

## **14 ENVIRONMENT QUARTERLY REPORT**

FILE REFERENCE INT1875999

RESPONSIBLE GENERAL MANAGER Michael Ellis

AUTHOR Desiree Lovell

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the report be noted.

### **Attachments**

*Nil.*

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides a summary of some key environmental sustainability projects currently being undertaken by Council. Projects have been categorised according to the Sustainable Environment Policy themes:

- Climate change
- Water
- Waste
- Biodiversity

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 environmental actions taking place throughout the organisation. While many of these occur within or are led by the Environment Unit, 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 2018-19 under the key performance area of Environment 'we will continue to plan and manage the natural and built environment for present and future generations'.

#### **Climate change and energy conservation**

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

##### **1 Environmental upgrade financing for businesses**

Environmental Upgrade Financing Agreements are a council-based financing mechanism to help businesses access funding for building works to improve energy efficiency, reduce waste and water use.

Property and business owners, have the opportunity to gain from exciting changes occurring in energy, waste and water technologies. Environmental Upgrade Financing (EUF's) agreements can assist business and farmers gain access to capital, freeing up cash flow and helping to complete projects that support long-term resource efficiency and operational cost savings. Interest to participate has been received from Gumbuya World and the VFF chicken meat President.

## Development and built environment

A solar installer has been engaged to install a 5kW solar energy system at Cockatoo Kindergarten. With Council support, the kindergarten was able to access State funding for the renewable energy system following a successful application to the Solar Communities grants program administered by DELWP.

The 5kw solar energy system will showcase to the community the benefits of rooftop solar, by supporting annual savings of approx. \$1000 and reducing the kindergarten's energy related carbon dioxide emission by 7200kg a year.

## Water conservation

Council Plan action – Plan to manage water in an integrated manner, including the reduction of potable water consumption by Council and households.

### 2 Water saving initiatives at Cardinia Life

Options for water saving measures for Cardinia Life are currently being investigated. Quotations for minor water saving upgrades currently being refined and details on pool blanket options are being finalised. The pool blanket will save both potable water and energy by reducing the rate of evaporation and heat loss when the pool is closed each evening.

A recently completed upgrade includes monitoring of rainwater collected onsite and used for pool top up through the Building Management System. This combined with improvements to the rainwater harvesting system, has seen over 3 million litres of rainwater used for pool top up since November 2017- that would otherwise come from potable water.

## Waste minimisation and sustainable procurement

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

### 3 Green waste drop off events scheduled

Two free green waste drop-off events have been confirmed for November 2018 to assist residents in preparing their properties for the upcoming fire danger period. The event details are:

Dates: Friday 16 November to Monday 19 November 2018 inclusive

Time: 9am to 4pm

Location: Lysterfield Resource Recovery Centre. 840 Wellington Road, Lysterfield

Dates: Friday 23 November to Monday 26 November 2018 inclusive

Time: 9am to 4pm

Location: Pakenham Resource Recovery Centre. 14 Drovers Place, Pakenham

Residents are able to deliver green waste for free from residential vehicles and trailers, upon the presentation of photo ID demonstrating a home address within the Shire. The service has the capacity to be expanded to individuals and community groups who wish to deliver green waste in larger vehicles, assessed on a case by cases basis by the Emergency Management and Waste teams.

**Natural systems**

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.

4 Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) and Pest Plant Management Strategy update  
Drafting of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and review of the Pest Plant Management Strategy continues. Following an extensive and detailed initial consultation process with the community, the Environment and Heritage Unit introduced the strategies and sought feedback from the Youth Council on Wednesday 5 September. The Youth Council were very supportive of the project and provided valuable information to contribute to the Strategy. The Youth Council will be providing network contacts to assist in the future consultation of the draft strategy once complete.

5 Community programs - Emerald Star Bush week (ESB) and Trees for weeds swap  
Emerald Star Bush (ESB) week was held in mid-October. Environment and Heritage staff worked with the community to continue surveying for new ESB populations. The community also organised and held a tree planting event at the DELWP owned Clematis Park Reserve. They also manned a market stall on Sunday 21 October which included give-aways of plants, stickers and coasters.

The Environment and Heritage Unit in conjunction with Friends of Emerald Lake Park ran the annual Trees for Weeds Swap on Saturday 8th September. 50+ attendees came to the successful event, with 300 indigenous trees distributed.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

**RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN**

Nil.

**CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION**

Where internal and external consultation has taken place it is captured in the background information above.

**FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

**CONCLUSION**

Council continues to be a leader in the environmental field, being one of a few councils to facilitate environmental upgrade financing for large businesses in the shire.

Council continues to deliver a multi-pronged approach to environmental sustainability, offering a suite of both community based programs such as trees for weeds swap and the green waste drop off service. This compliments the strategic work such as the drafting of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, which will provide a long term framework to guide decisions, programs and works into the future.