Centre of Excellence: Young People & Disasters submission: Victoria's Climate Change Strategy

April 2025

Key contacts:

Derm Ryan, Head of YACVic Rural

dyran@yacvic.org.au

Associate Professor Fiona MacDonald, Principal Research Fellow, Victoria University

Fiona.Macdonald@vu.edu.au

Acknowledgement of Country

Our work takes place across Victoria.

YACVic head office and Victoria University's Campus are on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation in Naarm (Melbourne). YACVic also has offices on the lands of the Gunditjmara Nation in Warrnambool, and on the lands of the Wemba Wemba and Wadi Wadi Nations in Swan Hill. Victoria University also has campuses across Melbourne's western suburbs, Brisbane and Sydney.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present for their wisdom, strength, support and leadership. Bunjil's lore states that those who walk on this land must care for Country and the waterways as well as care for the children and young people.

We stand in solidarity to pay respect to the ongoing culture and continued history of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations. Sovereignty was never ceded.

This always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Contents

About the Centre of Excellence: Young People & Disasters

The Centre of Excellence: Young People & Disasters ('the Centre') is a partnership between Victoria University's Youth and Community Research Group, and the Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVic).

Funded by the Commonwealth, the Centre champions the inclusion and active involvement of young people to contribute to all aspects of disasters. The Centre brings together expertise around young people (12-25 years), youth participation and disasters, and takes a strengths-based approach, recognising the capabilities and contributions of young people as active citizens in disaster readiness, resilience, and risk reduction.

The Centre champions whole-of-community approaches which are needed to create solutions to ensure Victorians are prepared and resilient for future natural disasters. Young people have been systemically excluded from decision making and need to be actively engaged to ensure that Victoria's future is protected, and communities remain resilient.

YACVic and Victoria University's disasters projects

YACVic and Victoria University (VU) have undertaken and partnered on a range of projects across Victoria, all of which have a strong focus on young people and disaster readiness, response and recovery. See Appendix A for more information about these joint projects and Appendix E for more general information about YACVic and VU.

Centre of Excellence: Young People & Disasters Submission

Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to Victoria's 2026-30 Climate Change Strategy (the Strategy).

The climate crisis is the biggest economic, social, and environmental threat facing the planet and humanity.[1] Climate change is directly impacting disasters causing them to be more intense, and climate-related disasters have almost doubled in frequency over the past twenty years.[1] Disasters are now experienced as multiple, compounding and cascading events.[2] For those in Victoria this means longer and more intense bushfire seasons, with a warmer, drier climate; longer and more intense heatwaves; intense rainfall events; and rising sea levels.[2]

We must act now. Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is increasingly getting further out of reach. Likewise, it is becoming more challenging to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.[1]

Much of the rhetoric around young people and climate change focuses on their futures. We know young people's futures are disproportionately affected by these compounding disasters,[3,4,5] but young people are also experiencing the effects of climate change and compounding disasters now. We also know that the task of adapting to climate change is going to fall to them as a generation forced to bear the burdens of past generations' inaction.[4]

In our work, young Victorian's are experiencing the effects of climate change through disasters, including the 2019-20 bushfires, the 2022-23 floods, the 2022 North-east Victorian floods and storms, and then 2024 Western Victoria and Bass Coast Bushfires.

Young people are largely left out of climate change planning and disaster management conversations.[6] Despite this, young people are motivated to act and are finding innovative solutions. Many are leading global movements including the School Strikes 4 Climate campaign, although others tell us that they do not feel safe to speak up in their communities.

Young people are consistently excluded from decision making spaces. This is exemplified at all levels of government in Australia and evident at global meetings like the Conference of the Parties (COP).[6]

Furthermore, adopting a social equity approach to climate change and disasters ensures all young people are included. There is much to learn from young people, including those who experience marginalised, disadvantaged and/or intersecting identities. The Strategy provides not only the opportunity to link climate change planning to disasters, but to ensure social equity, and intersectionality are integral to climate justice for all young Victorians.

It is critical that the Strategy acknowledge the unique impacts on young people while positioning them as leaders and agents for change[5] of today.

Methodology

The submission is grounded in the voices of young people across Victoria, drawing on their knowledge and experiences. This includes members of our Future Proof Youth Advisory Groups (12 – 24 years) from our 12 regional and rural partners across North and North-east Victoria. In addition, a consultation and survey were conducted with eight young people (13 – 24 years), four participants are based in metropolitan Melbourne and four are from rural/regional Victoria. The submission also draws on a consultation with eight young people (14-18 years) from Swan Hill for the Climate Resilience Inquiry in 2024. The groups represent participants who identify with a range of genders including participants who identify as female, male, trans & non-binary, and non-binary.

This submission also draws on findings from consultations that were conducted throughout 2024/25 with various emergency management organisations, non-government organisations, youth and community organisations and universities with the Centre. The focus of these consultations included questions about how climate change is a key concern for young people and how the Centre could mitigate against the negative effects they experience.

Diverse experiences and impact

It is important to state that young people are not a homogenous group, and the concerns raised mirror the social context and environment they live in, or have lived in. Some of the biggest distinctions are evident in the experiences of regional and rural young people in contrast to their urban peers. With climate change and disasters experienced more frequently in rural and regional areas it is essential that the Strategy is informed by young people living in Victoria's regional and rural areas.

Part 1: What young people told us

What are your main concerns about climate change in Victoria? And how do these concerns specifically impact young people?

Young people raised a number of key concerns about climate change and the impact on their lives.

Mental health impacts

The impact of mental health linked to climate change and disasters for young people is increasing as the regularity and severity of events increases.[7]

Climate anxiety and burden of the future

Young people raised the severity they are feeling from anxiety and stress for the future amidst rapidly changing weather events/patterns. As they look to the future, they feel uncertain about their career opportunities and carry the stress of

a changing economy. They carry and feel the burden of the inaction of the current generation falling on their shoulders.

Recommendation: The Strategy include specific mental health outcome adaption and mitigation strategies.

Recommendation: The Strategy be directly linked to the current Victorian Mental Health Strategy.

"Education is a key step to dissipating the anxiety that a lot of us are feeling towards what the future is going to look like" – consultation participant

Young people carry a sense of anxiety, responsibility and burden that the impacts of climate change cannot be reversed. They are aware that the world is at a crucial point.

Young people are concerned that the fear and worry of climate change is draining their excitement for the future.

