



Victoria's emissions reduction target for 2035

June 2022

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Jesuit Social Services: Who we are and what we do

Jesuit Social Services has been working for 45 years delivering practical support and advocating for improved policies to achieve strong, cohesive and vibrant communities. We are a social change organisation working with some of the most marginalised individuals and communities.

Our service delivery and advocacy spans Victoria, New South Wales and the Northern Territory in the following areas:

Justice and crime prevention – for people involved with the justice system.

Mental health and wellbeing – for people with multiple and complex needs including mental illness, trauma, homelessness and bereavement.

Settlement and community building – for recently arrived immigrants and refugees, and disadvantaged communities.

Education, training and employment – for people with barriers to education and sustainable employment.

Gender Justice – providing leadership on the reduction of violence and other harmful behaviours prevalent among boys and men, and building new approaches to improve their wellbeing and keep families and communities safe.

Ecological justice – advocating and conducting research around the systemic change needed to achieve a ‘just transition’ towards a sustainable future, and supporting community members to lead more sustainable lives.

Research, advocacy and policy are coordinated across all program and major interest areas of Jesuit Social Services. Our advocacy is grounded in the knowledge, expertise and experiences of program staff and participants, and academic research and evidence. We seek to influence policies, practices, legislation and budget investment to positively influence people’s lives and improve approaches to address long-term social challenges. We do this by working collaboratively with governments, businesses, the community sector, and communities themselves to build coalitions and alliances around key issues, and building strong relationships with key decision-makers and the community.

Our Learning and Practice Development Unit builds the capacity of our services through staff development, training and evaluation, and articulating and disseminating information on best practice approaches to working with participants and communities across our programs.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which Jesuit Social Services operates and pay respect to their Elders past and present. We express our gratitude for First Nations people’s love and care of people, community, land and all life.

Our commitment to ecological justice

Recognising that environmental challenges pose particular risks to the communities with whom Jesuit Social Services works, for over a decade we have been bringing an ecological perspective to our practice, policy and organisational identity. Jesuit Social Services has embraced ecological justice, encompassing both human and environmental equity. Jesuit Social Services sees ecological justice as:

A holistic paradigm inclusive of social and environmental justice which rests on the principle that 'everything is interrelated'; ethical action in the environmental sphere is therefore central to equity at a social level.

¹

Our commitment to ecological justice is grounded in:

- Our vision to build a just society;
- Our Jesuit heritage which emphasises reconciliation with creation, and an understanding of justice as relational and restorative; and
- Our work with people on the margins who overwhelmingly bear the brunt of both the causes and consequences of the climate crisis and environmental degradation.

In January 2021, Jesuit Social Services established the [Centre for Just Places](#). The purpose of the Centre for Just Places is to help governments, organisations and communities themselves to design place-based policies, programs and services to tackle the root causes of social, economic and environmental inequity and injustice. For further details of our ecological justice programs, please see the Appendix.

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Jesuit Social Services proceeds from a place of gratitude and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whose way of life is inherently ecological, expressing the connection between all things. We acknowledge their continued care for Country over tens of thousands of years. The dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their ancestral lands and cultural genocide has had devastating intergenerational social consequences. We are committed to pursuing justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge is foundational to our approach to ecological justice.

¹ Jesuit Social Services (2018) Ecological Justice: Dropping off the Edge (DOTE) and Environmental Indicators Final Report, p.2.

Introduction

Jesuit Social Services welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on Victoria's emissions reduction target for 2035. We note the importance of this consultation given that climate change is having unprecedented impacts on people and nature across every region of the globe, including in Victoria, as acknowledged in the Expert Panel's Issues Paper.

Jesuit Social Services' submission focuses on the following two questions raised by the Expert Panel:

What emissions reduction target do you think Victoria should set for 2035?

What can be done to make sure the benefits and costs of climate action are fairly shared (a 'just transition')?

