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Strathbogie Corporate Greenhouse Program cuts emissions and costs

Strathbogie Shire Council welcomed Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio to Nagambie recently to announce a second round of funding from the Victorian Government's Local Government Energy Saver Program.

Council received a \$50,000 grant in the first round of the program, which it matched with \$50,000 to implement the first step in a major rollout of energy efficiencies across council-run buildings.

This included the installation of 43kW of solar on four key buildings across the municipality, the installation of LED lighting and the upgrade and automation of a number of pumps across the shire, including at some of the pools and Lake Nagambie.

Minister D'Ambrosio was very impressed with Council's efforts and announced a further \$50,000 from the Local Government Energy Saver Program for Council to continue to implement more energy and cost savings.

Strathbogie Shire Mayor Amanda McClaren said the second round of funding will be utilised for the upgrade and automation of pumps at the old Violet Town landfill site and the pools in Avenel and Violet Town.

"We will also be fitting solar and LED lighting to the Euroa Library, Avenel Recreation Reserve, and Euroa's Works Depot," Mayor McClaren explained.

"By the end of this year Council will have addressed our 10 biggest power usage sites and implemented energy efficiencies of 216.4 tonnes of CO₂-emissions, saving us \$51,600 on our electricity bills per annum."

"The avoidance of 216.4 tonnes of CO₂-emissions equates to taking 50 passenger vehicles off the road for a year (or over half a million 'miles' driven by an average passenger car), or abating the energy of 26 homes for one year, every year," Mayor McClaren said.

The Corporate Greenhouse Program is just one element of Council's long-term low-carbon strategy outlined in its draft Sustainable Strathbogie 2030 Strategy, which includes a target of net zero emissions by 2025 for Council.

Mayor McClaren said Council has also been working behind the scenes for the last eight months to further support its long term aims to reduce greenhouse emissions and safeguard the shire's environmental and financial future.

"Months of research and planning went toward a recent commitment of 100 percent of Council's electricity load to the Victorian Local Government Renewable Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) by Council," Mayor McClaren explained.

“This includes street-lighting, building and pumping assets, with over 70 electricity accounts in total.”

Mayor McClaren said the commitment to the Victorian PPA is about reducing Strathbogie Shire’s exposure to the risk of the energy market which is subject to a great deal of volatility.

“As a Council, our responsibility is to assess these risks and strategise for the future. Climate change is rapidly driving non-renewable energy prices up through extreme weather events,” Mayor McClaren explained.

“Strathbogie has made a prudent decision to join with over 40 other Victorian councils to procure a renewable, clean and cost efficient supply of energy.

As a rural council we need to make smart investment decisions and we would rather invest in infrastructure and community, than energy retailers, so bulk renewable power purchasing is a win-win for us all.”

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