

Our strategic plan

2023 – 2027

30 April 2023

Introduction

The Royal Society of Victoria is at an inflexion point as we transition from a society that celebrates the role of science in our state, into an active group of individuals, organisations and like-minded societal groups who seek to help Victoria and Australia tackle the major issues of our time through science and technology.

This strategic plan sets out our key agendas and plans that will help us live up to our purpose - *To elevate Victoria's scientific leadership capability to purposefully contribute to the positive transformation of our global civilisation in the 21st century.*

The **strategic settings for 2023-27 require endorsement by the RSV's council**, while the initiatives under each strategic action are expected to evolve over the five years.

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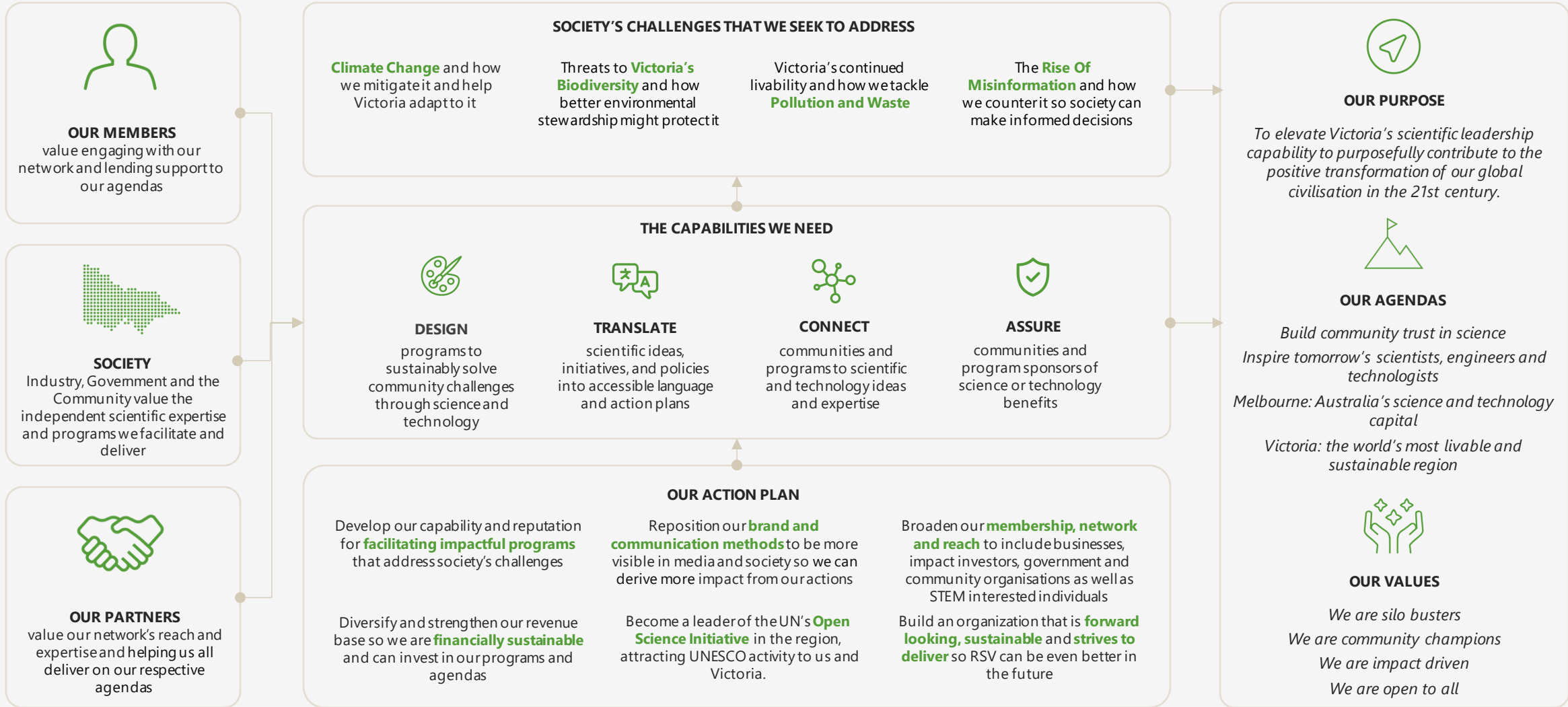


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Our strategic plan – 2023 to 2027



Our strategic settings: purpose



To elevate Victoria's scientific leadership capability to purposefully contribute to the positive transformation of our global civilisation in the 21st century.

Rationale

In our prosperous corner of the world, it has become clear that local problems are increasingly global problems; the regional impacts of rapid changes to the planet's climate system, the incursion of public health threats from global pandemic, and the associated geopolitical destabilisation.

