

6.5 Activity Reports

6.5.1 Environment Council Plan Initiatives Quarterly Report

Responsible GM: Peter Benazic
Author: Desiree Lovell and Jacqui Kelly

Recommendation(s)

That Council note this report.

Attachments

1. Environment Council Plan Initiatives Quarterly Report - January 2022 [6.5.1.1 - 6 pages]

Executive Summary

This quarterly report provides an update on projects, services and actions that are undertaken by Council to deliver on the Council Plan focus area number three: thriving environments and its associated initiatives.

Priority: We value our natural assets and support our biodiversity to thrive

We place a high value on our natural assets and biodiversity. We take action to help our natural assets and biodiversity thrive and build their resilience to climate change and natural hazards. We enhance green spaces and habitat links, support our communities to live sustainably, and champion sustainable development and waste management practices.

Initiatives

The initiatives 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.

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 Environment and Infrastructure Group, most of the organisation is involved in environmental sustainability to some degree.

Council Plan initiatives and how they link to the Sustainable Environment Policy themes:

- Biodiversity
 - Implement initiatives in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
- Climate change
 - Implement initiatives in the Aspirational Energy Transition Plan
- Water
 - Implement initiatives in the Integrated Water Management Plan
- Waste and resource recovery

- Implement the action plan for the Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy

This report also covers the Council Plan initiative *actively protect key heritage sites within the shire*.

Project Update

Projects and updates are included in the attached report.

Biodiversity

Council Plan initiative

- Implement initiatives in the *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy*

This section also includes updates on the implementation of the *Weed Management Strategy*

Deep Creek Reserve – environmental education booked out!

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Description | Ecolinc is a Victorian Government science excellence centre who provide environmental science excursions at Deep Creek Reserve. Ecolinc have partnered with PrimeSci from Swinburne University to expand program offerings at Deep Creek Reserve. |
| Funding | Ecolinc is fully funded by the Victorian Government |
| Update | <p>In 2021, many of the school programs on offer at Deep Creek were provided online due to COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>From February 2022, onsite learning will return to Deep Creek (1 day per week). Programs focus on frogs, native plants and wetland function for primary school students. With the introduction of PrimeSci to the site, program offerings have been broadened to incorporate chemistry, physics and healthy rivers. PrimeSci is a science education organisation run by Swinburne University that provides science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education school excursions, increasing children's curiosity and understanding of all science topics.</p> <p>Online bookings for the 2022 school year opened in the first week of October 2021. Almost all sessions at Deep Creek are now booked for 2022, with the most popular sessions including physics, chemistry, fascinating frogs and how healthy is the wetland.</p> |

Friends groups Council contributions

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Description | <p>The annual Friends group contributions are made available to help these important volunteer organisations with the cost of essential items such as insurance, personal protective equipment, first aid supplies, small hand tools and materials to support on ground works.</p> <p>Council allocates up to \$800 per group per year.</p> |
| Funding | These contributions are fully funded by Council |
| Update | <p>This year a new online form has been introduced to groups to enable a more efficient process for both the volunteers and Council. Groups can submit one or several claims at any time throughout the year, up to their group's allocation of \$800.</p> <p>The online form ensures that all information that Council requires to process the claim in a timely manner is submitted. This new process also provides a transparent process that meets auditing requirements.</p> |

Climate change

Council Plan initiative

- Implement initiatives in the *Aspirational Energy Transition Plan*

This section also includes projects that are run by South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA), of which Cardinia Shire is a partner.

Asset vulnerability assessment -bushfire case study complete

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Description | Bushfire adaptation options for Cockatoo and Gembrook community use facilities |
| Funding | This project is fully funded by Council |
| Update | <p>The asset vulnerability assessment identified Council buildings along with roads and drainage assets that are vulnerable to climate hazards such as flooding, heat, and bushfires. This information will be provided in a visual tool and assist Council to increase the climate resilience of its assets by influencing asset maintenance, management, and renewal programs.</p> <p>In the second stage of the project, a bushfire assets case study that includes a high-level cost benefit analysis of bushfire adaptation options to improve the climate resilience of the Cockatoo Community Centre and the Gembrook Community Hall is nearing completion. Adaptation options considered in the analysis can be categorised into upgrades to the facility, building shell and more extensive redesign/relocation options.</p> |