Unsafe environments

Young people in rural and regional areas of Victoria expressed a concern that they are unable to discuss climate change and the impacts in their local community. They reflected on the challenges of material interests and heavily resource-extractive industries restricting their ability to speak up or have agency around climate action.[8]

The logging industry is really important because it provides a majority of the population – those tiny communities – with jobs. Everybody knows everybody that works there... has family there. In the bigger [city] areas you can have those opinions more and you can find those people with the same beliefs [about the need for climate action] where you can still feel safe in that area, as well as feel validated." Research participant – young person

Burden of worry

Young people spoke about experiencing an anxiety that extends beyond themselves. They express concern for the collective wellbeing of their families, friends, and their communities. They want the needs of those they care for to be centralised in climate change strategies. Young people also feel burdened with the responsibility to address the climate crisis, reflecting generational injustice.

"Climate change is sacrificing my freedoms, choices and liberties for the future. In the future I want to be able live where I want, have the career that I want, live the lifestyle that I want, still conscious of the environment but with some of that choice. And without fearing of personal safety and the safety of the people I love or safety of the rest of the community" – consultation participant

"I feel an intense pressure that our generation has to fix all these problems looming over us." Research participant – young person

Overall productivity

The constant worry and anxiety about climate change, is distracting them from their work and study as well as having a negative impact on their overall productivity.

"In an ideal world we should the opportunity to focus on what issues to pursue in the future, unfortunately that isn't the case" – consultation participant

Cost of living and inequity

Low socioeconomic status/young people living in poverty

Young people raised concerns over the monetary costs of climate change, rising energy prices, economic hardship and food insecurity. All important aspects of daily living which exacerbate existing inequalities. Young people in regional and rural areas face challenges with seasonal, tourist driven employment which tightens with economic constraints.

Recommendation: The Strategy include specific outcomes that address young people who face economic hardship and who are in and from low socio-economic areas and backgrounds.

Geographical location and differences in infrastructure

There are more facilities available in metro Melbourne to deal with heatwaves and offer relief. An example was shared about the Carlton Community Learning Centre as a heat relief centre, and they even provide transport. Similar facilities in regional and rural areas may have less flexibility to respond to events with less citizens and income.

Recommendation: The Strategy and its adaption strategies should explore ways to take successful innovative ideas to regional and rural areas.

Housing

One participant reflected on the housing towers near where they live. They reflected on how scary the lack of climate control in the towers is, and how unliveable they become during heatwaves. This is a key issue for people who don't have the resources or authority to install air-conditioning.

Housing regulations should be a key mitigation strategy.

"These buildings weren't meant to last a long time but especially now they've added hallways, it's turned into a little bit of a greenhouse. So when you have heatwaves, it's really dangerous" – consultation participant

"I'm currently living in a department owned house, and the energy efficiency of it is really terrible. I can do my best and stick little things inside the windows, and try to seal it as best I can, but I actually don't have the authority to make any of those changes, and it's really frustrating" – consultation participant

---

Frequencies of disasters and growing instability of seasons

Heatwaves

Participants raised that there is less education around the growing issue of heatwaves, and the effects on community health and infrastructure. One participant raised concerns around the physical effects on health, specifically on young people in schools, including:

- skin exposure to high UV days, resulting in increased risk of skin cancers
- dehydration

Recommendation: Fund education initiatives and awareness campaigns around heatwaves that include innovative responses that can be scaled up for broader use.

Rural and regional

Young people in regional and rural Victoria have greater experience of climate-related disasters in their everyday lives yet are largely absent from the broader climate conversation. Interestingly, in our research in regional and rural Victoria, these young people did not make the connection between their lived experiences of climate-related disasters and climate change. For these young people, their concerns of climate change were on a larger, global scale. This should not be seen as a deficit view but rather one of difference and acknowledging acute distinction between climate change and material interests of communities and resource-

extractive industries. These young people are looking for safe spaces to engage in climate action.

> *"The young people I'm in contact with are very, very aware of climate change and feel very passionate about climate change, but perhaps are yet to connect things that are happening in their everyday life to climate change."* Research participant – young person

Nature and wildlife implications

There are so many species that are at risk of extinction. This will only worsen as climate change continues.

> *"There will be a generation of people who have never seen certain types of animals, they will never be able to experience a healthy forest, or reef, which is quite sad"*– consultation participant

Loss of cultural and traditional sites

Young people reflected on their experiences from other countries where they grew up before settling in Australia. They reflected on how disasters caused loss of cultural and traditional sites. They raised this in relation to similarities that they imagine First Nations people would experience and have similar concerns around.

The concern is well placed as recent events have had significant impact on First Nations children and young people. As many as one-tenth of children affected by the 2019-2020 bushfires identify as Indigenous. This raises significant concern for trauma, health, returning to Country, education and housing.[9]

Young people emphasised the loss of connection to Country for First Nations people, including when cultural sites are destroyed due to climate change.

Fossil fuels and corporations

Young people raised frustration over:

- The acceptance and lack of consequences for large polluters
- Reliance on brown coal and gas
- A slow transition to renewables
- The reliance on private corporations to create renewable energy farms, instead of creating publicly owned ones

Recommendation: the Strategy commit to holding polluters to account with fines and taxes to be used to speed up transition to renewables and increase state owned assets in all aspects of the growing renewable energy sector.

Government's concerns, ranked by young people

We asked the young people who took part in the survey and consultation to individually rank the concerns provided by the Victorian Government. The results below show the ranked concerns by most voted.

1st – My community's ability to prepare for and respond to the impacts of increased extreme weather events (such as heatwaves, bushfires, droughts)

2nd – Level of public awareness of, or response to climate change

3rd – Impacts on people who have limited means to adapt to climate change

4th – Level of government action in response to climate change

5th – Impacts on nature and wildlife (such as ecosystems, flora and fauna)

6th – Impacts on my cost of living

7th - Impacts on the Victorian economy (such as job loss and decreased economic activity)

8th - Impacts on my physical and mental health

9th – I'm not concerned about climate change

One participant reflected that the concerns listed by the government were focused on individual impacts, and this missed the mark of needing a community focus.

What are the ways that government can encourage and engage young people to be active in the response to climate change, including managing the increasing impacts of climate change?

Meaningful, non-tokenistic youth participation and opportunities

Young people emphasised that they must be involved in decision-making processes for mitigation and adaption strategies for community-led resilience. It is vital to highlight young people's unique perspectives, knowledge and life experiences in the Strategy.

Young people should be included as it is their human right. They are also experts in their own lives and have valid and important contributions to make. When included in all aspects of decision making it makes things better.

Young people want more education opportunities, forums and workshops around climate change and disasters. They want the relationship between the two to be spoken about.

Young people also want more opportunities to contribute their ideas and perspectives to decision makers in all aspects of climate change and disaster mitigation and planning.

Young people in regional and rural areas want the stigma involved in climate change education and action in their communities to be removed. They want safe spaces to be able to be better informed and take action.

