

# REGIONAL VICTORIAN GREENHOUSE ALLIANCES

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS  
WORKING TOGETHER ON CLIMATE CHANGE



# FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.victoriangreenhousealliances.org](http://www.victoriangreenhousealliances.org)

## PRIMARY AUTHOR AND CONTACT:

### Rob Law

Executive Officer  
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance  
M: 0467 692 827  
E: [eo@cvga.org.au](mailto:eo@cvga.org.au)



## SECONDARY AUTHORS AND CONTACTS:

### Scott McKenry

Executive Officer  
Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA)  
[scott.mckenry@maroondah.vic.gov.au](mailto:scott.mckenry@maroondah.vic.gov.au)



### Fran Macdonald

Executive Officer  
Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action (WAGA)  
[FranM@brimbank.vic.gov.au](mailto:FranM@brimbank.vic.gov.au)



### David Meiklejohn

Executive Officer  
Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA)  
[david@naga.org.au](mailto:david@naga.org.au)



### Dominique La Fontaine

Executive Officer  
South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA)  
[dlafontaine@seccca.org.au](mailto:dlafontaine@seccca.org.au)



### Bronwyn Chapman

Executive Officer  
Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance  
[eo@gbga.com.au](mailto:eo@gbga.com.au)



### Ian Southall

Executive officer  
Gippsland Climate Change Network  
[eo@gccn.org.au](mailto:eo@gccn.org.au)



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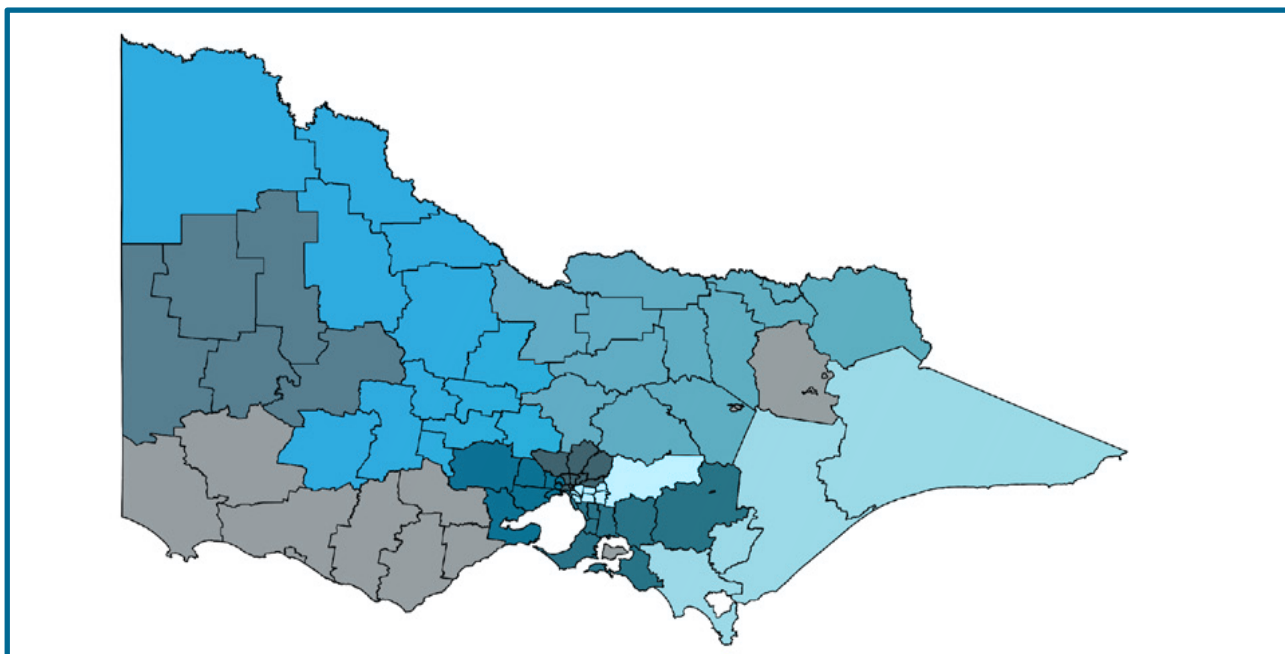
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# WHAT ARE THE GREENHOUSE ALLIANCES?

