

13 QUARTERLY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

FILE REFERENCE INT1961224

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RECOMMENDATION

That this report be noted by Council.

Attachments

Nil.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of some key projects, services and actions delivering environmental benefits across the work of Council. Projects have been categorised according to the *Sustainable Environment Policy (SEP) 2018–28* themes of:

- Biodiversity
- Climate change
- Water
- Waste and resource recovery

The SEP is the roadmap for the future direction of Council's environmental and sustainability strategies, plans and activities.

A similar report will be presented each quarter highlighting new programs or projects that have achieved significant milestones.

BACKGROUND

There are a broad range of projects, services and actions delivering environmental benefits throughout the organisation. While many of these occur within or are led by the Assets and Services Division, the vast majority of the organisation is involved in environmental sustainability to some degree. Below is a highlight of some of the key projects currently being undertaken.

All actions fall within the Council Plan 2019–20 under the key performance area of Environment 'we will continue to plan and manage the natural and built environment for present and future generations'.

Biodiversity

Council Plan action – Protect and improve biodiversity by increasing the area of natural ecosystems across the Shire.

Council Plan action – Preserve and improve our bushland and natural environment by implementing weed management strategy and programs and continuing activities on high conservation bushland reserves and roadsides.

Schools and kindergarten education program

Description	Biodiversity education program delivered by experienced educators for primary school students and kindergartens.
Funding	Council fully funds this project
Update	<p>The program has been well received and in high demand this year.</p> <p>The primary school program provides a two-hour session designed for grade 5/6 students. The session starts with a short classroom meeting to discuss the basic concepts of biodiversity and the importance of our local habitat. The students then undertake a biodiversity audit of their school ground, giving scores to good habitat for wildlife. The students discuss their findings and design/create ways they can improve the habitat value within the school grounds. Wonderful ideas that they have developed include installing nest boxes, bee hotels and indigenous planting.</p> <p>The kinder program has been highly popular since it was introduced in 2017. The program involves an incursion from a licenced wildlife handler who bring along animals that are likely to be found in the shire including a ringtail possum, blue-tongue lizard, bat, sugar glider and a frog. They discuss what the animals eat, where they live, what can be harmful to the animal and what they can do to protect them. The sessions are engaging and interactive. The second component includes a tree planting and art activity. The children learn about the different type of plants (tree, shrub, grass) and the teacher receives information about the plants, how to look after them and their importance to wildlife.</p>

Bob James - Emerald Quarry Reserve planting day

Description	Revegetation of the former Emerald Quarry
Funding	Council fully funds this project
Update	<p>In collaboration with Johns Hill Landcare, Council organised a community planting on Sunday 19 May. Over 28 community participants joined in to plant 750 indigenous plants.</p> <p>Council and the community have waited five years for suitable sterile soil to be donated to the project, which presented a significant cost saving to Council. The community have been highly appreciative of Council's tenacity and project management skills to infill the quarry and organise the follow up community planting.</p>

Biolinks plan

Description	Council has partnered with Bass Coast Shire Council to deliver a Biolink Project. This project seeks to create environmental corridors to enable flora and fauna to move through the landscape which will ensure long term viability of our native species. This work will also improve water quality across Western Port and Port Phillip catchments and improve the
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	<p>Western Port Ramsar listed wetland.</p> <p>The first stage will be the development of a Biolink plan that will map critical biolinks throughout the shire and find a consistent approach to biolinks where they cross local government boundaries.</p>
Funding	<p>The Victorian Government provided \$100,000 funding support to the Bass Coast & Cardinia Biolinks project, through the State Government's Integrated Water Management Program. This funding was based on the recommendations provided by the Western Port Integrated Water Management Forum.</p> <p>The funding was equally shared between Cardinia Shire Council and Bass Coast Shire Council with each Council providing matching funding.</p>
Update	<p>An environmental consultant has been engaged to draft the Cardinia Shire Biolink Plan.</p> <p>An inception meeting is scheduled for late July. The first task is to identify key fauna species to be surveyed and to plan for future community workshops.</p>