> *"I feel like there's just stigma around it … there's that fear of judgment, they're actually passionate about climate change but they don't want their peers to judge them." Research participant – young person*

Establishing permanent youth advisory groups/councils

Young people called for permanent youth climate advisory groups/councils at local and state levels so that young people's voices can be embedded in policy making. They reflected on the importance of ensuring diversity in these councils, not just prioritising those with the 'best resume'. See previous note, for specific challenges facing regional and rural young people to engage.

Recommendation: Commit to supporting local councils to form permanent Youth Advisory Councils/Groups to ensure young people's voices are embedded in policy making across all areas, but specifically in local emergency management plans and climate change actions.

Climate education and skills training

Young people want more education around sustainability, climate science, green job pathways and for hands on training to be provided for:

- Conservation
- Disaster Management
- Renewable energy

Young people asked for internship opportunities for environmental policy making or disaster response training.

Recommendation: Fund qualification opportunities for young people across Victoria in various areas of emergency management, climate action and sustainability and ensure any qualifications added to Free TAFE are accessible in all major regional and rural areas across Victoria.

Support youth organisations and youth workers

Young people reflected on the capacity and availability of youth services, especially in rural and regional areas. Funding these services is a direct way to

ensure they can continue to support and engage young people on a range of topics.

Recommendation: Scale up funding for place- and school-based youth workers to provide trauma informed, protected and trusted relationships and support to young people, not limiting services to disaster recovery periods.

Barriers

Participants identified that decision-making processes for climate change and disasters exclude them as they are not set up to accommodate their lifestyles, and highlighted the following barriers:

- Meetings held during school hours
- Stigma of communities restricting involvement
- Travel is often required for in-person meetings, excluding rural and regional young people and those who can't drive and are relying on public transport
- Application processes often look for life experiences, which biases older people
- Government processes are intimidating to engage with
- Lack of representation in decision making
- Limited access to climate education

Anti protest laws

Young people raised concerns about the new restrictions around protesting and the barrier this creates for them. Protesting is an empowering way for young people to have a say, especially for those under 18 as they can't vote.

Although it is important to note that many young people, particularly those outside urban environments, do not feel safe to participate in any form of activism or climate action.

Grassroots movements are incredibly powerful, and protests are a big part of the positive changes we've seen over the years. These laws are a very big risk for youth-led movements like School Strike 4 Climate.

> *"For me, going out and protesting, and showing my support for an issue is a way to make me feel better"* – consultant participant

> *"It is really important that young people are paid for their time to contributing to climate change solutions as they should be reassured that their time and opinions are valuable."* – survey participant

What do you think is most important to reducing Victoria's emissions and achieving net-zero by 2045?

Co-operation from corporations
Participants identified that achieving net zero requires co-operation from major corporations/sectors, namely, mining, construction and transport.

Transition to renewables and electric vehicles
Participants highlighted the importance of transitioning to renewables and taking advantage of Australia's natural renewable potential; solar, wind, hydro. Electric vehicles were also highlighted as a major opportunity to reduce emissions.

One participant emphasised the importance of blocking nuclear energy plans; they are costly and are inhibiting other mitigation strategies like the path to renewables.

Public transport
One participated reflected on the available electric vehicle grants...

> *"The problem with that is that it kind of only applies to you if you can afford a car in the first place. What about the people who can't afford a car like most young people?"* – consultation participant

They reported many young people have to turn to public transport, which is often ineffective, especially in rural and regional areas. Participants raised the importance of improving public transport in rural and regional areas to limit the reliance on cars and reduce the need for more vehicles. Metropolitan areas that aren't really designed for cycling and other forms of alternative transport were also noted. An idea raised to promote the use of public transport is discounted rates for off-peak travel.

Recommendation: Promote the use of public transport to reduce emissions by providing discounted rates for off-peak travel.

Implementing a circular economy
Reducing waste and reusing resources to lower emissions for production and keeping waste out of landfill. Ideas put forward include:

- Mandating reducing plastic waste
- Investment in large scale recycling programs
- Encouraging building and industries being more energy efficient; electrification, green energy materials, net zero building designs

What is most important to you in managing the increasing impacts of climate change across Victoria?

Participants highlighted the following as most important in managing the increasing impacts of climate change:

- Community-led resilience efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change and disasters
- Insurance reforms
- Implementing financial incentives for businesses and communities to be more climate conscious
- Education must be more in-depth and rolled out across numerous subject areas, focusing on:
    - Current and future impacts
    - Climate science, sustainability and renewable energy subjects, from primary to tertiary levels
- Funding for youth mental health services, particularly in rural and regional areas. Mental health support networks designated for disasters and climate change impacts.
- Nature based solutions: tree planting initiatives, healthier urban spaces

Recommendation: Dedicate funding for youth mental health services, particularly in rural and regional areas, specifically for disasters and climate change impacts as a key mitigation strategy.

Recommendation: Dedicate specific funding for youth-led nature based solution projects at a community level.

Part 2: Centre of Excellence

Part 2 of this submission is largely drawing on information from the sector collaborations conducted by the Centre across 2024/25.

What is most important to the Centre in the Victorian Government response to climate change?

Including young people's voices and prioritising youth participation in Victoria's climate justice efforts

The rights of young people to participate in decisions being made about them is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).[10] Not only is it their right, when young people are included, it improves the quality and effectiveness of service delivery.

This will be true for the development of the Strategy and ongoing work to achieve its mission. As outlined in the Victorian Government's Summary Paper on Climate Action, 'Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving climate resilience across the state will require action by all governments, businesses and

communities across all sectors of our economy'. We welcome this approach but the appropriate supports and structures must be put in place so young people can meaningfully contribute.

Recommendation: Young people are included in all planning and developmental phases of the Strategy, including a dedicated working group/advisory group for the Strategy.

Recommendation: Establish a Victorian Climate Justice and Disaster Resilience Youth Advisory Group as a governance requirement of the Strategy, to oversee the strategies implementation and progress.

Bridging the gap between climate change and disasters

Our sector consultations highlighted there is an opportunity for the Strategy to bridge the gap in climate change mitigation and the response and preparedness focus of disaster management.

Sector collaboration
What we heard

There is a disparity between those working in climate change/climate justice and those working in emergency management. Those working in emergency management, generally don't have a climate change lens on events and the siloing of different sectors means this broken link continues within systems.

What the evidence says

Relational and cross sector collaboration are key to effective climate responses and policy making.[11] By prioritising building critical relationships across sectors, more sustainable outcomes will be achieved and climate justice responses will be more effective.[11] It's about bringing everyone along, in a just and fair way, to have open dialogue about the clear links between climate change and disasters and how sectors can work together to address them and mitigate the effects.