Greenhouse Alliances<sup>1</sup> are partnerships of local governments (and sometimes other organisations) working together on climate change, energy and sustainability issues. Covering 70 councils and most of Victoria, the 8 current Greenhouse Alliances work across three main functions:

- 1. PROJECTS:** Develop and implement innovative, regional strategies and projects typically beyond the reach of individual councils
- 2. ADVOCACY:** Advocate on behalf of member councils
- 3. KNOWLEDGE SHARING:** Undertake a range of knowledge sharing/capacity building activities for council



<sup>1</sup> The term greenhouse alliances also captures regional climate change alliances (eg. SECCCA or GCCN) and sustainability alliances (WMSA)

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Being part of a regional alliance delivers significant cost savings, economies of scale, knowledge sharing opportunities and advocacy potential to member councils. For example:

- Over the past seven years the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA) has delivered over \$60 million worth of projects and delivered significant greenhouse gas emission reductions in the region.
- The Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) has delivered a significant return on investment (4.93) in the first four years of operation, including direct savings to Council expenditures of \$2.35M.
- The Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance has attracted significant funding with a return on investment of 2.7. The regional streetlights project delivered a 37% greenhouse emissions saving and a 30% cost saving in its first year. The Alliance assists members to respond to climate change in areas spanning the key concerns to members - economic capacity, community understanding and Council's operations.
- The Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action has delivered a broad range of projects, including a regional adaptation strategy, advocacy to state and Federal Governments, regular specialist topic workshops and conferences, and extensive research to support local government responses to climate change.
- The South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA) has secured close to \$10 million of investment to deliver 20 innovative climate change related projects over the last decade.
- The Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action (WAGA) has developed and is now implementing a regional greenhouse strategy (Low Carbon West) and a regional climate change adaptation strategy, led by local government and encouraging action from multiple stakeholders in the region.

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS OF BEING PART OF AN ALLIANCE INCLUDE:

Attract large sources of **FUNDING**

**DIRECT \$ SAVINGS** to council through projects/advocacy

Identify and achieve **EFFICIENCIES & ECONOMIES OF SCALE**

**COORDINATE** projects that are valuable to more than one council

Leverage **ADVOCACY POTENTIAL**

Even-out **RESOURCE DISPARITIES/CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS**

**SCALE UP** successful local projects

Attract **PARTNERS** and enable Collaboration

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS (CONTINUED)

The alliances have been recognised in Australia and internationally as a best practice governance model for climate change. Beyond Zero Emissions, ICLEI and Ironbark Sustainability recently released a [report](#) on the role local governments are playing across Australia on climate change. The review is very comprehensive and certainly reflects positively on the role local governments have played over the past 20 years in leading on climate change action. In particular the report highlights how Victorian local governments are well above the national average on addressing a range of climate change challenges, from setting ambitious corporate and community targets to information provision and on the ground actions. Moreover, one of the specific actions that the review suggests is for other states to replicate the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances model.

The Victorian Greenhouse Alliances have also been recognised as a best practice global model by [a review](#) for the Atmospheric Fund in Toronto,

Canada. The TAF have worked for 25 years on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Toronto through grant provision, impact investing and program development. Recently their mandate has expanded to work more regionally, and so engaged a consultant to examine best practice models of regional climate change governance. The report identified:

“An interesting example of a best practice decentralized network is the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances. Essentially, local governments have established nodes throughout the region to convene strategic discussions, plan and implement greenhouse gas emissions reduction projects, and advocate for local governments at the state and national level. They have successfully engaged a wide range of stakeholders, bolstered the capacity of local governments, and improved coordination between municipalities and regions.”



# HISTORY

Victorian local governments are unique amongst other Australian local government alliances in having established another tier of regional governance to address climate change over nearly two decades.