Caring for our local Environment (COLE) external community grant

Description	Community capacity building programs that will include a series of workshops and a weed education program.
Funding	This project is funded by DELWP (\$62,000)
Update	<p>Council has been successful in a grant application to run environmental community capacity building programs. These programs will educate and empower local environmental friends groups and other community members. Workshop topics include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborating and empowering the friends groups in the development of individual long term strategic plans including group recruitment plans • education in the use of online mapping for property planning, utilisation of citizen science programs • snake awareness and safety <p>The weed education program will be based in Cockatoo, Emerald, and Gembrook area. It will use a skilled facilitator to engage with landowners to create neighbourhood weed action groups to help tackle problematic weeds in the hills area.</p>

Eastern Regional Pest Animal Network

Description	The Eastern Regional Pest Animal Network is a partnership of eight Council's that work together to develop programs and strategies to deal with pest animals across the network region.
Funding	This project is jointly funded by the eight councils in the network, Cardinia Shire's contribution is \$10,000

Update	The network has recently engaged a consultant to develop a Regional Pest Animal Strategy as a framework to be used by councils in the eastern region. The strategy will help plan pest animal partnership projects using best practise techniques. Knox City Council is administering this project on behalf of the network.
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Climate change

Council Plan action - Adapt to the impacts of climate change by working in partnership with the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA) and both Victorian and Australian Governments

Council Plan action – Reduce Council's energy consumption and help the community to do likewise.

Civic Centre NABERS rating

Description	NABERS is the National Australian Built Environment Rating System, which measures a building's operational efficiency against the market. To arrive at a whole building energy rating, buildings are assessed on energy consumption, building occupancy and building area.
Funding	Council funds this initiative
Update	<p>Council officers have been working hard with an accredited NABERS assessor to have the Officer civic centre rated and we are excited to announce that we have received a 4-star NABERS energy rating.</p> <p>The rating was based on the 2018 calendar year. Reductions in energy consumption over recent years have contributed to this rating. Under the NABERS criteria, the achieved level of energy efficiency is classified as “good” and provides a benchmark for future actions. Council will be continuing to improve upon this rating over the coming years to further reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.</p>

Fleet vehicle offsets

Description	Initiatives that aim to offset the carbon emissions from Council's fleet of vehicles
Funding	Council funds this initiative
Update	<p>Council has offset 500 tonnes of fleet related carbon emissions. This includes purchasing offsets from The Yarra Yarra Biodiversity Corridor project in Western Australia, a gold standard Australian Native Reforestation initiative.</p> <p>The project plants native trees and shrubs, to join small patches of remnant vegetation in 1 of only 35 globally recognised biodiversity 'hotspots'. Besides removing carbon from the atmosphere, the trees and shrubs help to reduce salinity, water and soil erosion, and provide habitat for the endangered Carnaby's black-cockatoo, malleefowl and other threatened flora and fauna. A 100-year carbon rights and carbon covenant protect the plantings.</p>

	Carbon offsets are a suitable solution to offsetting unavoidable carbon dioxide emissions and these offsets support other Council initiatives to reduce organisational emissions.
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Community Climate Change Adaptation (3CA) grants program

Description	The 3CA program offers small grants to build resilience to climate change impacts through community-driven adaptation activities that address identified gaps and priorities in Victoria’s regions.
Funding	A funding application is currently with the Victorian Government’s Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning for this project
Update	<p>Council has collaborated with Federation University and South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA) in submitting an application for a 3CA grants. The funding application is for \$75,000 to conduct the baseline performance study of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) assets in the shire.</p> <p>The funding will be used to develop an understanding of the operational performance of WSUD assets and the functional role these features play in supporting the resilience of human settlement and urban aquatic ecosystems in a changing climate.</p> <p>The assessment and monitoring of WSUD assets, will inform the strategic management and enhancement of these assets to support the resilience of climate vulnerable ecosystems and urban settlements in Cardinia Shire.</p>

Water

Council Plan action – Manage water in an integrated way, including the reduction of potable water consumption by Council and households.