The Strategy should therefore have a dedicated focus on collaboration between the climate and disaster sectors.

Recommendation: The Strategy needs to draw a direct link between climate change and disasters and dedicate efforts to sector collaboration between the disaster/emergency management sectors and climate justice sectors. This could be done by:

- Cross-department planning and strategy to ensure all parties are across the two foci
- Annual disaster resilience and climate action forums/conference
- Education campaign focusing on the link between climate change and disasters

Recommendation: Establish a statewide Community of Practice (CoP) for the Strategy for cross sector collaboration to

achieve the Strategy's aims. Youth and community sectors should be included in this CoP.

Using impactful, up–to date language for climate change and disasters

The Strategy must adopt strong, up-to-date and accessible language that directly links climate change and disasters.

The Victorian Government summary papers and the survey questions related to the development of the Strategy use a mixture of language that includes:

- Natural disasters
- Disasters
- Extreme weather events
- Climate hazards
- Climate change related hazards
- Climate sensitive hazards

Many of these words don't align with the National Emergency Management Agency's (NEMA) National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework which focuses on 'natural hazards', 'disasters', 'climate and disaster risk' and 'resilience'.[12]

We urge the government to revise its approach and use words and phrases consistent with NEMA as the national body. The literature also reflects clear distinctions between hazards and disasters, hazards being weather events, and the events and impacts on communities that follow are the disaster, exacerbated by existing inequalities.[12,13] This distinction should be made clear.

What we heard

Our consultations revealed that there is an opportunity to take away the "power of mystery" (quote from consultation participant) around the emergency management sector and services.

The confusing and technical language isn't accessible and creates barriers to participation, excluding people and limiting their ability to prepare and understand disasters and climate change rhetoric.

What the evidence says

Communication is one of the key factors that can influence people's vulnerability to disasters, either increasing or decreasing their vulnerability.[14]

Various definitions for the same events/impacts creates a danger of misunderstanding and miscommunication, resulting in people being more vulnerable to disasters and climate change.[14]

Recommendation: The Strategy, and any further discussion papers or consultations related to the Strategy's development, use and define key words in line with NEMA's Disaster Risk Reduction Framework.

Feedback from the Centre's Youth Advisory Group

The Centre's Youth Advisory Group (YAG) emphasised that an acknowledgement of human impact on climate change in relation to disasters is important and suggest preferencing mention of 'natural disasters' (also applicable to 'natural hazards') with 'human exacerbated' or 'climate-change induced'. The YAG explored the relevance and applicability of the term 'natural' relating to disasters, at what point is it natural? And at what point is it human-induced? They suggested that even though some disasters may be a natural phenomenon, humans have an impact on the severity of disasters through human decision making or failings.

Recommendation: the Strategy preface needs to include explicit mention of disasters/hazards/extreme weather events with either 'human exacerbated' or 'climate-change induced'.

Prioritising social equity and marginalised voices in climate justice actions and disaster resilience

There is a need for an equity lens when discussing climate change and disasters and the Strategy has an opportunity to highlight how climate change and disasters exacerbate existing inequalities and commit to action to address this.

What we heard

Young people are a marginalised cohort in and of themselves, but there are many young people who experience intersecting identities and marginalisations which mean they fall through the cracks.

There are specific cohorts of young people who need to be recognised in the Strategy, with dedicated efforts for tailored support and specific advocacy for their unique needs when navigating climate change and disasters, including:

- **Rural and regional young people:** rural and regional communities have less resources to deal with the effects of climate change and young people feel they don't receive enough education, despite being among some of the most impacted communities from climate change and disasters.
- **Young people living in poverty:** there is a real sense that society has forgotten them and a growing issue of 'worried wealth', where wealthier areas are considered to be more concerned about climate change. This can be explained, in part, by the level of anxiety about other survival needs and people's inability to act on things that aren't 'immediate issues'.
- **Multicultural young people:** young people can often carry the burden of translation for families for disasters and climate change actions. This can prove difficult if the messaging itself is inaccessible and can create more confusion and pressure on young people if they don't know what specific climate and disaster terms mean.

- **Migrant and refugee young people:** Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds may classify and understand disasters differently based on their previous experiences and those they experience in Australia.
- **Disabled young people:** climate change and disasters exacerbate the numerous challenges that disabled young people face daily around access, healthcare, and facing everyday ableism.

What the evidence says

The inequity of climate change and its impacts is well documented – influenced by factors such as location, age, socioeconomic and class inequality, ethnicity and gender.[4]

- **Location:** while the impacts of climate change are felt state-wide, certain Victorian regions are at higher risk of experiencing disasters because of their location, resulting in higher numbers of 'high fire danger days',[2] and more frequent riverine flooding.[15] These disasters are impacting communities with already stretched and limited resources, and are lacking opportunities for young people to engage in their community and decision making bodies.[16]
- **Young people living in poverty:** a lack of private property ownership, social infrastructure and disposable income effects people's abilities to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change and disasters, exacerbating their vulnerability.[13,17] For example, during a heatwave, those who are on low-incomes don't have the luxury to run their aircon all day, and may not have the ability to pay for tickets to sit in a cool cinema.[17]
- **Disabled young people:** disabled populations are disproportionately affected by climate change at all stages of disasters; before (e.g. access to urgent information, early warning systems); during (e.g. evacuation, transport, inaccessible relief centres, separation from support workers); and after (e.g. housing, food, water, medical care, education).[18]
- **First Nations young people:** Climate change and disasters are compounding historical injustices, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation and displacement, as well as disrupting cultural and spiritual connections to Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.[19] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are also consistently left out of conversations about climate change at all levels of government despite having historical knowledge of climate and land management, mitigation and adaption.[19]

We also want to draw specific attention to the impacts that climate change and disasters are having on housing. Those most exposed to housing risk include the most vulnerable populations; persons experiencing homelessness, elderly people, women, children and young people, LGBTIQA+ people, multicultural communities, migrant and refugee communities, internally displaced peoples, people living in detention, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and disabled people.[13] The

strategy must acknowledge the link between climate change and housing and develop appropriate targeted responses. We note that there are currently two open inquiries ongoing into Victorian housing. Relevant recommendations should be incorporated into the development of this strategy from both inquiries

Recommendation: Dedicated efforts to support specific cohorts of vulnerable young people and communities to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and disasters, including:

- First Nations young people
- Rural and regional communities
- Low socioeconomic areas, and young people living in poverty
- Disabled young people
- Multicultural young people
- Refugee and migrant young people

Recommendation: Commit dedicated funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to lead climate and disaster action planning and elevate their voices as key stakeholders and leaders in climate justice efforts in Victoria.