The Greenhouse Alliances model was first formed in 2000 with the formation of the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA). Shortly afterwards, the Victorian Government began funding the development of such alliances across the state through the Regional Partnerships Program in its Victorian Greenhouse Strategy (2002).

Government assistance was particularly targeted at supporting the Greenhouse Alliances to:

- Develop greenhouse abatement measures to address the specific needs and priorities of Victoria's regions
- Build the capacity of local government, community and the private sector to engage in greenhouse abatement
- Partner with other levels of government in the delivery of State and Commonwealth greenhouse programs
- Improve the integration and targeting of government services and programs.

A review of the regional greenhouse partnership program in 2006 found that the Alliances had “provided a very cost-effective vehicle for encouraging coordinated action at the regional level” and “contributed significantly to raised awareness, improved knowledge and coordinated action”. The review recommended that the Regional Partnership Program of funding for Alliances be expanded to include other regions

of Victoria and (subject to the development of a favourable business case) “encompass the entire state” in three years. While this recommendation was not accepted, the Greenhouse Alliances have nonetheless prospered and now cover almost all Victoria's local governments.

The fact that these alliances still exist after 18 years is a testament to their success and ongoing relevance to local governments, particularly in an area as volatile and contested as climate change.



# CURRENT STATUS

Currently there are 8 greenhouse alliances operating across 70 of the 79 councils in Victoria. Over time some of the alliance boundaries change as different councils join or new alliances have formed. The following map demonstrates the current (August 2018) boundaries of the different alliances. Please note, that some councils are in more than one alliance, such as Ararat Rural City Council, which is in the CVGA and also the WMSA