Through our work, we understand that while climate change affects everyone, it is the most marginalised who are impacted first and hardest. Our 2021 iteration of [Dropping off the Edge](#) research, which maps disadvantage across Australia by location, confirmed this.² For the first time, the research included environmental indicators, finding that communities experiencing persistent disadvantage also experience disproportionate environmental injustice, such as higher levels of air pollution, greater exposure to heat stress and poorer access to green spaces.

To minimise the disproportionate negative impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on people from disadvantaged communities, increasing attention is being paid to the idea of a 'just transition' by governments, communities and organisations across a number of sectors. A just transition is a process of moving from current untenable environmental and social systems to a world that achieves zero greenhouse gas emissions, that ensures those least able to cope with climate change receive the help they need to adapt, and that enables healthy relationship between human communities and the eco-systems within which they live, and on which they depend.³

In this submission, we urge the Victorian Government to take immediate action to drastically drive down emissions across all sectors of the economy. We call for this to be achieved with a just transition to a low-carbon future.

We highlight that, in a just transition, strong action on climate change must be coupled with action to ensure those most vulnerable to unavoidable changes in climate are resourced to adapt and build resilience.

Further, the Victorian Government must harness the transition to achieve transformational change by: investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives; building thriving communities using place-based approaches; providing safe, energy-efficient and sustainable housing; enhancing access to 'green' jobs; and focusing on decarceration.

² Tanton, R., Dare, L., Miranti, R., Vidyattama, Y., Yule, A. and McCabe, M. (2021), *Dropping Off the Edge 2021: Persistent and multilayered disadvantage in Australia*, Jesuit Social Services: Melbourne. ([Weblink](#))

³ Jesuit Social Services. (2019). *Just Transitions – expanding the conversation*. ([Weblink](#))

Recommendations

Take strong action on climate change by:

Recommendation 1: Setting targets of reducing emissions by 75 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and net zero emissions by 2035.

Build the capacity of the community services sector to support a just transition by:

Recommendation 2: Increasing funding and resources for organisations and communities seeking to trial, test and implement climate change adaptation, mitigation and transformation activities.

Recommendation 3: Increasing access to and translation of the latest research and evidence-based practice in relation to climate change adaptation.

Recommendation 4: Supporting actions to increase awareness of ecological justice and how to minimise environmental injustice and inequity, with a focus on organisational culture and program delivery.

Recommendation 5: Establishing coordinating bodies that facilitate cross-sector collaboration to work towards a just transition. This should include engagement across all levels of government, together with industry, researchers and technical experts, environmental organisations, the community services sector and communities themselves.

Harness the transformational potential of a just transition by:

Recommendation 6: Investing in community-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives, such as community-owned renewable energy projects which deliver access to affordable clean energy and job opportunities that provide opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to continue to live on Country.

Recommendation 7: Continuing to support place-based, community-led initiatives and system-wide responses that prioritise equitable outcomes in social and environmental infrastructure, affordable housing and employment.

Recommendation 8: Transforming housing in Victoria by 2035 by funding a state-wide trajectory to 6-star homes and targeting retrofits to low-income home owners, renters and people living in social housing.

Recommendation 9: Creating pathways to good jobs in clean energy, land care and management, and other regenerative and sustainable industries.

Recommendation 10: Moving away from prisons, in a climate changing world by making decarceration the central focus of Victoria's justice system.

Net zero emissions by 2035

The latest report by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was a reminder that the impacts of climate change are accelerating, and as they continue, we will see increasingly severe weather events including extreme days of heat and heatwaves, floods, and bushfires.⁴ It reaffirmed that our ongoing reliance on a fossil fuel economy threatens the very survival of our species, let alone our economy, if we continue on the current emissions trajectory.

The IPCC findings make it clear that immediate action must be taken to drastically drive down emissions across all sectors of the Victorian economy.

The Victorian Government's targets to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 are too little, too late. Given the opportunities for emissions reduction and renewable energy generation here in Victoria, and our high historical contribution to climate change, Victoria can and should cut its emissions faster than the global required average to stay well below 2 degrees Celsius of global warming.

