments currently underway, or in capacity building through training and identifying best practice benchmarks to assist with implementing the upcoming anticipated ESD amendments under the *Elevating Environmentally Sustainable Design* project (pages 31-32).

### ***Goal 4: A city that conserves and enhances our natural and built assets - page 33***

*Re 4.4 - Improve, maintain and conserve our open space and natural assets.* It is pleasing to note the increase in the budget for Parks and Gardens to accommodate growth in increased open space reserves. We also recommend additional upskilling of Parks and Gardens staff to better protect/conservate mature trees, given carbon storage ratio favours large trees 500:1 ([Queensland Government Guide to Carbon Farming - See Carbon storage and tree size](#)) Each large mature tree lost is approximately equivalent to 500 saplings.

### ***Goal 5: A Council that provides leadership and advocates for its community - page 44***

*Re 6.3 - Advocates on behalf of the community.* In undertaking this advocacy, Council needs to be more proactive in communicating the impacts of the climate emergency and the need for collaborative community action.

*Re - Communications and design - page 46.* The above might well be achieved by: including a banner referencing the Council's endorsement of the *Declaration of Climate Emergency* on the City of Ballarat website; community mail-outs detailing municipal emissions and how Council's 2025 target for the *Carbon Neutrality 100% Renewable Energy Action Plan* will be met; how residents can help; and by referencing the climate emergency in City of Ballarat branding. BREAZE believes that given Council's stance on climate action since 2018, Ballarat could indeed become a model city for climate action.

## Conclusion

Given the deepening of the climate emergency as recently experienced by Australians in the extreme weather events of the last three years, it would seem prudent for Council to prioritise those actions outlined in the *Carbon Neutrality and 100% Renewable Action Plan* (2019) and in *Carbon Neutrality Plan Progress Update* (2022). Any discretionary funding and savings from efficiencies in the bigger budget items in the Draft Budget 2022/23, should be allocated to those actions. We recommend the following ranking re priority.

- 5% of the 2022/23 Budget to be allocated to climate mitigation
- Accelerate getting off the gas in council buildings
- Accelerate landfill gas capture - *Carbon Neutrality Plan Progress Update* (2022) page 115.
- Accelerate solar PV rollout on all council buildings
- Accelerate transition of Council's fleet to EVs rather than hybrids as per bulk buy via CVGA in *Carbon Neutrality Plan Progress Update* (2022) p. 111.
- Accelerate transition of street lighting to LEDS
- Implementation of ESD principles in all new developments
- Accelerate the active transport plan with more cycling infrastructure, particularly in new subdivisions to the west of Ballarat
- Accelerate tree planting under Urban Forestation plan to double tree canopy by 2040 to 2030 or sooner
- Council advocacy/communications to the community about the climate emergency
- Accelerate energy audits on community facilities

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer feedback on the 2022-23 Draft Budget, and also for prioritising *An environmentally sustainable future* as Council's first goal.

Yours sincerely



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The principal objective of BREAZE Inc. is to protect the natural environment and increase sustainability within the region by promoting renewable sources of energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. BREAZE Inc. aims to facilitate and educate the wider Ballarat community towards a goal of zero emissions by 2030. BREAZE became an incorporated body in 2007.