

## 6.5 Activity Reports

### 6.5.1 Quarterly Environment Report

**File Reference:** Nil.  
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#### Recommendation(s)

That Council note the report.

#### 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.

### **Deep Creek Reserve interpretation plan**

Description	Deep Creek Reserve Interpretation Plan
Funding	This project was fully funded by Council
Update	<p>Consultants were engaged to create an interpretation plan for the Deep Creek Reserve. The aim is to activate the visitor experience and “to create pride of place through understanding, education and connection to natural systems to inspire solutions or sustainable living.”</p> <p>The plan was developed in consultation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council’s environment, waste, recreation, diversity, communications, and engineering teams</li> <li>• Deep Creek Golf Club and cafe, Cardinia Environment Coalition, and Ecolinc</li> <li>• Bunurong Land Council, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and Boon Wurrung Foundation</li> </ul> <p>Deep Creek Reserve abounds in environmental education opportunities as it was developed with Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles, all abilities nature-based playground, indigenous display gardens and nursery, wetlands, and is located at the historic convergence of three creeks that would have been significant to our traditional owner groups.</p> <p>The interpretation plan addresses elements that complement the features of the site and the education topics provided by Ecolinc, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Waste</li> <li>• Energy</li> </ul> <p>Initiatives in the interpretation plan will be implemented in the coming years as grants and other funding opportunities arise.</p>

### Online resources for our natural environment

Description	Training webinars, video resources and social media engagement for community education about the environment and weed control.
Funding	Funded by the Victorian Government through the Caring for Our Local Environment (COLE) program
Update	<p>To adhere to COVID-19 restrictions several community engagement activities under the COLE program were modified. While a weed control workshop and training sessions for environmental community groups were cancelled, other resources have been developed.</p> <p>Two short weed control and identification videos have been created, each focusing on a specific weed within the shire. Both these videos remain as an ongoing resource to promote weed identification and control to the community.</p> <p>As part of a future citizen science initiative, training webinars for using phone applications to record local biodiversity will be undertaken over the next few months for the environmental volunteer groups within the shire.</p>

### Environmental planning annual update

Description	Environmental planning referrals annual update
Funding	This is fully funded by Council
Update	<p>Environment Planners have provided 320 referral responses to planning applications in the 2019-20 financial year.</p> <p>Environment Planners provide advice to avoid and minimise the impacts of development to native vegetation and waterways protected through both state and local planning scheme controls, and threatened species that are protected under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act).</p> <p>Some of the larger projects that Environment Planners have responded to in the past year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motorsports facility</li> <li>• Puffing Billy Discovery Centre</li> <li>• AGL Crib Point to Pakenham gas pipeline</li> <li>• Healesville-Koo Wee Rup Road duplication</li> <li>• Pakenham East Rail Stabling Yards project completion</li> <li>• Subdivision in Bunyip with Southern Brown Bandicoot recorded</li> <li>• Multiple road safety and upgrade projects</li> </ul>

### ***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.

#### **Household energy efficiency resources**

Description	Household energy efficiency information available on Council's website
Funding	This project was fully funded by Council
Update	<p>Council's website has been updated with a household energy efficiency page. The information provided will support residents to increase their household energy efficiency, improve the internal comfort of their homes and save on utility related costs. The home energy efficiency page features a range of information and resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information to help residents understand their energy and gas bill</li> <li>• Tips to help find the right household energy plan</li> <li>• A guide to building, buying and renovating environmentally sustainable homes</li> <li>• A home energy improvement handbook developed for the Cardinia community in partnership with Federation University</li> </ul>

### ***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

#### **Pepis Land dam restoration project**

Description	Repair of leak in lower dam at Pepi's land, Emerald
Funding	This project is fully funded by Council
Update	<p>In August last year Council observed a leak coming from an irrigation pipe at the base of the lower dam at Pepi's land. A pump was put into place to lower the water level of the dam, this relieved the pressure on the pipe and stopped the leak in the short term. This allowed Council officers time to review the options available and assess the best way forward.</p> <p>Dam repair and revegetation is nearing completion. The repair of the dam has improved the structure, made it safer and allows for easier maintenance. This has ensured that the dam and local environment is protected for the community.</p>

	<p>Large trees on the downstream bank were removed as the roots create pathways for leaks, tree ferns were retained, and a layer of rock was bought in to protect the surface from natural erosion and wombat burrows. A new spillway was created as the previous spillway was inadequate for flows and lead to frequent overtopping of the wall, which eroded the downstream slope.</p> <p>The work balanced the needs of engineering and maintenance with the environmental sensitivity of the site. Native fish and turtles were translocated for the works, all wombat burrows in the vicinity were monitored for activity and one-way doors were installed to make sure they were empty prior to works. Remnant vegetation downstream of the wall was not disturbed.</p>
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### ***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.