What could the Victorian Government do to help young people manage the increasing impacts of climate change?

Strengthening access to education and building young people's capability

What the evidence says

Some of the key barriers to climate adaption are related to education and include a lack of citizen engagement, low climate literacy and a low sense of urgency.[20]

Young people have said that they feel unprepared, under-educated, and increasingly fearful about potential disasters and have called for specific education on:[21]

- planning and preparing for natural hazards
- caring for themselves and others in a crisis
- info on how to access emergency alerts and warnings
- preventing or reducing the risk of a disaster

Climate change and disaster education is crucial for the development of the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to support young people to become agents of change, and to recognise the role of young people as future policy makers and civic citizens.[22] The Strategy should have commitments directly related to education.

Importantly, effective education must move away from climate change as something abstract or distant, towards something of personal relevance.[22] The

Centre champions place-based responses, knowledge and local climate change adaption methods.

YACVic's Submission to the Inquiry into Climate Resilience in Victoria included the following recommendation for education that the Strategy should adopt:

Recommendation: Invest in climate change literacy education to support young people to be change agents and increase community buy-in for climate adaptation and resilience actions. Include education that is:

- Place-based and community specific.
- Practical and action focused.
- Accessible, age-appropriate and reaches young people through platforms that are credible and relevant to young people, including digital technologies.

Recommendation: Subsidise diplomas and certificates focused on climate action, and sustainability across universities and TAFEs.

Large coalitions of youth-led groups such as Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC), Indigenous youth-led Seed Mob and the 'School Strike 4 Climate' (SS4C) have demonstrated an effective model of education, personal growth and advocacy, building youth empowerment and engagement for the climate justice movement through peer-led education.[23]

However, it should be noted that not all young people have the opportunity, or desire, to take this form of climate action. Many are looking for adopt their own actions and want safe spaces to be able to do so.

The Centre supports these movements, and the Strategy needs to recognise and include efforts dedicated to peer-led education and amplifying youth-led movements and organisations.

Recommendation: Invest in peer-led climate education and advocacy that can be rolled out across various avenues through schools, NGOs, community groups and local councils.

Prioritise mental health as an adaption focus area
What we heard

Young people are experiencing feelings of isolation, loneliness, feeling trapped, doomed, and that they have "no future, no one cares", due to the effects of climate change. Young people are experiencing a lack of agency and experience anxiety due to the feeling of being restricted to the actions of others.

The Centre's YAG also raised the ongoing and long-term psychological effects of disasters and how these must be addressed by governments.

What the evidence says

Exposure to climate change is having a disproportionate impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing[24]. Climate anxiety is widespread and impacting on young people's daily functioning,[25] and there is increased distress and a negative outlook on their futures, due in part, to a perceived failure of governments respond to climate change.[26,27]

Mental health is consistently raised as a primary concern for young people, and climate change and disasters are having a direct impact on young people's mental health.

Recommendation: Embed mental health as a 'priority focus area' in the Strategy to address climate change and disaster mental health impacts.

What does the Centre see as the biggest opportunities and benefits of taking action on climate change?

Mobilising citizen science, local level and place-based action and empowering young people to be 'agents of change'

Young people and individuals are not responsible for fixing the climate crisis and the failings of institutions. Climate change is a global systemic issue that needs institutions from sectors and government at all levels to address and work together to a common goal.

What we heard

Young people are burdened by the pressure to fix things through sustainability or individual actions. They are far from naive, they understand that individual efforts are insufficient to halt the climate change crisis.

The Strategy presents an opportunity to champion local level, place-based action and mobilise citizen science efforts. These efforts do make a difference at a local level and building community resilience. Efforts can also instil a sense of hope for young people.

Young people want safe spaces to be able to take action, free from stigma and the pressures of existing industries and economies.

Young people can play a fantastic role in nature-based resilience efforts and citizen science. It is important for the Strategy to communicate that, if young people are out in nature, reporting what they see, it provides useful and important data for organisations working to address climate change and disasters.

Young people are also a great way to pass information on to their families (where it is safe and supportive to do so), thus becoming advocates for the small yet effective changes they can make to reduce pollution and food waste, reduce their carbon footprint, prepare for disasters and support local biodiversity in their backyards and neighbourhoods. Although in adopting this approach, it should be noted that this creates unsafe spaces for some children and young people.

Case Study: Activators Program: Young people creating community change

Following the 2019-20 bushfires, YACVic in partnership with the RSPCA, ran the *Rural Activators Program: Young people creating community change*. The program provided an opportunity for young people to create and lead an impactful contribution to the development of their community. The Activators program provided guidance, skills training, funding, and mentorship on how to design and complete a local community project.[28]

The young people engaged in the Activators program consistently identified a need to connect with, and contribute to, their communities and reported feelings of increased connection to likeminded people as they completed the program. They reported enjoying the tangible ways they could engage in their communities and environment and the mental health benefits this brought.

This model of funding youth-led, place-based projects should be considered in the Strategy as a way to prioritise community-led action, and empowering young people to become 'agents of change' to address issues that impact them and their future.[5,29]

Recommendation: Commit dedicated funding to prioritise place-based, youth-led projects that are focused on mitigation and adaption to climate change affects in local communities.

Recommendation: Support and fund education workshops that teach young people about citizen science and the everyday, impactful things they can do to address climate change and build their disaster resilience.

Conclusion

Victoria Climate Change Strategy 2026-30 has the opportunity to empower young people to be active citizens in climate justice efforts and disaster resilience.

Young people continue to demonstrate they want to be part of community decision making processes regarding climate change, including disaster preparation, response and recovery. They are leading efforts today and have valuable insights and perspectives to contribute yet are consistently left out conversations.

We call on the Victorian government to ensure meaningful youth participation processes are embedded in the strategy at the local and state government level, and young people are equipped with the skills and qualifications to support preparedness and mitigation.

It is further critical that the strategy purposefully addresses pre-existing inequities that are being exacerbated by climate change and disasters, acknowledging this link and committing dedicated efforts to vulnerable populations. The strategy must also align with the National Disaster Risk

Reduction Framework and emphasise a commitment to cross sector collaboration and using up-to-date impactful, accessible language.

The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience has stood the test of time with its recognition that disaster resilience is a shared responsibility for individuals, households, businesses and communities, as well as for governments. The Victorian Governments Climate Change Strategy has the opportunity to lead this space, but it's about bringing along everyone in the community, including young people.