Simultaneously, we have regional stewardship issues that are unique to Victoria; in particular, countering the troubling progression towards mass species extinction and the loss of the unique biodiversity that ultimately sustains human life and civilisation.

These manifold shocks and stresses threaten the resilience of our society, affecting local supply chains and our capacity to deliver goods and services, along with the cultural fabric that connects us to the land, waters and each other as Victorians.

As Australians, privileged by the circumstances of our location, economic status and cultural legacies, we are ethically obliged by this privilege to act for collective benefit. With these grand challenges laid bare before us, it is more important than ever that we are not made ineffectual by skirmishes at the borders of conflicting ideologies, misaligned scholarly and commercial agendas, nor disregard for the health of our biosphere and cultural needs of our diverse communities.

Aligned Actions

We must:

- Identify and align diverse ideas, disciplinary practices and knowledge systems
- Establish common ground and clarity in scientific vision
- Generate sustainable actions towards a prosperous future
- Connect regional community values and needs to global initiatives, frameworks and challenges
- Develop and harness the voices of our current and emerging scientific talent
- Translate the best thinking into the most effective actions.

Our strategic settings: values



We are Silo Busters:

- We break down sectoral, institutional and disciplinary barriers between scientists and other holders of important expertise
- We foster interdisciplinary teams, conversations and outputs
- We convene the best people to tackle each issue, independent of institutional or corporate affiliations
- We use evidence and analysis to create dialogues, partnerships and collaborations between otherwise disparate groups, such as communities, industries and governments

We are Community Champions

- We work with government to reinforce the importance of engaging with community, and how to do it well
- We partner with grass roots, community organisations to activate local initiatives that articulate purposefully to larger scale frameworks, plans and policies
- We promote the value of citizen science and deliver programs that raise competency, literacy and agency in the scientific process
- We maintain situational awareness of community concerns and aspirations relevant to our purpose, and broker purposeful, nuanced responses from public service and ministerial portfolios to these

We are Impact Driven

- We champion the development of methodologies to solve problems – directing robust ideas into considered actions
- We amplify the voice of experts, their evidence base and reasoning on matters of importance to Victorian society to promote the adoption of sound research into government policies, industry practices, professional frameworks and community initiatives
- We sustain our representation of, relevance to and reach within the science community to effectively connect government, industry and community partners with effective, contemporary expertise
- We align measurement of our efforts with global frameworks such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals
- We build evidence of our contemporary capacity to secure outcomes

We are Open to All

- We promote and embrace diversity in our membership, partnerships and collaborations
- We ensure our expertise is accessible, and our attitude is non-elitist
- We accept everyone who is passionate about science and its application for a brighter collective future
- We guard our independence to ensure we can maintain these values and sustain trust in our actions and initiatives

Our strategic settings: agendas



Our agendas are enduring objectives that help us fulfil our purpose.

They outlast any program, initiative or strategic planning cycle.

These agendas reflect the long term objectives and activities that the Society has had over the decades.

They are likely to remain important into the future and are relevant in the context of a scientific society based in Victoria.

Victoria: the world's most liveable and sustainable region

Melbourne: Australia's science and technology capital



Building community trust in science

Inspire tomorrow's scientists, engineers and technologists

Society's current challenges that we seek to solve

Our members are passionate about many of the challenges we face as a society today, including the triple planetary crisis identified by the UN (Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution/waste). We will be focusing our energies on these to help society solve its major challenges through our programs, events and publications.



Climate Change: how we mitigate it and help Victoria adapt to it

Our programs frequently address this issue, examining causation, effects and potential solutions. In 2022 for example, we adopted the Position paper of the Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society as the Society's Official Position on climate change



The **Rise Of Misinformation** and how we counter it so society can make informed decisions

For example, with the motto "Science is for everyone", Inspiring Victoria brings science to the community, helping to build understanding as well as confidence in scientific expertise



Threats to **Victoria's Biodiversity** and how better environmental stewardship might protect it

We bring together research expertise, First Nations knowledge holders, policy leaders, catchment management authorities, finance sector leadership and community champions to deliver a call to action with proposed solutions



Victoria's continued livability and how we tackle **Pollution and Waste**. The UNFCC/IPCC now identifies pollution and waste as the third major crisis facing humanity, and we need to help Victorian's find local solutions

For example, in May 2023, Science Victoria will dedicate an edition to exploring the topic.

The capabilities we need



DESIGN

programs to sustainably solve community challenges through science and technology

Inspiring Victoria has demonstrated our ability to design and facilitate programs that have impact, build momentum over a sustained period and can attract investment from government.

We aim to build a portfolio of long term programs that industry, philanthropic organisations and government can invest in. A portfolio will enable us to invest in the people resources needed to design and run them.