We must aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent below 2005 levels within the decade (by 2030) and reach net zero emissions by 2035 – 15 years earlier than previously projected.⁵

We urge the Government to act now to reduce emissions by 75 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and reach net zero emissions by 2035.

As we outline in further detail below, even with swift action, many of the impacts of warming from past and anticipated future emissions are already 'locked in'. This reality will only compound the existing challenges facing at-risk and marginalised populations. It is therefore critical that people experiencing disadvantage are a central focus of the Victorian Government in the urgent transition to a clean economy.

Recommendation 1: Take strong action on climate change by setting targets of reducing emissions by 75 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2035.

⁴IPCC, 2022: Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, R. Slade, A. Al Khourdajie, R. van Diemen, D. McCollum, M. Pathak, S. Some, P. Vyas, R. Fradera, M. Belkacemi, A. Hasija, G. Lisboa, S. Luz, J. Malley, (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA. doi: 10.1017/9781009157926

⁵ Steffen, W., Hughes, L., Bradshaw, S., Arndt, D., & Rice, M. (2021). Aim high, go fast: why emissions need to plummet this decade. ([Weblink](#))

A just transition

To minimise the unfairness inherent in climate change and environmental degradation, increasing attention has been given to the idea of a ‘just transition’ to a zero carbon future. As discussed in our paper [‘Just transitions - Expanding the conversation’](#), Jesuit Social Services believes that a just transition should:

- ***Ensure disadvantaged communities receive the help they need to adapt and build resilience; and***
- ***Achieve transformational change by addressing the underlying and interrelated drivers of social and ecological vulnerability.***

Community service organisations as key to adapting and building resilience

Jesuit Social Services believes that strong action on climate change must be coupled with place-based action to support communities to adapt and build resilience.

Given their proximity to and knowledge of local communities, community service organisations (CSOs) have a key role to play in addressing the underlying drivers of vulnerability and supporting those impacted by extreme weather. However, at present, CSOs are themselves highly vulnerable and not well-prepared to respond to climate change or extreme weather events, with many small and medium-sized organisations at risk of permanent closure or service disruption as a result of major damage to physical infrastructure and disruptions to critical services.⁶

The detailed consequences of major disruptions to social service provision for people experiencing poverty and inequality – for whom CSOs are the shock absorbers for everyday adversity as well as crises – are very serious as they impact the basic needs for human survival: homelessness, deprivation, hunger, isolation and death. CSOs perceive an overwhelming range of barriers to action.⁷ Key amongst these is a lack of financial resources and skills and the concern that adaptation is ‘beyond the scope’ of the sector’s core business.

In recognising the urgent need to adapt to climate change, Jesuit Social Services’ Centre for Just Places has been delivering climate adaptation and resilience workshops across metropolitan Melbourne. In doing so, we aim to strengthen collaboration between CSOs and local governments to build resilience to extreme weather and protect the health and wellbeing of those most at-risk.

⁶ Victorian Council of Social Service. (2021). Survey Report: Extreme Heat.

⁷ Ibid.

Jesuit Social Services' climate adaptation and resilience workshops

Jesuit Social Services' Centre for Just Places has been delivering climate adaptation and resilience workshops across metropolitan Melbourne. The workshops bring together diverse cross-sector organisations working in particular geographic areas and LGAs, including services in the areas of housing and homelessness, mental health, settlement, education and gender justice, as well as religious leaders and local government. Participants report leaving the workshops with a deeper understanding of climate vulnerability and their responsibility to adapt. Resources are shared with participants, including the Jesuit Social Services' [Climate and Ecological Justice Resource Pack](#), which offers practical tools for addressing climate change adaptation within homes and organisations.

The place-based workshops serve as a critical conversation starter, building common understandings of climate vulnerability and community needs in each local government area and catalysing future collaborations. In one local government area, for example, relationships developed through the workshops enabled deep engagement with at-risk community members and their lived experience of climate change. These conversations will inform local government adaptation policy and programs. Elsewhere, we have seen Neighbourhood Houses come together to commit to developing a collaborative climate action plan.