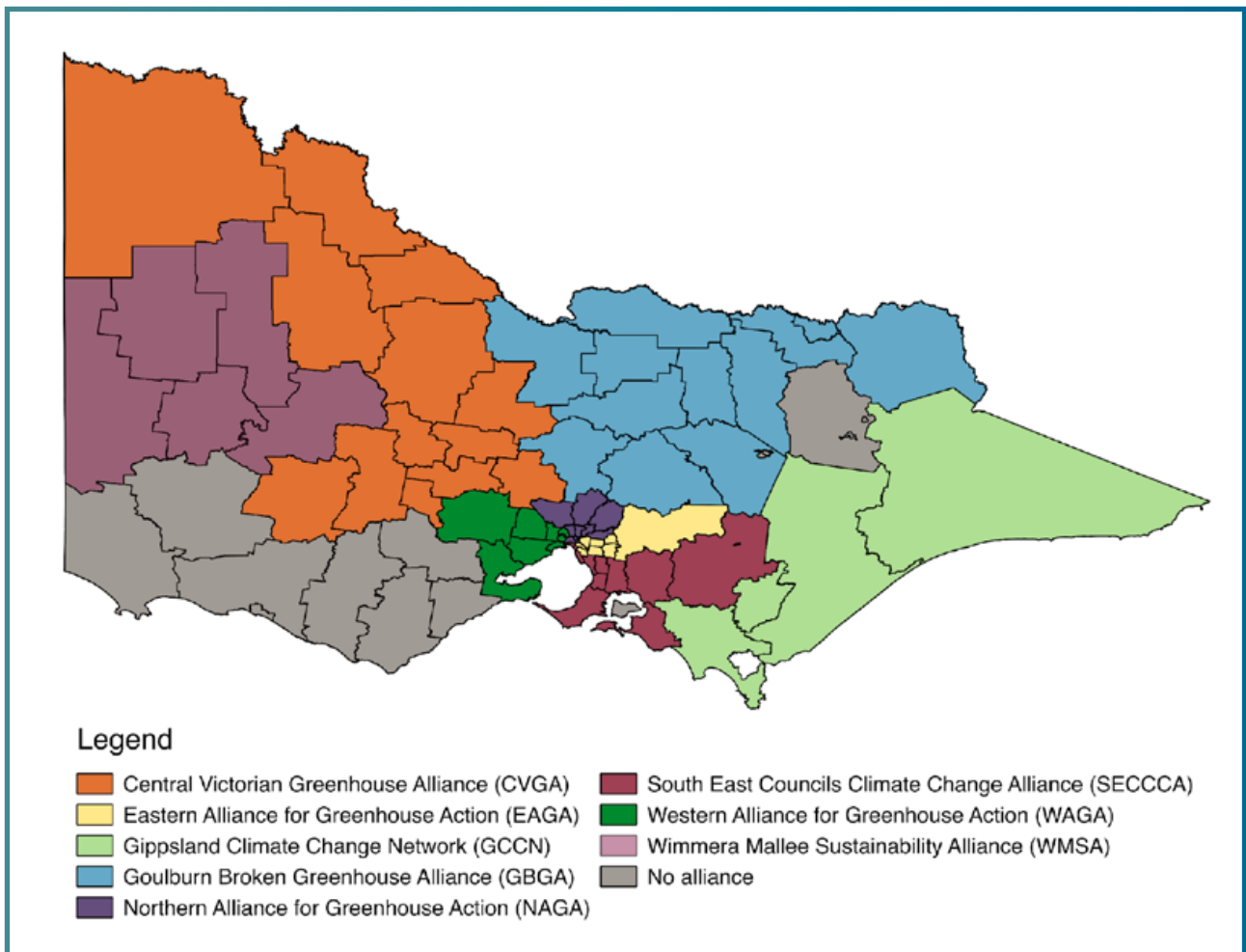


Figure 1: Victorian greenhouse alliances as of August 2018



# GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Greenhouse Alliances have different governance structures and membership arrangements that reflect local cultures, the members who sit around the table and the projects that they do. The alliances work in collaboration to share successful strategies and develop locally appropriate governance structures and work programs. Thus they can maximise their capacity to carry out work across Victoria to deliver regional projects that scale-up impact.

The alliances are either incorporated organisations (CVGA, SECCCA), or are auspiced by a host organisation (EAGA, WAGA, NAGA, GBGA). There are pros and cons to each approach; however, generally the performance and the function of the alliances is consistent across the state. Most of the alliances have a governing board/executive committee which sets the strategic direction, oversees finance and governance issues, as well as an officer level working group involved in project and advocacy development and knowledge sharing. For more information on governance refer to Appendix 1.

## CROSS-ALLIANCE COLLABORATION

Over the past 18 years, the alliances have delivered significant savings to its member councils and communities. Increasingly, the alliances work together to scale-up effective action through projects and advocacy across the state.

Examples of cross-alliance projects and advocacy outcomes include:

**Solar savers;** a \$4 million program to provide solar PV to low income pensioner households across 25 councils and 4 greenhouse alliances, led by EAGA

**Streetlight OMR savings;** a joint advocacy submission to the Australian Energy Regulator led to direct savings of \$22 million for councils between 2016-2020 for costs of operation, maintenance and repair of streetlights.

**How well are we adapting;** initially a project developed by WAGA, this project has now received further funding from the State Government to expand across the state and help councils measure and track responses to climate change adaptation

**Electricity procurement;** a broad work program being carried out across the alliances to explore new models for council electricity procurement that will deliver cost savings and emissions reductions. An ongoing working group has been established across interested councils across the state.

**Major road lighting;** the alliances have been working to facilitate the changeover of major road lighting to energy efficient lighting technologies. The alliances are leading the negotiations with the state government to establish and trial an equitable cost share model for asset replacement. The project has the potential to save \$24 million and reduce emissions by 85,600 tonnes annually.

**Future energy planning;** led by NAGA this project improved cross sector collaboration and information and data sharing between electricity networks across Victoria and local government land use planning and energy

**Annual greenhouse alliance conference;** the alliances jointly coordinate a free conference for local government every year. The conference highlights best practice in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, drawing on experts and case studies from across Australia.