TRANSLATE

scientific ideas, initiatives, and policies into accessible language and action plans

We have positioned ourselves as an independent voice among the scientific community and have some influential audiences. Our network of members are able to provide important scientific insight on key issues for society.

However, if we are to have broader impact and bring science into public debate, we need to be able to build our members skills in communicating in accessible language and through non-technical channels.



CONNECT

communities and programs to scientific and technology ideas and expertise

Our network of members and partners along with our Science Victoria audience is our most valuable asset. Their insight and expertise is needed across society to solve the challenges that it faces. Furthermore, our members have told us they have joined to make connections and put their expertise to good use.

While we regularly facilitate those connections today, it can be manually time consuming. We need to be able to connect more people more often but with less administration.



ASSURE

communities and program sponsors of science or technology benefits

With industry and government investing heavily in ESG (Environmental and Sustainability Governance) programs there is a risk it is not always been done with the best scientific guidance.

As this investment is getting to a scale to have meaningful impact to our purpose, there is an opportunity to help and as a by-product, secure revenue to help our own sustainability. But we need to find the best mechanisms to do this with the resources that we have.

Our initiative plan: 2023

Strategic Action	Initiatives	Progress to date
Develop our capability and reputation for facilitating impactful programs that attract sustained investment so we can have greater impact	Inspiring Victoria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure base funding to continue for next five years and enable employment of one or more program managers Create extensions that would be attractive for philanthropic investors to fund 	Inspiring Victoria has secured funding from Commonwealth and state governments for 2023
	Programs that drive action on Ecologically Sustainable Development / Biodiversity / Climate Change / Science Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify programs that will have an impact and are attractive to govt, industry or philanthropy Secure interest, funding and deliver leveraging similar infrastructure to IV where possible 	[Great Forest National Park establishment program] [Investigation of options for RSV site signage to promote scientific news and insight] [Investigation of being part of a City science walking tour connecting with Melb Museum]
	Auspicing of grants/programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend our brand's impact by helping other organisations with fewer resources attract funding and promote their outcomes 	Australian Science and Engineering Fair – helping Australian students participate in US fair
	Natural Capital Finance working group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSV as a facilitator of conversation between government, finance community, infrastructure owners and scientific expertise to develop framework and mechanisms for funding infrastructure that builds rather than erodes our Natural Capital 	[Natural Capital Finance working group ...]
	Explore how RSV and its network can play a role in ensuring corporate ESG initiatives are backed by scientific evidence	

Our initiative plan: 2023

Strategic Action	Initiatives	Progress to date
<p>Diversify and strengthen our revenue base so we are financially sustainable and can invest in our programs and agendas</p>	<p>Reconfigure how the RSV's property assets are used so that we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable greater use and exposure by Victorians • create large and sustainable sources of income • more effectively promote science to more of our society 	<p>Study and proposal by Adams Urban to lease most of the site for hospitality in return for capital works and enabling several science promotion related property projects</p>
	<p>Target an annual surplus of 15% of revenue so that the society has the capacity to grow and manage through sudden funding shocks</p>	
	<p>Invest in Science Victoria to expand its reach and impact by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing it into a multi-channel publication, inc. mobile friendly web content • building a large audience that can attract commercial and philanthropic investment <p>Goal: increase Science Victoria subscription from 4000 to 20000+</p>	<p>Redesign of Science Victoria's magazine format</p> <p>Investment in quality content and associated events that align to monthly themes</p> <p>Trial of printed distribution to Victoria's science institutions</p> <p>Brand, Communications and Digital Asset strategy under development</p>
	<p>Secure funding for RSV's initiatives and programs from philanthropic trusts (PTs) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships with large PTs whose investment missions are aligned to our agendas (e.g. Ian Potter, [.....]) • Developing a 'big idea' that PTs can strategically buy into, and then co-design initiatives that they want to invest in 	<p>Discussion held with LMCF,</p> <p>Draft big idea – 'Help Victorians discover for themselves how science and technology has shaped their community to date, and can tackle our biggest challenges today and tomorrow'</p>

