

#### 4.1 EAGA IMPACT EVALUATION AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING 2021 - 2025

Responsible Director: Ossie Martinz

##### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council:*

- 1. Acknowledges the significant value provided by councils' involvement in the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA).*
- 2. Endorses renewal of Council membership of the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) through executing a Memorandum of Understanding 2021-2025, and payment of associated membership fees.*
- 3. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to sign the Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the membership over its four year term.*

##### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to gain approval from Council to sign a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in order to renew our membership of the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) from 2021-2025 (Attachment 1).

##### **BACKGROUND**

EAGA is a formal alliance of eight eastern region councils working together on programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency and facilitate climate change adaptation across the region. EAGA was formed in 2008 in response to community concerns about climate change and a desire to drive environmental sustainability initiatives in a coordinated manner in the eastern region. EAGA members currently include City of Boroondara, City of Stonnington, City of Monash, City of Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges Shire, City of Knox Council, City of Glen Eira, and Maroondah City Council.

EAGA is committed to responding to the challenges of climate change through the delivery of programs, advocacy and expertise on behalf of its members, led by a dedicated Executive officer. EAGA's processes are managed in accordance with its Terms of Reference (within the MOU) and its Operational Framework which includes a four-year Strategic Plan and annual implementation plans.

##### **DISCUSSION**

In preparation for the 2021-2025 program, EAGA engaged an independent consultant to complete an impact assessment on the work that is undertaken by EAGA for the member councils (Attachment 2). The Alliance provide an economy of scale, allowing Monash to deliver projects we could not do on our own, opportunity to share knowledge and access to specialist expertise. During the last four years, EAGA has continued to implement a range of high profile regional

climate change initiatives delivering clear financial and greenhouse gas savings to members and their respective communities.

Key highlights of the impact assessment:

- For every dollar contributed in membership fees, approximately \$2.25 is returned to EAGA councils and communities (over 200% Return on Investment).
- Regional initiatives have reduced emissions by over 13,500 tonnes in the last 12 months, particularly through the sector-leading Energy Performance Contract (EPC) program, upgrading energy efficiency of major buildings (at Knox, Maroondah, Yarra Ranges, Whitehorse and Boroondara).
- Solar Savers has installed 190 solar systems leveraging an investment over \$1.3M in clean energy for households.
- EAGA has continued its key role in the establishment of the LG PPA – Local Government Power Purchase Agreement (now called the Victorian Energy Collaboration – VECO)- a landmark initiative that will enable Monash and 46 other Victorian councils to procure low cost renewable energy sourced in Victoria from mid-2021. This will reduce our GHG emissions by up to 60% from July 2021.
- Environmental Design Policy for Buildings and Infrastructure developed.
- Over \$60,000 in grant funding was secured to examine the costs and benefits for regional adaptation initiatives.
- Five formal advocacy submissions were developed over the course of the year, with key impacts on energy market reform and changes to the National Electricity Rules. Advocacy by EAGA and the other Greenhouse Alliance is well regarded by State and Federal Governments.

The MOU for 2021-2025 is underpinned by priority partnership projects and EAGA's strategic approach to delivery (Attachment 3). EAGA's advocacy work has had significant impact on decision makers in State and Federal Government. EAGA also provides access to tailored research and opportunities to collaborate on state wide projects with other Greenhouse Alliance councils such as an Electric Vehicle Charging network for Victoria.

### ***POLICY IMPLICATIONS***

Membership to EAGA allows Council to deliver on Priority 3: Climate Change of the Monash Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-26 and the Zero Net Carbon Action Plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025.

### ***SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

EAGA membership delivers Council many social and environmental benefits including:

- (a) Supporting and advocating for heatwave preparation and response, building vulnerability assessment, improving electricity network reliability and strengthening and diversifying the regional food economy.

- (b) Supporting and advocating for financial and greenhouse gas savings through reduction in operating, maintenance and replacement costs including street lighting and energy performance contracts.

#### ***HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS***

EAGA's MOU has been guided by the broad principles of the International Human Rights and Social Justice Charter.

#### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

Each Council will pay an annual membership fee to enable funding for the full time Executive Officer and project officer support (hosted by Maroondah City Council). The Executive Officer undertakes the secretariat, advocacy, grant writing and strategic and project management deliverables of EAGA.

The funding commitment includes the following payment schedule:

July 2021 - \$26,000 + GST

July 2022 - \$26,650 + GST

July 2023 - \$27,316+ GST

July 2024 - \$27,999+ GST

This will be funded through the Sustainability Strategy budget allocation.

As the lead, Maroondah Council have decided to make the Executive Officer as a permanent role to meet the requirements of Fair Work Australia. In the event that EAGA does not continue, Maroondah has asked that the member councils share the costs of redundancy in the event that Maroondah is unable to redeploy the incumbent, which was deemed as a reasonable resolution by the EAGA Executive committee.

#### ***CONCLUSION***

That Council acknowledges the EAGA Return on Investment Evaluation Report and endorses the renewal of the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) membership and delegates the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding 2021-2025, and payment of associated membership fees.

#### ***ATTACHMENTS:***

Attachment 1 - EAGA MOU 2021-2025 for sign off (2 copies need to be signed)

Attachment 2 - Return of Investment Evaluation Report

Attachment 3 - EAGA Strategic Plan