References

1. UNDRR. *Climate Action and Disaster Risk Reduction*. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. Accessed March 26, 2025. https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/drr-focus-areas/climate-action-and-disaster-risk-reduction

2. *Victoria's Climate Science: Report 2019.* Dept of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, State Government of Victoria; 2019. Accessed March 19, 2025. https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0029/442964/Victorias-Climate-Science-Report-2019.pdf

3. Bradshaw S, Hughes L, Karoly D, Gergis J, Dean A, Arndt D, Wakefield J, Rayner J. *Mission zero: How today's climate choices will reshape Australia*. Climate Council; 2023. Accessed March 19, 2025. https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Mission-Zero_Updated-190923_IL_2.pdf

4. Gorman J, Baker A, Corney T, Cooper T. Youth and Community Work for Climate Justice: Towards an Ecocentric Ethics for Practice. *Ethics Soc Welf.* 2024;18(2):115–30. Doi:10.1080/17496535.2024.2327379

5. UNDRR. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; 2015. Accessed March 16, 2025. https://www.undrr.org/media/16176

6. Grosse C, Mark B. A colonized COP: Indigenous exclusion and youth climate justice activism at the United Nations climate change negotiations. J Hum Rights Environ. 2020;11(3):146–170. doi:10.4337/jhre.2020.03.07

7. Leung S, Brennan N, Freeburn T, Waugh W, Christie R. *Youth Survey Report 2022*. Mission Australia; 2022. Accessed March 19, 2025. https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey/2618-youth-survey-2022-report/file

8. Woods B, Danks N, Gorman J, MacDonald F, Corney T. Climate-related perceptions of young people with lived experience of disasters in regional and rural Victoria, Australia. *J Appl Youth Stud*. Forthcoming.

9. Williamson B, Markham F, Weir J. *Aboriginal peoples and the response to the 2019–2020 bushfires*. Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University; 2020. Accessed April 7, 2024. https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/202442

10. Corney T, Cooper T, Shier H, Williamson H. Youth participation: Adultism, human rights and professional youth work. *Child Soc*. 2022;36(4):677–90. doi:10.1111/chso.12526

11. Wrigley K, Yallup Farrant J, Farrant B, Synnott EL, Barrow J, Godden NJ, O'Sullivan L. Relational processes for transformative climate justice policymaking: insights from a Western Australian community of practice. *Clim Policy*. 2025;25(3):352–367. doi:10.1080/14693062.2024.2385486

12. *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*. Dept of Home Affairs, Commonwealth of Australia; 2018. Accessed March 27, 2024. https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/national-disaster-risk-reduction-framework.pdf

13. Climate Justice Support Unit. *Climate Change Impacts on Access to Justice*. Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria; 2023. Accessed April 2, 2025. https://assets.nationbuilder.com/fclc/pages/715/attachments/original/170486 1023/Climate_Change_Impacts_on_Access_to_Justice_Review_21_Dec_%2 81%29.pdf?1704861023

14. Hansson S, Orru K, Siibak A, Bäck A, Krüger M, Gabel F, Morsut C. Communication-related vulnerability to disasters: A heuristic framework. *Int J Disaster Risk Reduct*. 2020;51:101931. doi:10.1016/j.ijdrr.2020.101931

15. Climate Council. Climate Risk Map of Australia. Climate Council. May 2, 2022. Accessed 30 March 2025. https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/climate-risk-map/

16. Brooker B. *What Matters to Young People in Rural and Regional Victoria 2018*. Youth Affairs Council Victoria; 2018. Accessed March 28, 2025. https://www.yacvic.org.au/assets/Documents/What-Matters-to-Young-People-2018-YACVic-Rural.docx

17. Latham B. *Feeling the Heat*. Victorian Council of Social Service; 2021. Accessed April 1, 2025. https://vcoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Feeling-the-Heat.pdf

18. Kosanic A, Petzold J, Martín-López B, Razanajatovo M. An inclusive future: disabled populations in the context of climate and environmental change. *Curr Opin Environ Sustain*. 2022;55:101159. doi:10.1016/j.cosust.2022.101159

19. Matthews V, Atkinson AR, Lee G, Vine K, Longman J. *Climate Change and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health*. Lowitja Institute; 2021. Accessed April 1, 2025.

https://www.lowitja.org.au/content/Image/Lowitja_ClimateChangeHealth_1021_D10.pdf

20. *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report: Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.* Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; 2023. Accessed March 21, 2025. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/

21. *Our World, Our Say: National survey of children and young people on climate change and disaster risk.* Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience; 2020. Accessed March 21, 2025. https://www.aidr.org.au/media/7946/ourworldoursay-youth-survey-report-2020.pdf

22. Favier T, Van Gorp B, Cyvin JB, Cyvin J. Learning to teach climate change: students in teacher training and their progression in pedagogical content knowledge. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education.* 2021;45(4):594–620. doi:10.1080/03098265.2021.1900080

23. Hohenhaus M, Rutherford S, Boddy J, Borkoles E. Climate warriors down under: Contextualising Australia's youth climate justice movement. *NPJ Clim Action.* 2023;2:45. Doi:10.1038/s44168-023-00085-y

24. Hall C, Ryan D. *"Speaking Up" Young People's experiences of Bushfire and Recovery: A partnership between YACVic, DET and BRV.* Youth Affairs Council of Victoria; 2021. Accessed November 14, 2023. https://www.yacvic.org.au/assets/Documents/YACVic-Speaking-Up-Report.pdf

25. Patrick R, Snell T, Gunasiri H, Garad R, Meadows G, Enticott J. Prevalence and determinants of mental health related to climate change in Australia. *Aust N Z J Psychiatry.* 2023;57(5);710-724. doi:10.1177/00048674221107872

26. Hickman C, Marks E, Pihkala P, Clayton S, Lewandowski RE, Mayall EE, et al. Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey. *Lancet Planet Health.* 2021;5(12):E863–E873. doi:10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00278-3

27. Gao C, Teo SM, Brennan N, Fava N, Freeburn T, Filia K. *Climate Concerns and Young People's Mental Health: Findings from the 2022 Mission Australia Youth Survey.* Orygen and Mission Australia; 2023. Accessed March 31, 2025. https://www.orygen.org.au/getmedia/4d21728e-f589-40a1-a271-ba9a070e86ff/Mission-Australia-Orygen-climatechange-report-17APRIL.aspx?ext=.pdf

28. Munnery L, Ryan D, Activators (Willow, Chloe, Jen and Chris). *Activators Program: Young people creating community change.* YACVic Rural; 2021. Accessed 31 March, 2025. https://www.yacvic.org.au/advocacy/activators-report/

29. MacDonald F, Lanyon C, Munnery L, Ryan D, Ellis K, Champion S. Agents of change in bushfire recovery: Young people's acts of citizenship in a youth-focused, animal-welfare and environmental program. *Int J Disaster Risk Reduct*. 2023;87:103551. doi:10.1016/j.ijdrr.2023.103551

Appendix A: YACVic and Victoria University's Disaster Projects

Much of our work can be found on the YACVic Young People and Disasters Resource Hub. Key projects include:

- *Centre of Excellence: Young People & Disasters*

- *Future Proof: Young people, Disaster Recovery and (Re)building Communities* - in 2022 YACVic secured a $10 million Commonwealth Government grant to deliver a 14-partner, collective impact project. The project delivers youth-led activities and youth-led community decision-making and capacity building in response to the 2019-20 bushfires.