Jesuit Social Services recommends that the Victorian Government commit to empowering communities and the community sector to adapt to climate change, by continuing to resource local initiatives that build community resilience over the long-term.

Support community sector organisations to reduce emissions

In addition to empowering people to adapt to climate change, community service organisations can support a just transition by undertaking organisational-level change to embed an ecological culture.

Jesuit Social Services has used a guiding framework that we call 'Our Way of Proceeding' as the basis to develop ecological awareness and action (please see the Appendix for further details of this). Examples of ways that we have embedded ecological justice within the organisation include:

- Reducing organisational emissions
- Minimising waste output
- Supporting ethical procurement
- Installing gardens to provide food security
- Expanding advocacy and research to include environmental factors
- Encouraging new ecological social work practices, including increasing ecological literacy amongst staff and participants
- Introducing education and training programs in green skills (see the Appendix for details of Jesuit Social Services' Ecological Justice Hub).

Like other organisations in the community sector, Jesuit Social Services is fiscally constrained and operates within a competitive funding environment. Organisations that wish to implement ecological justice programs may require extra financial support, however climate change adaptation, mitigation

and transformation are not always identified as a sector priority and often do not attract dedicated funding. Further funding would enable more organisations, and the community services sector itself, to be better prepared for climate change impacts.

Establish cross-sector climate resilience bodies

CSOs hold local knowledge and, through their relationships with communities, can best understand the vulnerabilities, strengths and responses most suited to their local communities. Building place-based, cross-sector coalitions would enable this knowledge to be incorporated into adaptation planning and just transition policy development to build broader community resilience.

While Jesuit Social Services' Centre for Just Places facilitates a process to bring place-based, cross-sector coalitions together through our climate resilience workshops, the Centre isn't resourced to coordinate these groups beyond the workshops. Coordination is very much needed to keep them alive and collaborating.

Jesuit Social Services therefore calls on the Victorian Government to establish place-based coordinating bodies that would:

- Set up formal structures to facilitate inter-sectoral collaboration towards a just transition;
- Increase the involvement of community sector organisations;
- Support and recognise community engagement and 'on the ground' actions; and
- Design and monitor policies and programs that ensure equity and that the most marginalised are not excluded in the path to just transitions.

We note that the Victorian Government is already doing this to a degree through bushfire recovery and emergency management and highlight that the place-based coordinating bodies could be an extension of this work.

Build the capacity of the community services sector by:

Recommendation 2: Increasing funding and resources for organisations and communities seeking to trial, test and implement climate change adaptation, mitigation and transformation activities.

Recommendation 3: Increasing access to and translation of the latest research and evidence-based practice in relation to climate change adaptation.

Recommendation 4: Supporting actions to increase awareness of ecological justice and how to minimise environmental injustice and inequity, with a focus on organisational culture and program delivery.

Recommendation 5: Establishing coordinating bodies that facilitate cross-sector collaboration to work towards a just transition. This should include engagement across all levels of government, together with industry, researchers and technical experts, environmental organisations, the community services sector and communities themselves.

Harnessing the transformational potential of a just transition

Climate justice coalitions internationally and locally have articulated a wider vision of what is needed for a just transition to create transformational, systems-level change:

“A just transition is a vision-led, unifying and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. This means approaching production and consumption cycles holistically and waste-free. The transition itself must be just and equitable, redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future through reparations. If the process of transition is not just, the outcome will never be.”

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Below, we outline the importance of harnessing the transformational potential of a just transition in Victoria by:

- Investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives;
- Building thriving communities using place-based approaches;
- Ensuring all people in Victoria have climate safe and energy efficient housing
- Enhancing access to ‘green’ jobs; and
- Focusing on decarceration.

Invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives

Since colonisation and through ongoing dispossession, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been witnessing the destruction of land, waters and ecosystems that are their sustenance and basis of their spiritual and cultural life. Justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture and land must be central to any commitment to ecological justice in Victoria.

