

28 May 2021

Dear Moonee Valley City Council,

Draft Budget 2021/22 Submission

We call on Moonee Valley City Council to invest \$500,000 in the 2021/22 Budget in rooftop solar, batteries and lighting upgrades for our sports clubs & community hubs.



Background

A report titled “Response to Notice of Motion 2020/31 – Installation of solar panels on Council owned buildings” was presented to the Council meeting of 13 April 2021.

The report attachment lists 31 “Council Owned Buildings Suitable For Solar Power”. Most are sports and community buildings with 17 not currently on Council’s electricity contract (which will be 100% renewable as of 1 July 2021) and therefore a priority for rooftop solar installation in order to reduce emissions.

The report noted that “Once installed, rooftop solar PV systems generate zero-emissions electricity and in most cases can result in significant electrical cost savings for the building over time”.

=> 17 Council buildings are ready to have rooftop solar installed

MVCC Strategy & Policy

There are numerous Council strategies, policies and resolutions which lay the path for strong action to reduce community wide emissions, for example:

- Council resolved to declare a climate emergency in October 2019 with widespread support
- Council resolved to adopt community interim emissions reduction targets of 44% below 2005 levels by 2025 in the MV2040 Action Plan – Green. That’s about a 40% reduction over this Council term!
- The following MV2040 Strategic Objectives relate to emissions reductions:
 - OBJECTIVE 3.2 - Protect population health and respond to emerging health issues
 - OBJECTIVE 13.1 - Support renewable energy
 - Action 13.1.1 ‘Install solar systems on Council and community buildings’
 - OBJECTIVE 13.2 - Create a low carbon city and economy
 - OBJECTIVE 16.1 - Plan and build a climate resilient city
 - OBJECTIVE 18.2 - Lead through exemplar projects

=> Reducing emissions is Council strategy and installing solar is Council policy

Legislative Framework

The *Local Government Act 2020* states the following under

Part 2 Councils

Division 1 - Role and powers of a Council

Section 9 Overarching governance principles and supporting principles

(c) Council “must give effect to the overarching governance principle” of promoting “the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks” as set out in Section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*

⇒ There is therefore a legislated obligation to “mitigate..... climate change risks” and the one and only method of doing this is to reduce emissions across the municipality.

(h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;

⇒ *Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy* includes a target of 50% renewables by 2030 as well as a comprehensive plan to transition to a clean energy future, noting that “everyone has a part to play” including local government and therefore this strategy must be taken into account under the *Act*.

⇒ Council is obliged to mitigate climate change and reducing emissions is the only way to achieve it

MVCC Draft Budget 2021/22

We have thoroughly reviewed the Draft Budget 2021/22. While the investment in planting more trees is commendable, trees do not reduce emissions and are therefore not the most effective method of preventing (mitigating) climate change.

The ‘Environmental Sustainability’ service area has been allocated just \$628,000. That money appears to be going entirely towards programs and policies rather than actually reducing emissions.

There is no funding allocated to installing rooftop solar or other actions that directly work towards reducing community wide emissions such as installing batteries to store solar energy.

It is not clear how Council can meet its own interim emissions reduction targets of 44% below 2017 levels by 2025 without funding actions that reduce emissions.

⇒ There is no funding for direct emissions reductions in the Draft Budget 2021/22

Our Request

We request \$500,000 be allocated to install rooftop solar, batteries and lighting upgrades. This modest sum is not only achievable, investing in direct emissions reductions is also an extremely prudent investment in the municipality’s financial sustainability. Every \$1 invested will avoid much greater future costs arising from climate impacts to local roads, buildings, infrastructure, fencing, sporting fields etc.

On a per capita basis, we request just \$3.84 (\$500,000 / 130,000) per resident of funding for the single biggest challenge that we face this decade. Much larger sums are allocated on single projects that benefit only a few hundred residents with little or no return on investment. By contrast, installing solar will directly benefit thousands of club members through reduced costs, but furthermore, will benefit every

single resident of Moonee Valley by preventing worsening climate impacts leading to better health, wellbeing and economic outcomes in line with MV2040 and Council’s obligations.

Current installation costs for rooftop solar are around \$1/W equating to \$25,000 for a 25kW system, which should be possible on most of the identified buildings. Battery systems start anywhere from \$10,000 upwards, so allocating say \$25,000 to install battery storage for each building would be a good starting point.

One option would be to allocate \$50,000 (on average) to install rooftop solar and a battery on 10 of the 17 buildings in the 2021/22 Budget, with the remainder to be funded in 2022/23.

Switching inefficient lighting over to modern LEDs is also a direct emissions reduction action that could be undertaken in the 2021/22 Budget. At least one tennis club not on Council’s electricity contract requires approximately \$50,000 to upgrade lighting so funding this would not only help the club and it’s members, but also reduce community wide emissions.

=> Investing \$500,000 / \$3.84 per resident is a modest sum given the impact of climate change

Why Solar, Batteries & Lighting

Rooftop solar is the most cost-effective way to directly reduce community wide emissions.

