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Regional organisations unite on climate resilience plan for Campaspe

A new regional action plan aimed at strengthening climate and disaster resilience across the Campaspe region was launched online today by Sheena Watt, the Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Action and Emergency Services.

The Campaspe Climate Partnership Collaborative Action Plan brings together local organisations, councils and community services to help communities prepare for the growing risks of floods, bushfires, heatwaves and other climate impacts.

The plan – <https://campaspecp.arcjustice.org.au> – is the result of more than two years of collaboration between organisations across the Campaspe region.

Jesuit Social Services' Centre for Just Places is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the Climate Partnerships project and ARC Justice is leading the implementation of it in Campaspe Shire. The project is also being delivered in Yarra Ranges Shire, where implementation is being led by the Eastern Community Legal Centre. The Federation of Community Legal Centres will share the work with the broader legal assistance sector.

ARC Justice CEO Damian Stock said the partnership, supported through the Australian Government's Disaster Ready Fund, had been built around a simple idea: communities respond better to disasters when local organisations are connected before a crisis hits.

"Extreme weather events are becoming more common and more complex," Stock said. "We know disasters don't just damage homes and infrastructure. They can trigger legal problems, financial stress, housing instability and family violence.

"This work is about making sure organisations across the region are better connected and ready to respond together when communities need support."

Watt said the Victorian Government is committed to strong climate action, but it only works if it connects with what communities need on the ground. "This plan is a clear example of that, bringing together local insight and practical steps to strengthen resilience across the region," she said.

More than 30 organisations across the region have contributed to the work, sharing local knowledge and identifying practical actions that could strengthen disaster resilience across the Campaspe region.

The partnership includes ARC Justice, Campaspe Shire Council, Anglicare Victoria, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Echuca Regional Health, Jesuit Social Services Centre for Just Places, the Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit, the Regional Association of Neighbourhood and Community Houses and Women's Health Loddon Mallee, along with a range of other regional organisations working together to strengthen community resilience.

The plan outlines practical steps to improve co-ordination between services, strengthen information sharing and identify gaps in support for communities before and during disaster recovery.

It will also guide ongoing collaboration between organisations across the region and support joint advocacy for the policy and funding changes needed to strengthen regional resilience as climate risks increase.

Stock said the partnership would now move from planning to implementation. "This is not a document that sits on a shelf. It's a practical, interactive guide for how organisations across the region can work together to better support communities before, during and after disasters."

**About ARC Justice**

ARC Justice is a rights-based, for-purpose organisation incorporating the Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre and Housing Justice, a specialist renter support program based in Bendigo, and the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre based in Shepparton. ARC provides legal and tenancy support services across 13 local government areas in central and northern Victoria, with a team of close to 70 staff working to advocate for and uphold the rights of rural and regional Victorians.

About the Campaspe Regional Advisory Group

The Campaspe Regional Advisory Group was established to guide the implementation of the Campaspe Climate Partnership project. It brings together representatives from community services, community health, local government and state government organisations. Members include ARC Justice, Campaspe Shire Council, Anglicare Victoria, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Echuca Regional Health, the Centre for Just Places at Jesuit Social Services, the Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit, the Regional Association of Neighbourhood and Community Houses and Women's Health Loddon Mallee.

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