- **The Umbrella Project** – following the flood disaster in 2022, YACVic was commissioned by the Victorian Government's Office for Youth to establish a youth-focused flood response and recovery program using a grants-based model. The Umbrella Project funded and supported 17 projects across flood-impacted areas to deliver work that connected and included young people in flood recovery activities.

- **The Activators program (2020-21)** YACVic Rural Activators Program sponsored by RSPCA Victoria provided young people with skills and supports to develop a project aimed at helping their local community. This program focused on supporting people affected by the 2019/20 summer bushfires to care for their animals during the recovery period.

- The **Evidence from Experience** report produced as part of the black summer bushfire consultations for the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (2020).

- **A Seat at the Table** and **Speaking Up** with the Victorian Department of Education and Emergency Management Victoria (then Bushfire Recovery Victoria) (2020-22).

- **Young people and the emergency services: working towards inclusive partnerships,** Bushfire & Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre, (2019-2020), Diversity and Inclusion Project, Associate Professor Fiona MacDonald.

For more information, please visit our disaster hub and the Centre's information page.

Appendix B: Government's concerns, ranked by young people

We asked the young people who took part in the survey and consultation to individually rank the concerns provided by the Victorian Government. The results below show the ranked concerns by most voted.

1st – My community's ability to prepare for and respond to the impacts of increased extreme weather events (such as heatwaves, bushfires, droughts)

2nd – Level of public awareness of, or response to climate change

3rd – Impacts on people who have limited means to adapt to climate change

4th – Level of government action in response to climate change

5th – Impacts on nature and wildlife (such as ecosystems, flora and fauna)

6th – Impacts on my cost of living

7th - Impacts on the Victorian economy (such as job loss and decreased economic activity)

8th - Impacts on my physical and mental health

9th – I'm not concerned about climate change

The graph is the result of the group ranking, but the top priority for each participant was:

Participant: My community's ability to prepare for and respond to the impacts of increased extreme weather events (such as heatwaves, bushfires, droughts and extreme rainfall)

Participant: Level of public awareness of, or response to, climate change

Participant: Level of public awareness of, or response to, climate change

Participant: Level of public awareness of, or response to, climate change

Participant: Impacts on people who have limited means to adapt to climate change

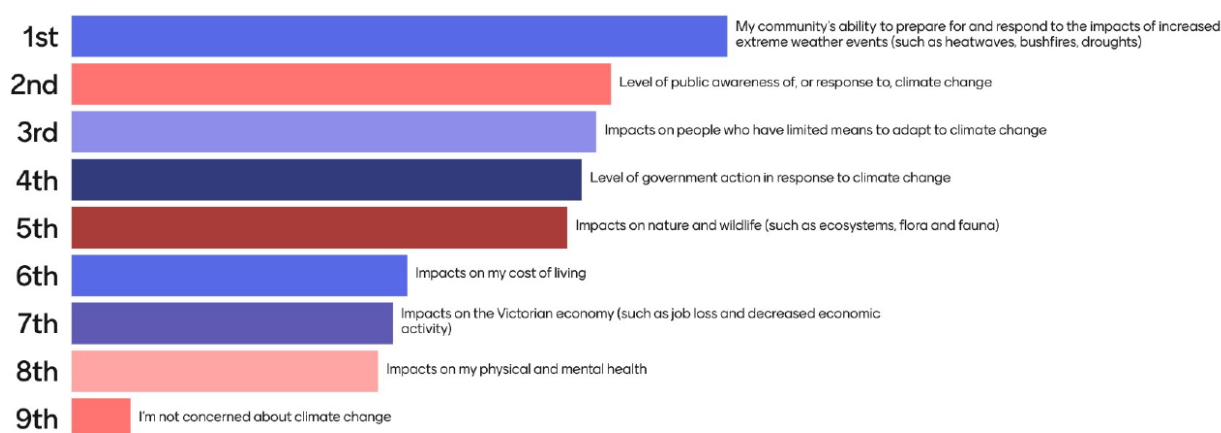**Participant:** Level of government action in response to climate change

Participant: Impacts on my cost of living

Participant: Impacts on people who have limited means to adapt to climate change
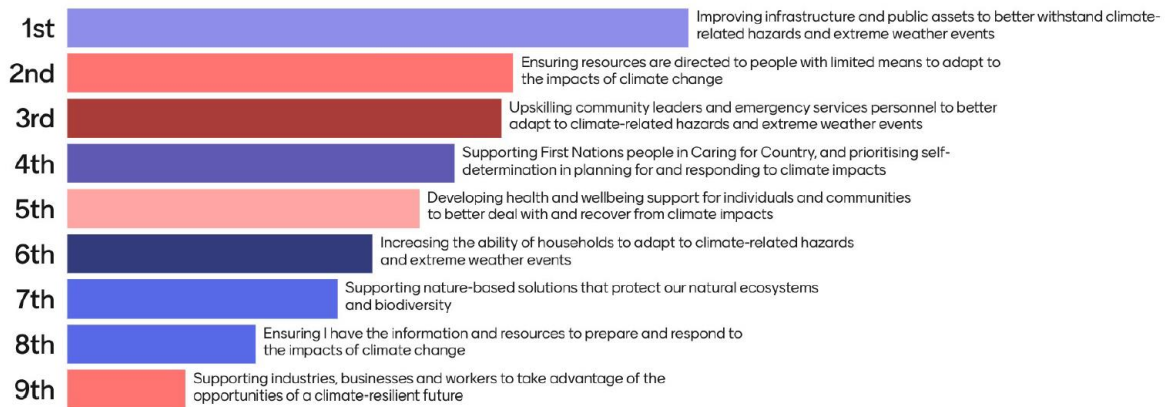
One participant reflected that the concerns listed by the government were focused on individual impacts, and this missed the mark of needing a community focus.

Appendix C: Victorian Government's options to manage climate change, ranked by young people

We asked young people to individually rank the options to manage climate change provided by the Victorian Government. The results in the table below show the ranked concerns by most voted.