Jesuit Social Services emphasises the importance of ensuring that the transition to renewable energy does not replicate existing power structures that are harmful or exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For example, in the Northern Territory, there is growing interest in the economic opportunities presented by renewables; without clear parameters set by government, there is a risk that new solar projects could perpetuate the pattern of old industries – extracting value from Aboriginal land without the participation or benefit of traditional owners and local communities.

We call on the Victorian Government to invest in community-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives, such as community-owned renewable energy projects which deliver access to affordable clean energy and job opportunities that provide the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to continue to live on Country.

Take place-based approaches to build thriving communities

Last year, Jesuit Social Services’ latest [Dropping Off the Edge report](#) was released—the fifth edition of research spanning over 20 years, which maps disadvantage by location. The report identifies where entrenched and persistent disadvantage is located and demonstrates the complex web of challenges

⁸ See <https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/>

faced by those communities. For the first time, Dropping Off the Edge 2021 includes environmental indicators alongside social, economic, education and health measures. The findings show that communities that experience persistent disadvantage often also experience disproportionate environmental injustice, represented by factors such as air pollution,⁹ heat stress,¹⁰ and less green open spaces resulting in fewer natural features such as trees, flora and fauna.¹¹

Jesuit Social Services strongly believes that place-based approaches can address the complex and interconnected web of challenges encountered by vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. While there is no fixed definition of a place-based approach, there is consensus it should involve, “a collaborative, long-term approach to build thriving communities delivered in a defined geographic location”.¹² This recognises that everyone’s wellbeing is influenced by the community they live in, and that every community is different.

The Centre for Just Places is currently conducting a research project for the Victorian Government to build a repository of best practice and evidence-based research to inform government decision-making. This research highlights the importance of a whole-of-government approach to better understanding both the factors that support thriving and resilient communities and the role of coordinated and integrated policies to address the drivers of disadvantage across Victoria. The Victorian government must commit to ongoing support of place-based, community-led initiatives and system-wide responses that prioritise equitable outcomes in social and environmental infrastructure, affordable housing and employment opportunities.

Provide access to safe, energy-efficient and sustainable housing

Jesuit Social Services is concerned to ensure that pre-existing inequities in housing in Victoria are not exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. As we collectively face increasingly harsh climatic conditions, the lack of adequate housing for sections of our community is an inequality that, if unaddressed, will exacerbate existing health inequities and undermine social cohesion.

The mandatory rating for newly constructed homes is six stars under the 10-star Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme.¹³ Comparatively, in Victoria, the average energy performance of existing homes is only 1.8 stars. This is well below the requirement for new dwellings. A study by Sustainability Victoria found that significant energy savings and reductions in emissions could be achieved by undertaking energy efficient upgrades on Victoria’s existing housing stock.¹⁴ For example, upgrades could reduce average household gas use by 58 per cent.¹⁵

We support the Victorian Council of Social Services’ (VCOSS) call to transform housing in Victoria by 2035 to ensure that all people living in Victoria, regardless of whether they rent, live in social housing or own

⁹ Tanton, R., Dare, L., Miranti, R., Vidyattama, Y., Yule, A. and McCabe, M. (2021), Dropping Off the Edge 2021: Persistent and multilayered disadvantage in Australia, Jesuit Social Services: Melbourne. Indicator 32. Pg 236.

¹⁰ Ibid. Indicator 34. Pg 236.

¹¹ Ibid. Indicators 33 and 35. Pg 236.

¹² Dart, J. 2018. Place-based Evaluation Framework: A national guide for evaluation of place-based approaches, report, Commissioned by the Queensland Government Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS) and the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS).

¹³ See <https://www.nathers.gov.au/>

¹⁴ Sustainability Victoria. (2015). Energy Efficiency Upgrade Potential of Existing Victorian Houses.

