

Focus 1: Repower Victoria's economy with clean energy

Key test of success: How will the Party make Victoria a leader on clean energy by embracing opportunities to drive renewable energy and phase out fossil fuels?

Environment Victoria's policy agenda

Unleash Victoria's Renewable Future

- **Meet the Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET) of 5400 MW by bringing 1000 MW of new, large-scale renewable energy online every year for the next four years**
- **Repower Alcoa with renewable energy**
- **Phase out fossil fuels across Victoria**

Build a grid that benefits all Victorians

- **Set a 500 MW storage target**
- Give every Victorian access to solar by encouraging solar gardens (shared solar installation) and allowing landlords and tenants to split the cost of solar
- Make Victoria's renewable boom job rich by establishing TAFE Centres of Excellence to train renewable energy workers and ensure projects built through the VRET meet or exceed a 10% minimum apprenticeship requirement
- Supercharge the Greener Government Building's Program by increasing investment in the program

Repower Victoria's Transport

- Invest in sustainable transport such as public and active transport and reduce spending on freeways
- **Repower Melbourne's trains with 100% renewable energy**
- Encourage off-peak public transport through innovative ticketing
- Encourage uptake of electric vehicles by setting an electric vehicle target for all new cars, allowing EVs to use high occupancy lanes, reducing emission from the Government's fleet and providing rebates for public charging stations.

Focus 1 - Party Response:

Renewable Energy

We are for establishing a major public corporation dedicated to the rapid expansion of renewable power production in Victoria, using a combination of wind, solar, biomass, and hydro power with large scale battery storage to fast-track Victoria's transition to a zero-emissions energy system.. Two of Victoria's key industrial and energy zones – Melbourne's north and the Latrobe valley – now left to decline, could instead become world centres of cutting-edge renewable energy technology, with highly-skilled and trained workers producing energy infrastructure for the state and the world.

We support the phasing out of fossil fuels. As ageing power plants are replaced – not in 30 years, but in 15 or 10 – with modular, scalable plants, wind farms, solar cell ranges and mega batteries, these areas will acquire new prosperity, focus and identity. If elected we will invite constituent groups to address us on the appropriate storage targets but note the EV proposal of 500 MW as a starting point.

We note that EV call for TAFE courses to equip workers with the skills to attain jobs in the renewables sector. This aligns with VS policy that the number of courses offered at TAFE should be expanded and exempt from fees.

We think landlords should pay the cost of solar panels on rental properties. As well as aiding the transition to renewable energy sources, it would make electricity cheaper for tenants.

Public Transport

Victorian Socialists are for a massive expansion of public transport as both a means to improve workers' quality of life and to reduce the impact of carbon emissions from cars. The state government provides a subsidy of \$100 million per year to Metro Trains, which makes an estimated \$50 million in profit annually. We will call on the state government to reverse the privatisation of public transport so that the public subsidy to the private operators can instead be invested in the expansion of the services. Bringing public transport back into public hands would also enable the state government to ensure that trains (and buses and trams if possible) can run on renewable energy sources.

We do not currently have a policy on the use of electric cars, but would be happy to consider any proposals.

Focus 2: Ensure a just and fair transition to a sustainable Victorian society and economy

Key test of success: How will the party ensure that all Victorians benefit from the shift to clean energy and that communities and workers are supported as Victoria transitions to a sustainable future?

Environment Victoria's policy agenda

Repower 250,000 homes and businesses with rooftop solar and energy efficiency in the next 4 years

- **Build a virtual power plant that provides solar, battery storage and energy efficiency upgrades for 150,000 Victorians by 2022**
- **Set up a fully resourced state-wide fund for priority household efficiency and renewable energy upgrades**
- Increase and extend the Victorian Energy Upgrade Program
- Set up Home Energy Hubs
- Set energy efficiency standards for rental properties
- Improve efficiency standards for new homes
- Appoint new compliance cops to enforce building efficiency standards

Deliver a just transition across Victoria

- **Make the Latrobe Valley Authority a permanent statutory authority and expand its mandate**
- **Expand energy efficiency programs across Gippsland, starting with 14,000 most vulnerable households in the region**
- Reserve 500 MW of new renewable energy to be built through the VRET for the Latrobe Valley
- Establish a Forest Industry Transition Authority to drive the shift to sustainable plantation timber.

Focus 2 - Party Response:

The Victorian Socialists recognise the need to support workers and communities impacted by the transition to a zero-emissions energy system. We will advocate for significant public investment to support workers at decommissioned power stations to retrain and be redeployed in jobs in the renewable sector.

We believe that such a large-scale energy transition can't be left to market forces. This particularly applies to the impact on communities and households, who in a privatised energy system would be subject to increased costs passed on by corporations. The establishment of a public corporation to lead the energy transition will help to mitigate this effect.

The Victorian Socialists advocate using super profits taxes and bond issues to limit any price increases associated with the energy transition.

We support measures to make households more energy efficient. Such measures may include requirements on landlords to refit their rental properties with solar panels. All new apartment blocks and developments should be required to meet energy efficiency standards and use certain materials for cladding and insulation. The cost ought to be borne by the big developers rather than residents. We have called for the Victorian Building Authority to be properly resourced with sufficient numbers of inspectors to ensure compliance with building regulations in all new developments.

Victorian Socialists support the 2017 ban on unconventional gas exploration and mining which was led by Victorian farmers, environmentalists and Indigenous activists. The fossil fuel industry is well past its use by date: more than 70 communities have declared themselves "coal and/or gas field free". The Liberals and Labor want to lift the ban, under pressure from the gas lobby. We need to maintain the ban and promote renewable sustainable energy.