1st – Improving infrastructure and public assets to better withstand climate-related hazards and extreme weather events

2nd – Ensuring resources are directed to people with limited means to adapt to the impacts of climate change

3rd – Upskilling community leaders and emergency services personnel to better adapt to climate-related hazards and extreme weather events

4th – Supporting First Nations people in Caring for Country, and prioritising self-determination in planning and responding to climate impacts

5th – Developing health and wellbeing support for individuals and communities to better deal with and recover from climate impacts

6th – Increasing the ability of households to adapt to climate-related hazards and extreme weather events

7th – Supporting nature-based solutions that protect our natural ecosystems and biodiversity

8th – Ensuring I have the information and resources to prepare and respond to the impacts of climate change

9th – Supporting industries, businesses and workers to take advantage of the opportunities of a climate-resilient future

Rank	Priority
1st	Improving infrastructure and public assets to better withstand climate-related hazards and extreme weather events
2nd	Ensuring resources are directed to people with limited means to adapt to the impacts of climate change
3rd	Upskilling community leaders and emergency services personnel to better adapt to climate-related hazards and extreme weather events
4th	Supporting First Nations people in Caring for Country, and prioritising self-determination in planning for and responding to climate impacts
5th	Developing health and wellbeing support for individuals and communities to better deal with and recover from climate impacts
6th	Increasing the ability of households to adapt to climate-related hazards and extreme weather events
7th	Supporting nature-based solutions that protect our natural ecosystems and biodiversity
8th	Ensuring I have the information and resources to prepare and respond to the impacts of climate change
9th	Supporting industries, businesses and workers to take advantage of the opportunities of a climate-resilient future

This graph is the result of the group ranking, but the top priority to manage climate change for each participant was:

Participant: Improving infrastructure and public assets to better withstand climate-related hazards and extreme weather events

Participant: Supporting industries, businesses and workers to take advantage of the opportunities of a climate-resilient future

Participant: Improving infrastructure and public assets to better withstand climate-related hazards and extreme weather events

Participant: Ensuring resources are directed to people with limited means to adapt to the impacts of climate change

Participant: Upskilling community leaders and emergency services personnel to better adapt to climate-related hazards and extreme weather events.

- The participant who ranked this as most important also emphasised the importance that multicultural and multi-faith leaders are included in this as well.

Participant: Supporting First Nations people in Caring for Country, and prioritising self-determination in planning for and responding to climate impacts

Participant: Developing health and wellbeing support for individuals and communities to better deal with and recover from climate impacts

Participant: Increasing the ability of households to adapt to climate-related hazards and extreme weather events

Again, participants reflected on the individualism of some of the options and emphasised the value of a community focus.

Appendix D: Key messages from young people

"I'm scared of losing the places that I love. Living in the Dandenong Ranges and growing up in the wider central highlands, my childhood was embedded in the towering mountain ash trees and fern filled gullies. I feel myself embedded in my local area as it's my home and knowing that harmful practices such as logging of native forests and things like storms and bushfires which are exacerbated and caused by climate change, causing damage to them, it hurts."– consultation participant

Protection for forests

One young participant called for greater protections in place for forests, including:

- Improving the Great Forest National Park project
- Committing to work towards the target of 30% of Australia's natural habitat being protected by 2030.
- Formal enquiries and testimonies of locals and local young people into forest degradation and the role of climate change
- Revision of controlled burning practices and inquiring into their effectiveness
- Collaborating with Traditional Owners
- Ensuring proper practices are in place for protecting native wildlife, particularly those at risk such as the greater glider or lead beaters possum
- Ensuring accessible and reliable internet and phone service during disasters
- Ensuring local people are involved

Climate change and colonisation

One participant reflected how "climate change is two sides of the one coin when it comes to colonisation". It can be easy to think of colonisation as something that happened in the past and fail to acknowledge its ongoing impacts. Putting up fences around significant sites, developing land and industrialising the world has an impact on climate change, but the reasons they are being removed and developed relates to a colonial mindset and not recognising community ownership.

They highlighted that climate change feels like the result of all of these cumulative actions and what we are experiencing now is ongoing colonisation.

Transitioning away fossil fuels needs to bring everyone along

Workers in fossil fuel industries must be supported and given access to re-skilling opportunities, as the shutting down of industries results in job losses. Governments should invest in green job training, sustainable agriculture training and paid internships for young people to upskill in this.

Governments should create a clear roadmap for transition to fossil fuel industries to sustainable jobs, to ensure people aren't left out.

Appendix E: About YACVic and Victoria University

About YACVic

Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVic) is the peak body and leading policy advocate for young people aged 12–25 and the youth sector in Victoria. Our vision is that young Victorians have their rights upheld and are valued as active participants in their communities. As a peak body, we work closely with young Victorians, and the sector that supports them, to deliver effective advocacy, events, training, resources and support. We're driven by our valuable members and their vision for a positive future for young Victorians.

About YACVic Rural

YACVic Rural is a key delivery agency of Youth Affairs Council Victoria. YACVic Rural works in partnership with young people, youth practitioners, key stakeholder and partner agencies throughout rural and regional Victoria to provide targeted advocacy, strengthen youth participation, and support those who work with young people.

YACVic recognises that young people and sector professionals in these areas face particular challenges and offer specific insights that differ to their metropolitan counterparts. YACVic's presence across the Great South Coast and Southern Mallee regions are funded by the Victorian Government through the Rural Presence Program. YACVic Rural also coordinates and implements a range of targeted projects across regional and rural Victoria including in response to disasters, which have been funded by the Australian Government.

YACVic has worked with young people across disaster-affected areas in response to the Black Summer bushfires, and throughout the COVID pandemic, and the 2022 Victorian Floods to inform and support disaster response and recovery using a youth participation model. YACVic has also worked to support youth service providers to identify, develop and support locally relevant and youth-led response and recovery activities to meet community needs.

About Victoria University

Victoria University (VU) is a world-class teaching and research institution committed to lifechanging research that positively impacts the wellbeing of people, place, and planet. For VU, research with impact is more than knowledge

but ethical knowledge, more than strengths but solutions, and those values have informed the creation of the Centre of Excellence.

VU see the alignment of many of the issues young people have raised regarding their involvement in emergency management and community resilience with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which are a key focus of VU research. VU is well positioned as a dual-sector university across higher education and TAFE to consider all aspects of education, training and skills development for young people.

Victoria University's (VU) Youth and Community Research Group

The Youth and Community Research group encompasses academics from the youth and community teaching programs within the College of Arts, Business, Law, Education, IT, and researchers focused on Young People & Social Inclusion within the Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities (ISILC).

The Youth and Community Research Group has been deeply involved in establishing the 'Centre of Excellence – Young People and Disasters' funded by the Federal government, in partnership with the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.