¹⁵ Ibid.

their own home, have access to climate safe and energy-efficient housing.¹⁶ The Victorian Government can achieve this by funding a state-wide trajectory to 6-Star homes and target retrofits at low-income owner-occupied homes, private rentals and social housing, which are more likely to be older and of poor quality, and to house people experiencing vulnerability.¹⁷

Create pathways to 'green' jobs in marginalised communities

Acknowledging that not everybody has the same access to education, training and employment opportunities, often because of circumstances beyond their control, Jesuit Social Services' [education, training and employment programs](#) help Victorians who have had limited access to learn, study and work. We support them so they can reach their potential by equipping them with the fundamental skills and pathways they need to ultimately thrive.

Our employment, education and training programs across the organisation increasingly include skills needed in transitioning economies, and create models of sustainable and ecologically just living. Almost five years ago, Jesuit Social Services opened its [Ecological Justice Hub](#) in Brunswick, focused on realising ecological justice with communities most at risk from climate change and economic transitions. The Hub provides skills, training and employment support into green economy jobs for people experiencing barriers to employment.

We call on the Victorian Government to increase training and education pathways into employment in clean energy, land care and management, and other regenerative and sustainable industries: activities that reduce our climate risk and build the economy of the future.

Focus on decarceration

For 45 years, Jesuit Social Services has accompanied people involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, the criminal justice system. Our '[Prisons, climate and a just transition](#)' discussion paper makes the point that marginalised people – and imprisoned people in particular – are some of the hardest hit in the face of worsening climate change.

Heatwaves already kill more people in Australia than all other extreme weather events combined, and experts are predicting that the number and severity of extremely hot days in Australia may in future make parts of the country uninhabitable.¹⁸ Our paper shares examples of extreme heatwaves causing health problems and creating conflict among people living in prison buildings that are not fit for purpose.

Alongside the effects of climate change on imprisoned people, our paper outlines the ways Australia's reliance on imprisonment as a response to crime is ineffective, costly and discriminatory, disproportionately harming the most marginalised people in our communities.

Flowing from a history of colonisation and dispossession, systemic racism, intergenerational trauma and discriminatory laws and practices, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be vastly overrepresented in Victorian prisons, making up 11 per cent of people incarcerated in Victoria despite making up 0.8 per cent of the general population (January 2022).¹⁹ High rates of reoffending demonstrate the ineffectiveness of prisons as a way to rehabilitate people and keep communities safe,

¹⁶ VCOSS. (2022). Fair and fast action for a safer climate – submission. ([Weblink](#))

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Climate Council. (2021). The Deadly Costs of Climate Inaction. ([Weblink](#))

¹⁹ ABS. (2021). Corrective Services – Australia. ([Weblink](#))

with 45 per cent of people released from prison returning to corrective services within two years (2019-2020).²⁰

Not only are marginalised people – and imprisoned people in particular – some of the worst impacted by climate change, but prisons are often ecologically damaging. They are built on large tracts of land, often cleared of vegetation, and produce large amounts of waste. Further, much of our infrastructure is under-prepared for climate change, and the scope of climate risks is not fully understood. In Victoria, according to the state’s infrastructure advisory body, “no current and comprehensive assessment catalogues climate risks for Victoria’s infrastructure”.²¹ As the body notes, our infrastructure should be “designed, operated and maintained in ways that reduce the vulnerability to adverse impacts, build economic and social resilience, and reduce emissions”.²²

We believe that a just transition to zero greenhouse gas emissions necessitates moving away from damaging economic and social systems, including Victoria’s reliance on imprisonment. Instead of investing in prisons and designing harsher and more inflexible sentences, we need to resource prevention, therapeutic and restorative programs, and implement community-led alternatives to imprisonment that hold people accountable for their actions in a meaningful way. For further details in relation to how decarceration can be achieved, please see Jesuit Social Services’ [submission to the Inquiry into Victoria’s Criminal Justice System](#).

Harness the transformational potential of a just transition by:

Recommendation 6: Investing in community-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives, such as community-owned renewable energy projects which deliver access to affordable clean energy and job opportunities that provide opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to continue to live on Country.

Recommendation 7: Continuing to support place-based, community-led initiatives and system-wide responses that prioritise equitable outcomes in social and environmental infrastructure, affordable housing and employment.