In our view the timber mills in the Latrobe Valley can remain open and employing people but must be run with plantation timber and plantations need to be managed in such a way as to avoid degradation of the biodiversity of regions.

Focus 3: Strengthen the systems that drive environmental protection and sustainability in Victoria

Key test of success: How will the party strengthen, reform and enhance the laws and policies that protect Victoria's natural systems and precious flora and fauna?

Environment Victoria's policy agenda

Deliver a fair go for nature

- Establish a Commission for a Hotter and Drier Victoria to plan for warming that is already locked-in
- Improve threatened species protections under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act
- Reform the Water Act to give our rivers a fair share of water
- **Double the funding provided for successful riverbank restoration to \$60m**
- **Establish the Great Forest National Park, fill gaps in our national parks system & expand our marine parks**
- Properly fund inclusive park management
- Invest \$36M in the Trust for Nature's revolving fund to protect 60,000 ha of conservation land

Clean up our waste systems

- **Reform recycling systems to restore trust and ensure that recycling is reducing the amount of waste going to landfill**
- **Redirect organics from landfill to create compost production systems and fully implement a ban on e-waste being sent to landfill**
- Increase the landfill levy and use it to drive innovation
- Help people fix goods by supporting repair cafes
- Articulate plans to work towards a circular economy

Improve environmental transparency

- Implement mandatory disclosure of contamination on residential sites
- Make sure the EPA has the resources to clean up abandoned sites
- Establish an Environment & Lands court
- Fix the Environmental Effects Act by strengthening the approvals process and ensuring that the act is more closely adhered to

Focus 3 - Party Response:

We will work with constituent groups to achieve legislative reform as well as seek to support grassroots campaigns to achieve the change outlined below.

Protect our Forests

Firstly, we will support the agitation from conservation groups for the creation of the Great Forest National Park in the Central Highlands to protect the Mountain Ash, Leadbeater's Possum from logging and conserve a vital water source for Victorians.

We will support the efforts of groups agitating to extend the national park system to provide protection to other areas of natural beauty and significance. We reject the counter position put between defending jobs and protecting the environment. We will argue for investment in renewable energy and reskilling of workers to attain employment in new, sustainable industries in their communities.

Water Management

Current levels of water use are completely unsustainable in Australia. Excessive water use, especially by heavy industry and water-intensive agribusiness, is causing irreparable damage to our fragile ecosystems and creating chronic water shortages.

Conventional free market economics aims to solve this problem by putting a price on water and allowing it to be traded by those who can afford to purchase it. Trading in water encourages speculation and the most profitable rather than the most sustainable and socially just uses. It leads to poor farming practices. Instead of market-based approaches, we advocate an all-round plan for water sustainability based on a thorough scientific assessment of rivers, wetlands and water tables. Public ownership and democratic, accountable management of water resources is essential. Unless the water supply is publicly owned, the profit motive will always disrupt scientifically-based water conservation measures.

Furthermore, more water runs off the hard surfaces of Melbourne's urban area than is taken from our dams. Currently, most of this water flows into storm drains and out to sea. The Victorian Socialists will seek to ensure that all new development is water sensitive, allowing storm water to be collected and reused in Melbourne's parks and gardens.

In relation to water management, we also support:

Strengthen systems to reduce climate pollution

- **Support and embed 2025 and 2030 emissions targets that are consistent with keeping warming below 2 degrees**
- **Set limits on carbon pollution from power stations through EPA licences**
- **Use the Climate Change Act to drive ambitious reductions across Victoria's economy and set ambitious targets to reduce emissions from the Victorian government's own operations.**
- Climate proof Victoria's budget by tracking the costs of climate change and integrating environmental accounting into the budget
- Set up a task force to investigate negative emissions and develop a roadmap for Victoria

1. An end to the free access of the mining industry to water in artesian basins, catchments and rivers.
2. The prosecution and banning from operation of mining and agribusiness corporations that pollute water, with full remediation costs for damage; and the exposure of and politicians who support these companies.
3. Stopping land clearing and logging in important water catchments to preserve water quality and slow erosion. Increasing funding to land clearing prevention services.
4. Phasing out water-intensive monoculture crops in climatic regions which are unsustainable.
5. Limiting maximum private dam sizes rather than charging for rainwater stored in farm dams for irrigation, and subsidising irrigation efficiency technology such as drip irrigation to limit water wastage.
6. Introducing a grant for low-income households to install water tanks.

Recycling & Waste

With China no longer accepting our waste, much of our recycling is being dumped into landfill. This is a clear case of government neglect, combined with recycling companies putting short-term profits ahead of sustainability. To fix this, the Victorian Socialists call for a new, publicly-owned recycling hub in Melbourne's north. This wouldn't only be an environmental win, but would create thousands of new jobs.

Fixing our recycling system is only half the story. The real problem is the explosion in the volume of waste being produced. We need to tackle this problem at its source – not simply discouraging use of plastic bags in supermarkets, but reducing the unnecessary packaging that companies use for their products. We need new regulations to force companies to reduce the amount of disposal packaging, and to curb the “throwaway” culture of capitalism.

We agree that the EPA should be adequately resourced to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and be empowered to require companies to clean up any contamination of sites. This may be enhanced by a specialised court list or tribunal to hear cases regarding breaches of environmental regulations as suggested by EV.

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Priority policies are indicated in **bold**