Sustainability Victoria – community climate change and energy action program

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Description | Successful energy audit grant funding |
| Funding | This program is funded by the Victorian Government - Sustainability Victoria |
| Update | <p>Council has been successful in securing funding through the Sustainability Victoria-Community Climate Change Energy Action Program (CCEAP) to undertake energy audits of two Council facilities.</p> <p>Energy audits of Holm Park Pavilion and the Bunyip Hall will identify opportunities to improve the energy efficiency, reduce operational costs and energy related greenhouse gas emissions of these buildings. These initiatives align with Council's Aspirational Energy Transition Plan target to achieve zero net emissions by 2024.</p> |

Heritage

Council Plan initiative

- Actively protect key heritage sites within the shire

Emerald Museum update

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Description | An update from Emerald Museum about works undertaken during lockdown and welcoming visitors back now restrictions are easing |
| Funding | Council provides funding to the Community Asset Committee to help with the running of the museum. |
| Update | <p>While the museum has been closed, lots of work has been undertaken including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-design of website, including listing names of families that have hard copy files available to view, information about the park and collections held at the museum • Collaborating with a graphic designer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create a new pamphlet based on the museum collection - re-design of the old logo (to be released soon!) • An update on the collection policy, to make it easier for volunteers to know what should and should not be accepted into the collection <p>The Emerald Museum re-opened its doors at the beginning of November 2021 and the committee are working on some fun ways to re-engage the community and visitors with the museum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerald Museum celebrated museum selfie day Wednesday 19 January, increasing engagement across social platforms with the hashtags #museumselfieday & #emeraldmuseumselfieday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anyone can participate by visiting the museum and taking a selfie, it's that easy. • The collection accessibility project is underway. This project supports four museum/arts student interns to work across the museum database eHive, cleaning up object records and updating locations to improve public accessibility, visibility as well as collection digitisation. |

Water

Council Plan initiative

- Implement initiatives in the Integrated Water Management Plan

Mid-term review of Integrated Water Management Plan

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Description | <p>Council's Integrated Water Management (IWM) Plan was adopted by Council in 2014. It is a 10-year strategic plan that delivers a framework to guide Council towards a more sustainable approach to water management to reduce Council reliance on potable water and enhance ecological health of receiving waterways and Westernport Bay.</p> <p>An internal review at its mid-point has been completed to ensure the aspirations, targets and actions are still delivering on Council's vision and are reasonable considering population growth and resources available.</p> |
| Funding | <p>Actions in the Integrated Water Management Plan are funded by Council and external funding sources as they become available.</p> |
| Update | <p>The review highlighted that Council has met its potable water consumption target and 90% of the actions within the IWM Plan have been completed and/or superseded by other policy, planning and projects.</p> <p>Some key actions/initiatives that have been undertaken to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed a dedicated Council WSUD (Water Sensitive Urban Design) Officer 2017. • Internal capacity building including WSUD training and formation of an internal Integrated Water Management working group. • Information boards installed at Lakeside, Cook Spring Reserves and more. With developers now required to include boards prior to handover of wetland/water assets. • Joint project with VPA (Victorian Planning Authority) City of Casey and South East Water to identify strategies and requirements in future precinct structure plans for inclusion of an integrated water approach. • Reinstatement of Cardinia Life water harvesting system with annual water saving of 3.7 ML (1.5 Olympic sized swimming pools per annum). • Installation of 184 water tanks at Council owned facilities across the shire. • A shire wide public toilet retrofit program -21% decrease in potable water use. • Sediment pits installed in priority locations through northern part of the shire in 2019-20. • Pakenham Regional Recycled Water Scheme targeting landholders, farmers and businesses in the Cora Lynn and Pakenham South area to use recycled water for agriculture. |

Waste and resource recovery

Council Plan initiatives

- Implement the action plan for the Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy

Recycling sticker and new inspection contract

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Description | <p>It is a key focus for Council's waste team to see a reduction in the kerbside recycling contamination rate (particularly plastic bags and soft plastics, which make up 40% of the overall total contamination) to avoid further processing cost increases, keep staff and equipment safe, and continue to minimise our impact on the environment.</p> <p>DELWP, Sustainability Victoria and MWRRG are preparing a state-wide standardised acceptable list for recycling by mid-2022. It is therefore imperative that Council educates our residents on the basic do's and don'ts of recycling in preparation for next year's more detailed campaign. To do so recent improvements have been made to the bin inspection program and additional education, including a shire wide mail out.</p> |
| Funding | Funded by the garbage charge education budget. |
| Update | <p>In September 2021 Council entered a new bin inspection contract with Scoop Enterprises, to continue to reduce confusion and contamination in kerbside recycling- offering a quality service for a highly competitive price. The new contract includes 240 bin inspections per week, improved and additional accompanying education material such as new stickers, postcards and flyers. Efficiencies in this new contract will save Council approximately \$30,000.</p> <p>During November 2021, following National Recycling Week, all Cardinia Shire households received a recycling reminder letter and a weatherproof 'acceptable items' recycling sticker via Australia Post unaddressed mail. The sticker is a tool that is designed to be available when needed - at the bin - to help residents sort their waste correctly and matches the sticker that was distributed in 2020 for the launch of Food Waste in the green waste bin, both stickers have been immensely popular with the community.</p> |

Advanced waste processing – special purpose vehicle announcement

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Description | Advanced waste processing has progressed with the establishment of a special purpose vehicle |
| Funding | Jointly funded by Australian and Victorian governments and participating local governments including Cardinia Shire Council (\$75,000 from Council's garbage charge) |
| Update | <p>Council has partnered with 14 other councils to seek proposals from the industry on how we manage our waste. Currently all household rubbish is sent to landfill which is expensive and not environmentally sustainable. With no more landfills planned to be built, we need a long-term solution for how we manage waste for our growing community.</p> <p>To support the delivery of this project, Council have formed a subsidiary company with 14 other councils across south east Melbourne known as a special purpose vehicle.</p> <p>The special purpose vehicle (SPV), called South East Metropolitan Advanced Waste Processing Pty Ltd, will help councils deliver an advanced waste processing facility that will process household rubbish instead of burying it in landfill.</p> |

October waste storm response

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Description | Cardinia Shire again experienced a severe storm event on 28-29 October 2021, impacting many Cardinia Shire residents. Council provided immediate and ongoing support including waste service support for the large clean-up required. |
| Funding | Victorian Government emergency event funding |
| Update | <p>Kerbside waste services were paused in some areas on Friday 29 October due to high winds and access issues, some households missed their usual Friday collection, collections resumed on Saturday and were completed in full, no additional collections were required after that.</p> <p>Waste bins were provided to Emerald and Cockatoo drop-in centres for 2 weeks, providing an additional 1,000L of capacity for residents to dispose of spoiled food due to power outages.</p> <p>Additional hard waste entitlements were made available to residents to assist with green waste clean-up on properties following the storm. As well as two free Green Waste Drop-off events throughout November, available to all Cardinia residents for both storm clean-up and general property maintenance in preparation for summer and to reduce reliance on burning off.</p> <p>The first drop-off event was held at Cleanaway Lysterfield on 12 – 15 November, 54.6 tonnes of garden waste disposed of, via 200 vehicles. The second drop-off was held at Future Recycling Pakenham on 26 – 29 November, with a record breaking 124.3 tonnes of green waste collected over the four days, from 600 residential vehicles – that is double the previous events.</p> |

Management of COVID disruptions to kerbside services

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Description | As COVID-19 restrictions ease, our collections contractors are experiencing staff shortages across their Victorian networks, as precautionary measures are prioritised to keep employees and communities safe - including reduced crews and staggered shifts to limit exposure, regular COVID testing, and isolating from work. |
| Funding | Kerbside collection services are fully funded by Council's garbage charge. |
| Update | <p>Council is working with waste kerbside collection contractors to minimise potential impacts as much as possible, a reduced workforce means some of our services may be affected.</p> <p>Residents are asked that if their bin isn't collected on their designated day or hard waste pile in their designated week, to please be patient and leave it out.</p> <p>'Missed areas' are tracked and in most cases, the area will be serviced within 24 hours, including Saturdays.</p> <p>Residents are also reminded that Council's waste collections are serviced by a network of contractors who have families and are members of their own communities and thank them for their continued support, understanding and patience during these unprecedented times.</p> |