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Recommendation 9: Creating pathways to good jobs in clean energy, land care and management, and other regenerative and sustainable industries.

Recommendation 10: Moving away from prisons, in a climate changing world by making decarceration the central focus of Victoria’s justice system.

²⁰ Sentencing Advisory Council – Released Prisoners Returning to Prison ([Weblink](#))

²¹ Infrastructure Victoria (Dec 2020) Victoria’s Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy, ([Weblink](#)).

²² Ibid.

Conclusion

The impacts of climate change are accelerating and, as they continue, we will see increasingly severe weather events including extreme days of heat and heatwaves, floods, and bushfires. The latest evidence suggests that states and territories within Australia must aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent below 2005 levels within the decade (by 2030) and reach net zero emissions by 2035 – 15 years earlier than previously projected.

Even with swift action, many of the impacts of warming from past and anticipated future emissions are already 'locked in'. This reality will only compound the existing challenges facing at risk and marginalised populations. Without concerted action now to build an ecologically just society, the significant disadvantage experienced by marginalised communities will compound.

We appreciate the Independent Expert Panel receiving our views as a part of the Victorian Emissions Target Consultation. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these ideas with you further.

Appendices

1. Jesuit Social Services' ecological justice programs

a) Building community capacity for climate justice in the Northern Territory

Jesuit Social Services is working alongside other community service organisations, environment groups Aboriginal organisations and unions in a unique partnership to advocate for just climate action that simultaneously addresses the Territory's deep social inequalities, while promoting the health of Country and our climate.



NT Climate Justice Forum, 2019 - Warumungu and Warlmanpa Traditional Owner Dianne Stokes shares the ways in which climate change is already affecting Aboriginal communities across the Barkly Region and her history fighting to protect Country.

In February 2021, we co-hosted the third NT Climate Justice Forum. The *Our Jobs, Climate and Communities* forum articulated a vision for the Territory's economic recovery built on foundations of care for people, Country and climate.

b) Ecological Justice Hub

Jesuit Social Services' Ecological Justice Hub in Brunswick is a permaculture garden and community centre dedicated to building ecological awareness, restoring our regenerative relationship with nature, and working collaboratively with others towards a sustainable society that includes both social and environmental justice. The Ecological Justice Hub is a garden, workshop and gathering place which:

- Builds ecological awareness and understanding for community members and community, government and businesses through advocacy and community education.
- Provides skills, training and employment support into green economy jobs for people experiencing barriers to employment.
- Creates 'green living' demonstration projects which support climate change reduction and environmental recovery.



Jesuit Social Services' Ecological Justice Hub, Brunswick

Through the Hub we have developed an ecological literacy curriculum that engages people to show the impact climate change has on our food, water and energy systems, and on the symbiotic relationship between our behaviour and the impact on the natural environmental. Not only does the Hub offer a deeper understanding of the unprecedented changes we are seeing in our climate, it also equips communities with the skills and tools to cope in an uncertain climate, such as how to:

- Secure employment in green industries
- Reduce energy consumption
- Retrofit a home
- Conserve water
- Implement zero-waste cooking skills
- Compost
- Create more resilient communities.

The programs are aimed at supporting individuals who have disengaged from the education system, people who are unemployed or underemployed, recent retirees, low-income families and single parents.

The Ecological Justice Hub has successfully tested a model of community advocacy, education and training, jobs pathways and green living demonstration projects through the development of a range of education and skills training programs, including:

- *Just Habitat* – constructing small eco-friendly homes that creates employment opportunities and develops people’s skills.
- *Just Energy* – solar power systems for redistribution to people on low incomes.
- *Just Nourishment* – building permaculture gardens and growing healthy food.
- *Just Hammertime* – workshops to provide skills in carpentry and construction for young women.
- *Just Mushrooms* – workshops to demonstrate the benefits of growing mushrooms.
- *Just Honey* – promoting local bee keeping.
- *Just Compost* – turning Brunswick and city waste resources into garden compost.

c) The Outdoor Experience

The Outdoor Experience (TOE) offers young people a unique opportunity for learning, growth and connection in a supportive environment. Participants learn more about themselves, strengthen relationships with others and have a greater understanding of their relationship with nature.