# CURRENT ALLIANCE ACTIVITIES

In addition, each of the alliances are undertaking a broad range of regional projects and knowledge sharing activities that are relevant to their region. The following table highlights some of the recent projects across the different alliances:

Alliance	Project	Summary	Status
CVGA	Social Energy Procurement	Assessment of energy procurement opportunities for regional councils including PPAs and local energy project partnerships	2018
	Cool it: Heat vulnerability mapping	Heat vulnerability mapping and greening action plans for regional towns	2018
	Country Charged	Shortlisted bid for \$3.5 million project to develop a large scale virtual power plant across the region	Funding bid
	Lighting the regions	Initiated by WMSA the lighting the regions project led to changeover of residential streetlights to LED. Next stage being developed by CVGA for major road lighting.	Ongoing
	MASH community solar	Delivers a community solar and battery bulk buy across the region	Ongoing
GBGA	ClimateSmart Agriculture	Modelled and assessed the impacts of climate change on agriculture across 14 commodities to 2030 and 2015. Next stage is expansion of area included and economic impacts.	2016 original project and current funding bid
	Electric Vehicle Feasibility Study	Assessed the introduction of electric vehicles to fleets in regional organisations using Council travel data.	2018
	Hume region sustainability indicators	Reporting indicators embedded in GBGA website for future trends and benchmarking	ongoing

Alliance	Project	Summary	Status
EAGA	Solar savers	Scales up the successful Darebin model to include and additional 25 councils	Current
	Scaling Up Solar on council buildings	Systematic review of rooftop solar potential across ~60 council facilities across the region	Current
	Energy performance contracting (EPCs)	Australia largest corporate energy efficiency project targeting council buildings, lead by EAGA's Major Energy Projects Manager	Current
NAGA	Electric vehicle feasibility study	Assessment of five council fleets as to their suitability to incorporate EVs. Produced a tool which can be used by other councils.	Completed 2018
	Local governments as energy retailers	Initial research has created interest amongst members. Have submitted application for funding to conduct feasibility study.	Current
	Local electricity trading	Modelled scenarios in which local electricity trading (trading energy over property boundary) would be economically beneficial for local government.	Current
	Future Energy Planning	A project that aimed to improve collaboration between local government land use planners and electricity network planners.	Complete 2017
SECCCA	Ecodriver	Behaviour change program to improve vehicle utilisation fuel and cost efficiency	Ongoing
	New home energy advisory service	Helping new home buyers and volume home builders to incorporate energy efficiency and renewable energy into new home builds, save on expenses and improve liveability	Ongoing
	RES Scorecard	Piloting the Residential Energy Efficiency Scorecard and energy efficiency tools in the South East	Ongoing
	ESD Matrix	Developing a tool to make uptake of ESD into council assets and facilities easy	Ongoing
	SEMREP	South East Melbourne Renewable Energy Project - similar to MREP, but with a focus on economic development outcomes of the project being delivered in the south east	Ongoing
	Financial risk adaptation planning (FRAP)	Identifying and costing council's climate risk to assist councils plan and budget for future adaptation requirements.	2016 complete - new stages being developed
	Zero Emissions Strategy	How can the south east region achieve zero emissions and what are the socio economic benefits	under development

Alliance	Project	Summary	Status
WAGA	How well are we adapting	Tool to monitor, evaluate and report on councils' adaptation responses internally and to the community, developed by WAGA. Next steps: expand to other Victorian councils and develop a complete set of indicators.	Ongoing
	Greener Streets: improving street tree planting	Project to improve the environmental, social and economic benefits of street tree planting, including development of a guide for Victorian councils	Ongoing
	EUAs for non residential buildings	Finance mechanism offered by councils to facilitate environmental upgrades for businesses (in 5 WAGA councils, 10 EUAs so far, worth nearly \$3.5M)	Ongoing
	EnergySmart solar and lighting program for businesses	Council-approved providers marketing commercial solar and energy efficient lighting to local businesses and schools	Ongoing
GCCN	Community Power Hub Latrobe	The GCCN are hosts to one of three pilot community power hubs operating across Victoria.	Current
WMSA	Lighting the Regions initiation and development	Initiated and later partnered with CVGA councils to undertake the largest residential street light energy efficiency retrofit project in Australia.	Complete
	Bioenergy project development	Using waste timber for heat - now at Beaufort Hospital	Ongoing

For more information please go to [www.victoriangreenhousealliances.org](http://www.victoriangreenhousealliances.org) or contact any of the individual alliance coordinators/executive officers using the contact details at the start of this document.