#### **Virtual waste education program**

Description	Council provides education programs to residents through a variety of formats including online materials, talks, workshops, event stalls and school and kinder programs
Funding	This service is fully funded by the annual garbage charge
Update	<p>During the COVID-19 crisis, waste education was adapted to a virtual format. These engagements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A page on Connecting Cardinia created in collaboration with the Environment Team to provide resources and engagement with residents.</li> <li>• An activity pack for children, including a letter from a driver, colouring pages and worksheets. This was posted to all supported playgroup families and made available online and by post.</li> <li>• A video starring a well-known Cardinia Shire waste truck driver to be used on social media.</li> <li>• An instructional video for beeswax wraps, in partnership with Casey Cardinia Libraries.</li> <li>• Our first virtual workshop will be held Sunday 12 July in celebration of Plastic Free July, in partnership with Casey Cardinia Libraries.</li> </ul> <p>The online contents, particularly the activity sheets, have been well received by internal teams, peers at other councils and residents and are here to stay!</p>

#### **Hardwaste collection results**

Description	Biannual, shire-wide hard waste collections previously occurred over five weeks in April-May and October-November each year.
Funding	This service fully funded by the annual garbage charge

Update	<p>The final shire wide hard waste collection was successfully implemented from Monday 20 April to Friday 22 May. The contractor made modifications to this service to adhere to COVID-19 restrictions and ensure the service was not interrupted.</p> <p>Over the five weeks 3269.95 tonnes was collected, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 32.9 tonnes of e-waste,</li> <li>• 92.36 tonnes of green waste</li> <li>• 448.85 tonnes of scrap metal</li> </ul> <p>This can be compared to the April-May 2019 collection of 2,174.98 tonnes collected. The increase can be contributed to COVID-19 as residents have had additional time to clear houses and property, we offered assistance through additional green waste collection requests and had significantly less material collected by 'pickers' ahead of the contractor trucks, particularly scrap metal.</p> <p>Following this collection, Council have now moved to a bookable hard waste service from 1 July 2020. A comprehensive communication and behaviour change program, including monitoring of unbooked hard waste, is being rolled out over the coming months.</p>
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### Green waste drop-off service

Description	Free Green Waste drop-off days are held at two transfer stations in April-May and October-November each year. They allow residents the opportunity to drop-off garden material for free, helping to reduce reliance on burning off and reduce fuel loads on property. The green waste is transferred to composting facilities and becomes soil improver that is sold commercially.
Funding	This service fully funded by the annual garbage charge
Update	<p>The planned free green waste drop-off days were initially cancelled due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Prior to the first service, the Victorian Government provided updated information that waste transfer stations and their services should remain operational and would be considered a valid reason to leave home. As a result, both services went ahead with modifications. These modifications included a contact-less and socially distanced service, with reduced hours of operation.</p> <p>Residents were also offered the option of an additional three cubic meters of green waste collected as part of their hard waste service. This option was available to those not wishing to leave home, and those who were not aware that the service was continuing. 76 residents booked this service.</p> <p>The Pakenham service ran Friday 17 April, Saturday 18 April and Monday 20 April. 26.48 tonnes were collected from 144 vehicles. In May 2019, 69.17 tonnes were collected from 317 vehicles.</p> <p>The Lysterfield service ran Friday 1 May, Saturday 2 May (until 12pm), Sunday 3 May (until 12pm) and Monday 4 May. 42.12 tonnes was</p>

	collected from 179 resident drop-offs. In May 2019, 103 vehicles presented, with 16.8 tonnes collected.
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## Projects planned for 2020–21

### *Strategy delivery*

The projects listed below were scheduled to be delivered in 2020-21, before COVID-19 restrictions came into effect. Some projects require face to face interaction with the community and will be delivered in alternate ways to meet COVID-19 restrictions. Where this is not possible projects may need to be suspended until restrictions are lifted.

- 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.
  - Undertake weed mapping of selected bushland reserves and roadsides of high conservation significance
  - Cannibal Creek Catchment Biodiversity project – A multi-stakeholder project aiming to reduce the impact of weeds, deer and fox in remnant vegetation in the Cannibal Creek Catchment, south of Bunyip State Park, working across both private and public land.
  - Increase the number of available weed grants – The increased budget for this program allows a greater number of properties to access these grants. Grants are provided for activities such as weed disposal costs, equipment hire, herbicides, the purchase of tools and hiring of contractors.
- Implementation of Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019
  - Continue to participate in the Eastern Region Pest Animal Network, including development of Regional Pest Animal Strategy
  - Continued development and adoption of Cardinia Shire’s Biolinks Plan
  - Finalise the volunteer bushland reserve friends groups works plans
  - Recruit a full time Environment Education Officer (subject to COVID-19 restrictions on community outreach work)
  - Prepare guidelines for developers to encourage indigenous plantings
  - Develop and install interpretation signage at Mt Cannibal
- Implementation of the Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy
  - Implementation of a kerbside food waste diversion service and behaviour change program
  - Implementation of bookable hard waste collection
- Implementation of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP)
  - Undertake minor works at various Council facilities to improve water efficiency
  - Complete Gembrook Park erosion control works
  - Participate in the Integrated Water Management Forums for Westernport catchment including implementation of key regional projects
- Implementation of the Aspirational Energy Transition Plan
  - LED lighting upgrade at the civic centre and continued feasibility for a solar system
  - Purchase of fleet carbon offsets
  - Continuation of community engagement programs i.e. New Home Energy Advisory Service, Sustainable Living workshops
  - Continued involvement in carbon mitigation and adaptation projects delivered by the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA)
  - Begin development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan

### *Annual programs*

- Coordination of grants:
  - Annual Weed control grants to reduce weeds on private and public land



- 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:
  - Annual trees for weeds swap day
  - Gardens for wildlife program
  - Kinders biodiversity education program
  - Indian Myna trapping program (sale of traps)
  - Schools and kindergarten waste education program
  - Community waste education program