Our initiative plan: 2023

Strategic Action	Initiatives	Progress to date
Reposition our brand and communication methods to be more visible in media and society so we can derive more impact from our actions	Invest in <i>Science Victoria</i> to expand its reach and impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Science Victoria</i> (or new brand) becomes the way we talk about science (rather than RSV activity) to the STEM engaged community in Australia/NZ beyond just our members • Align our digital channels that talk to the community about science (rather than RSV activity) around <i>Science Victoria</i> brand • Language, tone, voice and assumed knowledge aimed at a high school student with interest in STEM 	Brand, Communications and Digital Asset strategy under development
	Evolve RSV's Position Papers into timely points of view on important issues that are simply communicated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics have impact across Victorian community, are worthy of a science based position and would be of interest to the general media • Language, tone, voice and assumed knowledge aimed at a high school student with interest in STEM 	Position paper strategy and target topics agreed by Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will it take to recover Victoria's biodiversity? • Does Victoria need a Biodiversity Council? • What is a liveable city in the context of ecologically sustainable development? • How large should Victoria's population go? • Should we establish a National Park in Victoria's central ranges? • Does Carbon Capture & Storage work? • How do we protect ourselves from bushfire smoke inhalation? • Should we use containment or eradication on destructive or invasive species?
	Use our city centre location to be more visible and have a stronger identity with Victorians, for example: Light up building or install lawn sculptures with science related / inspired art	Gobo lighting trial being arranged Exploring M Pavillion Lightcatcher Exploring Tram and Bus Stop renaming to RSV

Our initiative plan: 2023

Strategic Action

Become a leader of the UN's **Open Science Initiative** in the region, attracting a UNESCO focus on our global region and raising the profile of Melbourne, Victoria and Australia with the global community.

Initiatives

The RSV site is to become a physical & logistical hub of a Melbourne-based Global Centre facilitating UNESCO objectives in education, science and culture

- assisting communities, governments and industries to effect transformations from the grassroots up, starting with local people understanding their regional context in the global system (climatic, economic, environmental)
- deliver quantifiable knowledge exchange, research translation, economic prosperity, public health and cultural change programs, enabling Australian communities to take regional steps towards global goals in the interests of local prosperity

As the locus of the proposed UNESCO Centre, RSV will

- Develop, convene and maintain partnerships with other agencies to support Australian expertise within a global network
- convene a mix of leading local and international scientists, social scientists, industry proponents, policy champions and effective community leaders
- align its programmatic aims with the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- aggregate and facilitate the range of UNESCO functions and programs operating in Australia and the Oceania region

Progress to date

RSV already sits as an independent convener of the best Victorian science, and can become the interface to the global world of research and best practice that the UNESCO Centre will attract through establishing supportive, mutually-beneficial partnerships.

Our initiative plan: 2023

Strategic Action	Initiatives	Progress to date
Broaden our membership, network and reach to include businesses, impact investors, government and community organisations as well as STEM-engaged individuals	Expand the number and diversity of RSV Fellows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become more representative of Australia’s multi-cultural and Indigenous society • Improve reach into organisations and networks beyond the main universities 	Appointment of new Fellows in 2022 from a more diverse set of professional backgrounds to contribute to work on Biodiversity Conservation & Recovery
	Create a strong, vibrant membership base from organisations aligned with science and technology by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • growing the number of organisational members • linking RSV with businesses that have the latest practical solutions and technologies to society’s challenges • promoting RSV as a location and focal point for science and technology businesses to interact with academic network and meet and recruit STEM students Goal: more organisational members than individual members	Launched organisational memberships (~15 members in April 23) Plan to have monthly event centred around <i>Science Victoria’s</i> monthly theme where org members and contributors have ‘stands’ or mini presentations
	Become an essential node of STEM advocacy in the state and region by having all related organisations as affiliate members	Launched affiliate memberships
	Develop relationships with major philanthropic trusts whose investment remit aligns to our agendas and purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a ‘big idea’ that moves our agendas and that trusts can get behind and invest in 	Exploring new Council member with philanthropic connections/background; Discussions with LMCT Developing a ‘big idea’ narrative around ‘Helping Victorians discover for themselves how science and technology has shaped their community to date, and can tackle our biggest challenges today and tomorrow’

Our initiative plan: 2023

Strategic Action	Initiatives	Progress to date
Build an organization that is forward looking, sustainable and strives to deliver so RSV can be even better in the future	Resourcing plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build critical mass of programs and funding to enable program managers to be employed on a long-term basis • Utilise Council Members better by assigning specific actions to them for progressing strategic initiatives • Build a diverse council with the skills between them to advise and deliver the future RSV, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial management • Business management • Philanthropy relationships • Government relationships • Science and technology industry relationships • Academic relationships 	
	Governance and Succession plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adaptable & resilient structure enabling the Society to function & move forward without dependence on any one individual • Succession plan for leadership and Council 	Appointment of a Nominations Committee looking at Council, fellows and exec succession
	Build a forward looking, open to all culture by critically reassessing the society's symbols <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artefacts and room names within RSV Hall • The society's tagline "promoting science since 1854" 	Planned Victorian science timeline in RSV Hall corridor: aboriginal science through to 'how might we in the future' calling out prominent female and first nation contributions New draft tagline proposed "Shaping a better future through science and technology"