Council plan action - Promote water catchment management practices that improve the quality of our waterways

Gembrook Park sediment/detention basin

Description	<p>Design and construct a sediment/detention basin and associated drainage works within Gembrook Park.</p> <p>Gembrook Park is a beautiful bushland reserve south of Gembrook. Stormwater from approximately 6ha of the town is directed into the north-eastern area of the park. The terrain through the park is very steep and soil is highly erosive. This has set up a pattern of stormwater importing loose gravel to the park and depositing / blocking drainage adjacent to roadways, which causes flooding. There is also extensive, local erosion of road-side table drains. This narrows road access and will de-stabilise mature trees in the future.</p> <p>Further downstream, the change in water regime has modified the vegetation (and therefore habitat) through the reserve. The gully</p>
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	previously supported indigenous vegetation and is now covered in weeds. The increased frequency of flows has destabilised mature vegetation within the park and caused large trees to fall.
Funding	Council (\$70,000) and Melbourne Water (\$70,000) jointly fund this project
Update	Council has been successful in receiving a grant from Melbourne Water's Living Rivers program to design and construct a sediment/detention basin and associated drainage works within Gembrook Park. Functional design was completed in 2018 and quotes are currently being sought for construction design. Construction is scheduled during the summer months.

Waste and resource recovery

Council Plan action – promote practices that result in the reduction per household of the amount of waste going to landfill, particularly food waste.

Green waste drop off results

Description	Provision of green waste drop off events form part of the waste and resource recovery strategy action to implement a suite of options that provide alternatives to burning off. It helps to reduce risk from bushfire within the shire and provide alternatives to burning off for our community.
Funding	Council funds this initiative
Update	<p>Two free green waste drop-off events were held in May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 17 May to Monday 20 May, at Pakenham Cleanaway Resource Recovery Centre • Friday 24 May to Monday 27 May, at Lysterfield Cleanaway Resource Recovery Centre. <p>These events were held in response to requests for a drop-off to be held every six months to assist residents to maintain a low fuel load on properties. 69.1 tonnes of green waste was collected at the Pakenham event, and 16.8 tonnes at Lysterfield. Overall 256 residents attended, with 420 drop-offs. The next service will be offered in November 2019.</p>

E-waste ban from landfill

Description	The definition of e-waste is any item with a cord, battery or lead at the end of its life. From 1 July all e-waste will be banned from landfill in Victoria. The ban is a Victorian Government response to the growing issue of hazardous e-waste and results in residents being unable to dispose of these items in any kerbside bin.
Funding	Sustainability Victoria has provided \$10,000 grant to assist Council to educate residents. Council is further supporting this through a provision in the garbage charge.
Update	To educate residents on the definition of e-waste and ban from landfill,

	<p>officers have included e-waste information in the 2019 waste guide and hard and bundled green waste flyers. We have developed a new e-waste webpage which includes a local directory of drop-off locations for items.</p> <p>With the support of the Sustainability Victoria grant, four recycling stations have been ordered to collect small e-waste, mobile phones, batteries and x-rays which will be installed in community spaces in July. They will be installed at Pakenham library, Emerald library, the Civic Centre and Koo Wee Rup Regional Hospital Eco-house.</p>
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Detox and drumMuster results

Description	Detox Your Home is a Sustainability Victoria program supported by Council held annually. drumMUSTER program is a product stewardship scheme of agriculture and veterinary chemical producers supported by Council held biannually. Both programs are held within the shire and are free for the community to use.
Funding	Detox Your Home is funded by Sustainability Victoria including staffing. drumMUSTER is supported by Council through the provision of staff and recycling collection.
Update	Detox Your Home and drumMUSTER were held concurrently on Saturday 27 April. Detox Your Home collected 2.9 tonnes of hazardous chemicals from 162 householders. This was a 38 per cent increase on attendance from last year. drumMUSTER collected 140 drums from six attendees, twice that of last collection.

