

14 ENVIRONMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

FILE REFERENCE INT207819

RESPONSIBLE GENERAL MANAGER Peter Benazic

AUTHOR Desiree Lovell; Jacqui Kelly

RECOMMENDATION

That this report be noted.

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..

Helmeted honey eater investigation

Description	In March 2019, Council engaged Ecology Australia to assess and report on the suitability of habitat at four sites along the Cardinia Creek corridor to support the release of captive bred Helmeted Honeyeater. The potential release sites (Beaconsfield Flora and Fauna Reserve, Guys Hill Reserve, Cardinia Creek Parklands and Brennan Reserve) were initially assessed against seven criteria which related to current habitat quality, land tenure and planning zones, landscape context and security, and potential constraints to Helmeted Honeyeater management.
Funding	This project is jointly funded by Zoos Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).
Update	A draft report was submitted early October 2019 to the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Team for review and comment. The findings of the report revealed that all but one site (Guys Hill reserve) had potentially significant flaws relating to one or more of the seven criteria. Based on this, Guys Hill Reserve has been deemed the preferred future release site. The report is expected to be finalised early 2020, with management recommendations for Guys Hill Reserve and a timeline for potential release of the birds.

Community COLE grant – Cardinia Hills Ragwort Action project

Description	<p>This project is focused in the areas of Cockatoo, Gembrook, Mt Burnett and surrounds and will run from December 2019 to April 2020.</p> <p>It will focus on supporting landowners in the Cardinia Shire hills area to control weeds through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing workshops • assisting the formation of neighbourhood weed action groups, and • providing information and financial support for weed treatment. <p>The project will also aim to re-establish a Landcare Group, which will play a role in providing ongoing land management support after the completion of the project.</p>
Funding	This project is fully funded by the Victorian Government (\$31,000)
Update	A facilitator was recruited in November 2019 and has commenced the community engagement activities for this project, including an introductory letter to targeted landowners, with additional educational material on Ragwort and Blackberry control.

Community COLE grant – strategic planning and training for bushland reserve Friends groups

Description	Community members actively participating in the environment is part of DELWP's 2037 strategic plan. Council has received funding from DELWP to support our environmental community groups with actions such as long term strategic planning, recruitment planning and education in
-------------	--

	citizen science projects.
Funding	This project is fully funded by the Victorian Government (\$31,000)
Update	A project brief has been prepared and a facilitator is currently being engaged to deliver workshops to each of the nine bushland friends group. A project brief to deliver educational workshops in the use of citizen science programs via computer and smart phones is also being prepared.

School spectacular at Deep Creek Reserve

Description	Ecolinc, together with the Cardinia Environment Coalition and Council, launched the environmental schools excursions at Deep Creek Reserve with a schools spectacular event on the 22 November 2019.
Funding	This event was fully funded by Ecolinc.
Update	<p>Ecolinc is one of the Victorian Government's six science and math specialist centres that specialise in environmental science. They provide STEM based environmental excursions to school children. Ecolinc excursions and a bus trip are free to all Government schools identified as rural and metro-disadvantaged.</p> <p>On Friday 22 November, approximately 80 students from 11 local primary schools visited the reserve to take part in the very first Ecolinc school demonstration day. Grades 4 and 5 students participated in 5 workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macro Bugs in the Lab Room • Plant propagation in the Nursery • Animals up close in the Function Space • Worm Farms and Food Waste in the Compost Corner • Water Quality in the Wetland <p>In the first week of December 2019, students from Lang Lang, Bayles and Pakenham Springs Primary Schools attended the first official workshop 'Fascinating frogs'. It is a super popular program and the number one booked out program for next year. Schools are now able to book in for the 2020 programs.</p>

Emerald Star Bush Community Partnership Project

Description	The Emerald Star Bush Community Partnership Project aims to conserve the Emerald Star Bush through on ground environmental works and public awareness raising programs.
Funding	Council is one of the partners of this project
Update	Following on from the community tree planting at Emerald Quarry Reserve in May 2019 to help protect the Emerald Star Bush, the community partnership project held a market stall in Emerald to raise awareness of the Star Bush. Site visits with a Council staff and

	community members to 20 private properties in the Aura Vale Road region revealed one new population of Star Bush which has been mapped.
--	---

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.

