

<b>Title</b>	<b>Garnaut speaks at launch of first low carbon community 'cluster' – the 'Livewell Yarra' Project</b>
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Today, climate change analyst Professor Ross Garnaut was keynote speaker at the 'Livewell Yarra' Project launch, the first in a series of 'Livewell Clusters' initiated by Curtin University. The Project will engage members of the Yarra community in a collaborative trial focussed on reducing carbon emissions.

Professor Garnaut discussed how Australians can contribute to avoiding dangerous climate change.

"Australia has richer renewable energy resources than other developed countries. Reductions in the costs of solar, wind and batteries mean that many Australians are now able to greatly reduce their emissions while reducing what they pay for energy," he said.

Funded by the [CRC for Low Carbon Living \(CRCLCL\)](#), the 'Livewell Yarra' project – which will initially run from March to September – was initiated by its leader Dr Robert Salter of Curtin University and is supported by [Yarra City Council](#) and the [Yarra Energy Foundation](#).

According to Dr Salter, community members joining the program will decide on and collaboratively work towards carbon-reduction targets with support from the CRCLCL, university researchers, the Yarra Energy Foundation, Yarra Council and other local organisations.

"There are many ways to live a low carbon life, such as draft-proofing your house, switching to energy-efficient lights or starting a food garden. You can walk, cycle or take public transport to work, install solar panels, switch to green power or share tools with your neighbour. There are many options, and they won't reduce your quality of life," Dr Salter said.

The 'clusters' refer to different types of groups and activities. For example in 'Decarb Groups' six to 12 people will work out what their carbon footprint is, get information on how to reduce it, set targets then help and support each other on the way. 'Project Groups' will each focus on a project to make carbon reduction easier for everyone, such as organising working bees to do simple retrofitting jobs, bulk buying low carbon products or encouraging food gardening.

Professor Deo Prasad, CRCLCL CEO said that the CRC "is very interested in how local communities can move towards low carbon living. A better understanding of what resonates at that level is important to support programs and interventions to lower carbon footprints."

City of Yarra Mayor, Cr Phillip Vlahogiannis, who officially launched the project said

“Council is delighted to have the [CRC for Low Carbon Living \(CRCLCL\) undertaking this important project in the City of Yarra](#)”.

Yarra Energy Foundation CEO, Sarah Johnson, said her organisation, which is a not-for-profit, would provide information and promotion for the project.

“The success of this project relies on getting people involved so we will be helping with promotion and reaching people who have already shown an interest in reducing emissions and living low carbon lives. We are delighted to be working with Livewell on this collaborative project,” she said.

Once the CRC phase is over it is intended that the Livewell Clusters will become a fully autonomous movement run by participants – independent, yet well connected with like-minded organisations and sources of expertise, and embedded in local communities.

**To get involved contact Rob Salter at [rob@livewell.net.au](mailto:rob@livewell.net.au) or his Project Researcher, Darren Sharp on [darren@livewell.net.au](mailto:darren@livewell.net.au)**

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### **About the CRC for Low Carbon Living Ltd**

The CRC for Low Carbon Living (CRCLCL) is a national research and innovation hub that seeks to enable a globally competitive low carbon built environment sector.

It brings together property, planning, engineering and policy organisations with leading Australian researchers. CRCLCL develops new social, technological and policy tools for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment.

A key aim of the CRCLCL is to help cut Australia’s residential and commercial carbon emissions by 10 mega tonnes per year by 2020, which is the environmental equivalent of taking 2.3 million cars off the road each year. This will be achieved through developing low carbon building construction materials and increasing the evidence base for government policy and planning, among other measures. Australia has set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of 25 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050 compared with 2000 levels.

When the 2020 carbon reduction targets are met, the CRCLCL will have delivered a direct benefit of \$250 million per year to the economy, while reducing risk to the \$150 billion per year construction industry as it adjusts to a carbon-constrained economy.

Ultimately the CRCLCL will help unlock barriers to cost-effective carbon reduction opportunities, empower communities and facilitate the widespread adoption of integrated renewable energy. This will enable the sector to transition and contribute to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions targets while maintaining industry competitiveness and improving quality of life. It is supported by the Cooperative Research Centres program, an Australian Government initiative.