# APPENDIX 1: ALLIANCE ARRANGEMENTS AS OF JUNE 2018

	No of Staff, staff roles and FTE	Governance structure	Member type, category & number	Membership process	Fee structure and value (\$)	If known, average number of sustainability staff per member council	Accommodation arrangements and costs (hosted/ with or without charge)
SECCCA	1 FTE EO and 1 FTE project co-ordinator	Management committee made up of 2 sustainability reps (officer, team leader level) from each member council, several subcommittees.	9 Councils, all full voting members	3 year MOU	\$16.3K/annum/ member council	Majority of councils have between 2 and 3. One has 12+	Hot desking at member councils as required and home office arrangements. No council accommodation costs.
WAGA	1 EFT EO	Executive and Operational Committees, with 1 rep per council on each committee. New structure will commence in 2018-19. WAGA will be overseen by LeadWest's Environment Planning and Sustainability Group (Directors and Managers), which will report directly to LeadWest Board (CEOs and Councillors from each financial member council).	8 council members: 6 financial and 2 non-financial/ non-voting.	4.5 year MOU	\$22,000/ annum/financial member council	2 to 6	WAGA staff and funds are hosted by a member council on a rotating basis. Current host council is Brimbank. No additional costs to host council beyond staff costs (salary, LSL, super), which are provided through WAGA budget.
NAGA	0.8 FTE EO, 0.6 FTE Project Manager	Executive with senior reps from each councils (usually a councillor and a senior manager). Supported by working groups covering Advocacy, Finance and Governance. Deliver 3 year strategy broken up into annual work plans.	9 councils, all full voting members	2 year MOU	Flat fee = \$25,000 per annum. Increases in line with rate cap.	Varies, usually 1-2.	Hosted at MEFL, annual charge of \$29,500.

	No of Staff, staff roles and FTE	Governance structure	Member type, category and number	Membership process	Fee structure and value (\$)	If known, average number of sustainability staff per member council	Accommodation arrangements and costs (hosted/ with or without charge)
<b>GBGA</b>	1 ETF EO	Main Committee with 2 reps per member, Councils send one Councillor and one officer. Meets quarterly. Plus Alliance committee handles EO work plan, and other governance matters. Meets quarterly	11 Councils, 2 CMAs, DELWP (Hume)	4 year MOU 2017-2021	Rate per head population for Councils (0.40c per head) Range of contribution from \$3,300 to \$25,900. Agencies have set fee around \$5k	Varies from one day per week (0.2 EFT -held by a consultant) to 7 EFT (including waste and native veg officers ) Sustainability is usually one officer or less.	Auspiced by City of Greater Shepparton with costs applying
<b>CVGA</b>	0.8 FTE EO, 0.6FTE office/ project manager, 0.6FTE MASH program lead	Board of directors made up of councillors, CEOs and directors of member councils. A finance and audit subcommittee made up of board members, and a working group of officers across member councils	13 councils, all full voting members. Used to have different associate members but scaled back to be just local gov.	3 year MOU, currently being signed for 2018-2021	Smaller councils (<\$20 mil turnover)= \$8500 p/a, Medium councils (\$20 - \$40 mil)= \$12500 p/a and Larger councils (>\$40mil)= \$18500 p/a. All rates per year per council, and amounts to about \$150K in total each year.	Too variable. Many councils have none, and not always based on size eg. bendigo has about 4 or 5 but ballarat has 1 waste, water and energy officer and no sustainability officer, despite being same size.	Independent, we rent out two rooms in the hub building in castlemaine.
<b>EAGA</b>	1EO, 1FTE PM (grant funded) 1 PM (project budget funded). EO on a 2 year contract rolling contract reviewed annually	Executive Committee made up of 1 councillor / member and Operational Committees, with 1 - 2 officers	8 Councils	4 year MOU 2017-2021	Starts at 20K/ member to increase 2.5%/ annum from year 1	On average 3	Hosted by Maroondah with no charges. Host councils retains \$50K for liability