MVCC commissioned ARUP to produce a report in 2015 to identify sources of emissions and mitigation opportunities (see *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modelling, 2015 – Attachment 1*). The report identified solar are the most effective measure in the commercial sector (which community buildings come under) and that alone it could reduce commercial emissions by 32%. LED lighting was also identified as a key measure at 12%.

At the time of writing in 2015, the report notes the cost of solar at \$1.85/W. By November 2020, prices had dropped significantly to just over \$1/W¹, making the business case for solar even more attractive.

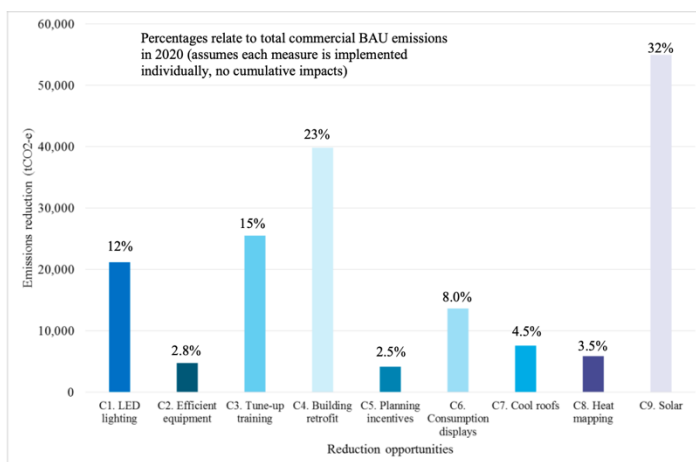


Figure 9 Identified commercial emission reduction opportunities

Battery storage complements rooftop solar to store energy generated during the day for use in the evening, for example to run lighting towers. A number of clubs we spoke to identified lighting as their biggest cost.

Lighting sports ovals and tennis courts consumes vast amounts of energy and is often used for many hours on multiple days a week during winter. Funding energy efficient LED lights would greatly reduce energy consumption and therefore emissions, benefitting the clubs and helping Council achieve its own targets.

=> Solar, batteries and lighting upgrades are cost effective ways to directly reduce emissions

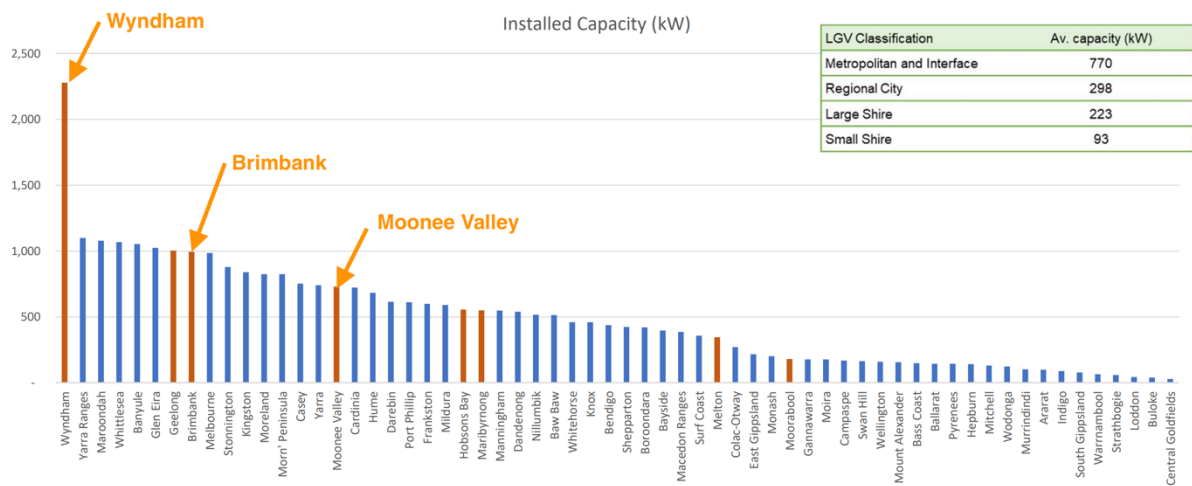
¹ <https://www.solarchoice.net.au/blog/commercial-solar-pv-price-index-november-2020/>

Case Study

Council's are already funding solar, batteries and lighting. For example Wyndham City Council, a fellow member of the Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action (WAGA) are directly investing \$1.36 million in their 'Solar City' program in 2020/212.

The program has already installed 2.27MW of solar and 373kWh of batteries installed. For reference, Moonee Valley has installed 730kW to date³.

Victorian Council Leaderboard – Solar installed by 2020



=> Councils can, and are, investing significant funding in solar and batteries to help their communities

Local & State Funding

Local and State Governments can, and should, invest in rooftop solar programs. This will help both levels achieve their own targets faster, saving more money for rate / tax payers and reducing climate impacts.