New solar at Hollins Children's Centre

Description	Installation of 40kW rooftop solar energy system at Hollins Children Centre
Funding	This project is fully funded by Council
Update	<p>A solar installer has been engaged to mount a 40kW rooftop solar energy system at Hollins Children Centre. The system will comprise of 128 solar electricity panels and support savings of approximately \$8,000 in energy costs per annum. This provides a payback period on investment of approximately six years. The system will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 53 tonnes of CO₂e per annum, the same annual emissions as 13 average cars.</p> <p>This solar energy installation is part of Council's work to improve the efficiency and reduce the environmental impacts of its facilities, to achieve zero net emissions by 2024 as outlined in the Aspirational Energy Transition Plan.</p>

SECCCA climate energy workshop

Description	SECCCA Climate Emergency workshop hosted at the Civic Centre
Funding	The workshop was hosted by South East Council Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA)
Update	In partnership with Council, SECCCA hosted a climate emergency roundtable workshop at the Civic Centre in Officer. The purpose of the workshop was to provide SECCCA member Councils further information on the climate emergency as well as to share and compare experiences from those Councils that have declared. As a founding member of SECCCA, Cardinia Shire Council is well placed to strengthen its position upon declaring of a climate emergency in September and benefit from the regional adaptation and mitigation projects SECCCA delivers in the climate change space.

HERITAGE**Heritage information on Council's website**

Description	New and updated history and heritage information on Council's website
Funding	This project was fully funded by Council
Update	Council has recently updated its website to include more information about our local history and heritage. The website provides a range of excellent resources to help learn more about local history and heritage sites in Cardinia Shire. It includes a summary of the key periods in Cardinia Shire history, links to the Casey Cardinia Libraries local history section with access to historic rate and minute books, newspapers and family history. A link to the Victorian Heritage Database includes all properties in Cardinia Shire that are subject to heritage overlay, with their citations from our heritage studies. There are also links to local historical societies and museums and Council's annual heritage grant program.

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

Successful Living Rivers Grant Applications

Description	<p>Council’s three grant applications for Melbourne Water’s Living Rivers funding were all successful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extension of the current Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) officer role (0.6EFT) for an additional 3 years (June 2020-23) • construction management training session for WSUD to be held for the development and engineering groups (early 2020) • WSUD Asset Management Plan to understand lifecycle costs and required operational budgets for this growing asset class (early 2020)
Funding	These projects are jointly funded by Council and Melbourne Water’s Living Rivers fund
Update	Funding agreements are being finalised with projects to commence in early 2020

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.

Results of green waste drop off events

Description	Two free green waste drop-off events, held in Pakenham and Lysterfield, for four days each, where residents can dispose of green waste from their properties.
Funding	This initiative is fully funded by Council’s garbage charge.
Update	At the free green waste drop events, 93.54 tonnes of green waste was collected, which will be processed into soil improver. Many positive comments were received about these events including “great event for keeping our properties safe before fire season”, “excellent initiative, good fuel reduction strategy” and “great event pre-summer”.

Community waste education workshops

Description	Since July 2019, Council has taught three community workshops, a staff lunch and learn, two school engagement days with schools from across the shire and hosted a pop-up stall at Deep Creek Reserve opening. This is in addition to the school and kinder education program ran by our contractor, EnviroCom.
Funding	This initiative is fully funded by Council’s garbage charge
Update	Approximately 220 adults and children have been directly engaged in waste education workshops over the last six months. The workshops

	<p>have received fantastic feedback with requests for more workshops in the future.</p> <p>The workshops have enabled us to raise awareness about our new recycling processor, including no soft plastics in the recycling bin, waste rebates and future initiatives including food in the green waste bin (coming October 2020)</p>
--	--