Compost workshops

Description	The beginner compost workshops aim to increase the confidence of residents in using compost or worm farms, and promote the compost rebate program.
Funding	Council funds this initiative
Update	<p>To support the community to reduce waste and divert food from landfill, Council held three free compost workshops between January and May. These were supported by Casey Cardinia Libraries, Koo Wee Rup Eco-House and used a presenter from Living Learning Pakenham.</p> <p>The workshops were popular with two of the three events booked out and all receiving positive feedback. 87 per cent of participants who completed a feedback survey reported that they would definitely start a compost or a worm farm at home, and 75 per cent strongly agreed that their knowledge on compost and worm farms had increased. Many participants requested additional workshops in the future.</p>

Autumn hard waste service

Description	Blanket service for autumn hard waste was completed in May
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Funding	This service is funded through the residential garbage charge
Update	<p>The autumn hard waste collection across the shire took place over five weeks, with 2,175 tonnes of material collected from 38,805 tenements across the shire. The total amount of material collected was down 16 per cent on last years' service however recycling was up 1%.</p> <p>The customer service for the hard waste collection was excellent with the number of CRMs recorded totalling half of the amount of previous years and the response rate to those recorded was efficient and complete.</p> <p>There are two more blanket services planned for Oct-Nov 2019 and April-May 2020 before we move to a bookable service.</p>

Projects planned for 2019–20

- Opening of Deep Creek Ecocentre and indigenous nursery
- Implementation of Weed Management Strategy 2019
 - Peri Urban Weed Partnerships Project 2016–20 working across tenures to reduce effects of high threat weeds along Cardinia Creek Corridor
 - Emerald Lake Park Vegetation Management Project 2019–20 weed control
 - Pepis' land wetlands restoration project 2015–20 weed control and revegetation works
- Implementation of Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019
 - Participation in the Eastern Region Pest Animal Network, including development of Regional Pest Animal Strategy
 - Development of Cardinia Biolinks Plan including collaborative workshops with the community
 - Implement Caring for our Local Environment (COLE) DELWP community grant to Friends groups and the community
- Implementation of the Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy including:
 - installation of e-waste recycling stations in community places
 - planning for a kerbside food waste diversion service and behaviour change program
- Implementation of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) including:
 - Identifying opportunities for environmental improvements along key waterways (incorporated in the development of the Biolinks Plan)
 - Undertake an assessment of water sensitive urban design assets to enable accurate forecasting for maintenance budgets
 - Bring together key internal WUSD stakeholders and initiate steering committee meetings
 - Construct Gembrook Park sediment basin
 - Participate in the Integrated Water Management Forums for Westernport catchment including implementation of key regional projects
- Implementation of the Aspirational Energy Transition Plan (AETP) including:
 - Solar electricity system on the new Depot building, Hollins and Lakeside Children Centres
 - Purchase of fleet carbon offsets
 - Continuation of community engagement programs i.e New Home Energy Advisory Service, Sustainable Living Workshops (Cardinia Casey Libraries), household energy efficiency handbook (Fed Uni).
 - Energy efficiency lighting upgrades Solar PV install at Lakeside Children's Centre
 - Continued involvement in carbon mitigation and adaptation projects delivered by the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA)
 - Business efficiency program- Environmental Upgrade Agreements
- Coordination of grants:
 - Annual Weed control grants to reduce weeds on private and public land

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- Annual Heritage grants to conserve places protected under the heritage overlay
 - Biodiversity Incentive grants on private land
 - Distribute annual friends group support grant
 - Trust For Nature rate reimbursement scheme
 - Continued community collaboration and awareness programs:
 - 2019 National Tree Day at Pepis land.
 - Annual trees for weeds swap day
 - Gardens for wildlife program
 - Schools and kinders biodiversity education program
 - Indian Myna trapping program (sale of traps)
 - Schools and kindergarten waste education program

Community waste education program