For example, a recent State Government investment of \$5 million for trees in the western suburbs, including Moonee Valley, on top of MVCC's own \$900,000 investment in trees, serves to increase the tree canopy faster which is a great outcome for everyone. The same can be done for solar!

=> Local and State Government can both invest in solar to achieve their respective emissions targets

² <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/project/wyndham-solar-city-project>

³ <https://waga.com.au/waga-councils-projects-and-achievements-2019-2020/>

Community Support

A petition was launched both online and in hardcopy on 3 May 2021. The online petition attracted 190 signatures while the hardcopy had 28 signatures for a total of 218 signatures. See Attachment 2.

The petition was tabled by Cr Samantha Byrne at the 25 May 2021 Council meeting.

=> There is community support for Council to fund solar, batteries and lighting upgrades

Club Support

As part of our submission, we spoke with a number of the clubs identified. They were all supportive of the idea. The Essendon Tennis Club are officially supporting this submission. See Attachment 3.

While we do not have formal letters of support from other clubs, a number of them signed and shared our petition with their members.

=> There is club support for Council to fund solar, batteries and lighting upgrades

MP Support

We have also obtained a letters of support from both The Hon. Ben Carroll, Member for Niddrie and Mr Danny Pearson, Member for Essendon.

=> There is Local MP support for Council to fund solar, batteries and lighting upgrades

Conclusion

Given the global shift in action on climate change over the past few months, the majority community support, the legislative obligations and the urgency that with which we must act in order to meet Paris Agreement goals of limiting global temperature rise to as to 1.5° as possible, it is imperative that Council invests in direct emissions reduction actions that will also benefit our whole community

We simply cannot afford to delay action any longer.

Yours Sustainably,

Logan Shield

0402 689 598

[Moonee Valley Sustainability](#)

[Moonee Valley Sustainability Forum](#)

Let's Be The Change

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of Moonee Valley land, the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people of the Kulin Nation, their spirits, ancestors, elders and community members past and present

Attachments

Attachment 1

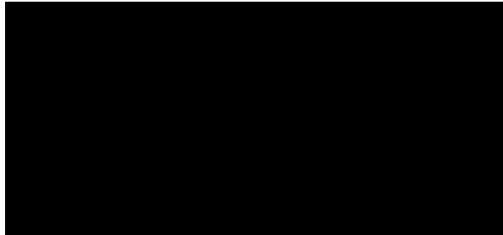
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modelling report, Arup, 2015

Attachment 2

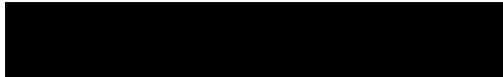
Solar Our Sports petition, Moonee Valley Sustainability 2021

Attachment 3

Email of support from Essendon Tennis Club



We are happy for you to use our name.
I have also distributed information and petitions to all our committee.
Thanks



Attachment 4

Letter of support from The Hon. Ben Carroll, Member for Niddrie.

Attachment 5

Letter of support from Mr Danny Pearson, Member for Essendon.

25 May 2021

Manager Finance
Moonee Valley City Council
PO Box 126
MOONEE PONDS VIC 3039

Moonee Valley City Council Budget 2021-22

Dear Manager Finance,

Congratulations on handing down Moonee Valley City Council's Budget for 2021-22.

I write in support of a budget submission drafted by Moonee Valley Sustainability group, calling on MVCC to invest in rooftop solar, batteries and lighting upgrades for sports clubs and community hubs.

It is clear to the Victorian Government, as it is with MVCC, that solar power is the way of the future and one of the easiest and most effective ways of reducing emissions in our community.

I appreciate your due consideration being given to Moonee Valley Sustainability group's budget submission, requesting investment in rooftop solar, batteries and lighting upgrades for sports clubs and community hubs.

Yours sincerely



HON BEN CARROLL MP
State Member for Niddrie
Minister for Public Transport
Minister for Roads and Road Safety



473 Keilor Road , Niddrie VIC 3042 ■ PO Box 554, Niddrie VIC 3042

P: 9379 5879 F: 9379 4434 E: ben.carroll@parliament.vic.gov.au

27 May 2021

Mayor and Councillors
Moonee Valley City Council
PO Box 126
Moonee Ponds Vic 3039

Re: Budget Submission – Monee Valley Sustainability

To Whom it May Concern,

I write to you in support of the budget submission put forward by Moonee Valley Sustainability Group.

The submission is calling on the City of Moonee Valley to invest in rooftop solar, batteries and lighting upgrades for sporting clubs and community hubs.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing in solar power, as is the City of Moonee Valley. Solar power is the way of the future and is one of the most effective ways of reducing carbon emissions in our community.

I would therefore appreciate careful consideration being given to Moonee Valley Sustainability Group's budget submission, which I strongly support.

Yours sincerely,



Danny Pearson MP
State Member for Essendon
Assistant Treasurer
Minister for Regulatory Reform
Minister for Government Services
Minister for Creative Industries