The Outdoor Experience is funded to work with 15-25 years of age with Drug and Alcohol issues. Our programs are designed to meet the needs of an already organized or established group. Programs may involve a series of day programs or multiple day/overnight trips.

The Outdoor Experience utilises Adventure Based Learning principles (ABL) and range of therapeutic practices to provide a powerful environment for achieving desired outcomes.



The Outdoor Experience uses bush therapy to support young people

Key Features of TOE - Adventure, Learning and Growth

TOE specialises in Bush Adventure Therapy partnering with agencies working with participants (15-25 years) with drug and alcohol issues. We believe that well designed and supported adventure/nature based activities provide vulnerable young people with opportunities for learning and growth.

The factors that are considered core in TOE programs are:

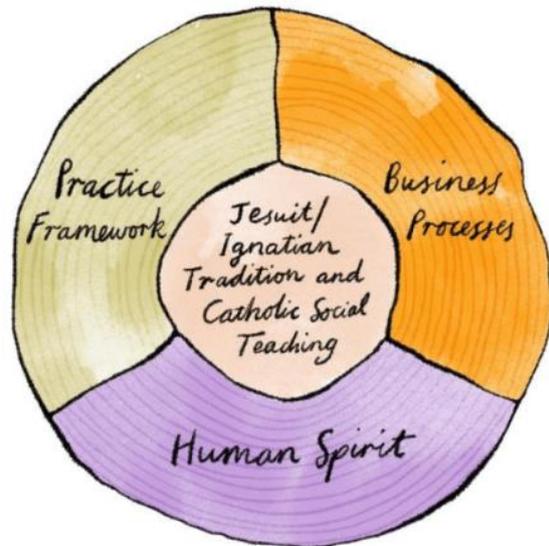
- **Individual Design:** Each program is designed to address specific aims objectives of agencies and participants.
- **Participant Readiness:** Participants choose and are willing to participate in all aspects of the program.
- **Active involvement of the agency worker:** Agency workers participate in all aspects of the program. The program provides many opportunities for agency workers to build on their relationship with participants and further develop participants learning and the transference of these learning into their lives.
- **Responsiveness:** Programs are modified in response to emerging needs.
- **Simplicity:** We aim to 'travel light' on program and live simply our focus is on individual growth, building a supportive group environment and further developing our relationship with nature.
- **Nature:** Programs explore participant's relationship with nature.
- **Adventure/ Journey:** Programs are designed to provide young people with a sense of personal achievement, at times significant enough to be used as a life reference point.
- **Personal Reflection:** Experiential education methodologies such as action- reflection aims to grow the capacity of participants to actively reflect on their behaviour and choices both during and post program.
- **Small Group Work and Closed Group Design:** We work with groups sizes of 6 to 12 including staff. On program we aim to protect the focus of that group for the duration of the program by maintaining independence from external influences and other groups.

2. Jesuit Social Services – Our Way of Proceeding

Our Way of Proceeding recognises three interconnected domains that must be considered in all aspects of the organisation's operations.

1. **Human Spirit** – Focusing upon essential anthropological and spiritual questions about what it means to be human and enquires into the conditions within which humans thrive and have healthy relationships. This involves an informed and discerning process of understanding ourselves, our fellow humans and the context of our relationships, to people, place and planet.

2. **Practice Framework** – Developing a relational way of being and acting that reflects and lives ecological justice. This promotes environmental awareness and ecological justice across our practice areas and our advocacy including justice and crime prevention, settlement and community building, mental health support and wellbeing, and education, training, and employment, and gender justice



Jesuit Social Services - 'Our Way of Proceeding'

3. **Business Processes** – Adopting environmentally sustainable business practices and processes using a process of discernment about how to use our financial and other resources so they respect and contribute to, rather than harm, efforts to build a just society. This includes embedding climate change adaptation, mitigation and transformation into our business practices.