



CITY OF
MONASH

Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Annual Report

2016/17





Acknowledgement of Country

Monash Council acknowledges and recognises the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land now known as Monash. On behalf of citizens of the municipality, Council pays respect to indigenous elders, past and present and values the lessons of indigenous experience.

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

Council has a role to play in the development of a socially just, healthy, inclusive and sustainable community where all members irrespective of their ability, gender, social, ethnic, or economic background can fully and fairly participate in community life.

The development of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016 – 2026 has been guided by the broad principles of the International Human Rights and Social Justice Charter. Monash City Council observes the rights incorporated in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 when making decisions, developing policies and strategies and providing services.

Our Priority Areas

The Environmental Sustainable Strategy 2016 – 2026 focuses on seven broad strategic priorities. These reflect the key areas that Council and the community have identified as issues within the city.

**Priority 1:
Built Environment**

**Priority 2:
Urban Ecology**

**Priority 3:
Climate Change**

**Priority 4:
Waste and Resource Management**

**Priority 5:
Integrated Water Management**

**Priority 6:
Partnerships and Leadership**

**Priority 7:
Education, Engagement and Reporting**

Priority 1: Built Environment

2016/17 ACTIONS

No Built Environment actions were due to be completed within the 2016/17 financial year. However, refer below to a number of actions which were completed.

OTHER ACTIONS

1.3.1 a Develop and implement an Integrated Transport Strategy (2016-18)

In February 2017, Council adopted a 20-year transport strategy to ensure that as Monash's population grows, our area remains an accessible and vibrant place with sustainable transport choices. By 2037, the vision for Monash is to have 'a highly accessible and sustainable transport network that supports the safety, health and prosperity of all members of the community'.

Some of the specific actions which Council has committed to improving sustainable transport in the strategy and are being progressed include:

- » Increasing the funding for upgrades to the cycling network by at least 10 per cent per year (from \$500K+ in 2015/16)
- » Advocating for a review of the bus network to identify new routes and increase direct routes
- » Working with VicRoads to provide pedestrian crossings with traffic lights along arterial roads such as Princes Hwy.

Action undertaken include:

- » [Eastern Transport Coalition \(ETC\)](#) of councils launched campaign for better transport options in the east
- » \$20K allocated to deliver initiatives and actions identified in the Monash Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS)

1.1.2. c Ensure Monash's planning policies and processes consider and implement environmental protection and, where possible, enhancement principles (2016-26)

Using planning controls for environmental protection is another avenue Council has pursued. In February 2017, Council adopted stronger development standards and new residential zones aimed at protecting Monash's 'garden city character'. These changes were submitted to the Minister for Planning for approval. Some of the new measures adopted by Council include:

- » The rezoning of areas near the Damper, Scotchmans and Gardiners Creeks and along the Dandenong Valley Escarpment to Neighbourhood Residential Zones where development will be less intensive;
- » Increasing the rear setback from 1 metre to 5 metres for properties in the General Residential Zone and in the Neighbourhood Residential Zones 3 and 4 along the Dandenong Valley Escarpment and in the Damper, Scotchmans and Gardiners Creeks environs areas;
- » Increasing the rear setback from 1 metre to 7 metres for properties in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone 2 that abuts Damper, Scotchmans and Gardiners Creeks;
- » Reducing site coverage (how much a building covers a block) from 60 per cent to 50 per cent in General Residential Zones and in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone along the Dandenong Valley Escarpment, and to 40 per cent in areas abutting the Damper, Scotchmans and Gardiners Creeks

These changes to Monash planning controls will assist Council to protect and enhance the environment.



Priority 1: Built Environment

1.2.1 a Implement the ESD assessments and referrals through the planning scheme and develop the ESD skills and knowledge of Council staff (2016-26)

On 29 September 2016, the Minister for Planning approved Amendment C113 to the Monash Planning Scheme which introduced an Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) Policy. The policy requires certain types of planning applications to be accompanied by information which demonstrates how relevant policy objectives will be achieved within the development proposed.

Monash is a member of the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) and now subscribes to the [Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard \(BESS tool\)](#) to assist planners to implement the policy requirements. To support the planners, external training in assessment of ESD applications has been completed. Council also has the licence to IMAP Sustainable Design Assessment in the Planning Process factsheets which provide information on the ESD objectives to be addressed under the policy and will assist planning applicants to submit full and complete planning applications to Council. Introductory training was provided to all planners to help them with the implementation of the new ESD policy.



Priority 2: Urban Ecology

2016/17 ACTIONS

2.1.1 a Complete a municipal-wide review of landscape and garden character and incorporate approved recommendations into future planning scheme provisions (2016-17)

Strategic Planning are currently finalising the Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy for Monash. The plan aims to protect and enhance the green Garden City Character within the contemporary context of climate change and forecast urban growth and change.

Its purpose is to increase urban greening to create a more resilient landscape that contributes to community health and wellbeing now and in the future, including increasing canopy tree cover across public and private land from 22% to 30% by 2040.

It will also provide a cohesive vision for the landscape character across the public and private land and update the relevant regulatory controls and planning scheme to give effect to the vision.

Work has been progressing on the development of a draft Strategy, and internal consultation has been completed. The plan will be seeking community consultation following Council approval.

OTHER ACTIONS

2.1.2. a Undertake ecological assessments to record baseline data for conservation reserves under Council management and to identify habitat corridors across the municipality and at the catchment scale (2016-18)

The Urban Biodiversity Strategy and Site Monitoring project was initiated to review and collate past documentation and outcomes, provide a baseline of current biodiversity status for Monash, and develop an overarching 10 year Urban Biodiversity Strategy and associated resources to provide vision and direction for the management and enhancement of Monash Council's biodiversity assets. It seeks to achieve long term biodiversity outcomes on Council owned and managed land.

Priority 2: Urban Ecology

Internal consultation with the Horticultural and Urban design teams has been ongoing during the development of the strategy and reporting framework. Ecological assessment work, monitoring protocol, research and literature review work are complete. There will be an opportunity for the community to provide feedback once the strategy is complete to the satisfaction of council.

This Strategy is part of a suite of strategies that relates to the landscape and reserves of Monash. These include the Street Tree Strategy, Open Space strategy, Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy. Together they provide an Urban Forest Framework but council will need to take into account the position of the Biodiversity strategy with the other strategies to ensure it is complementary.

In 2016/17, an ecological assessment has been completed across Monash's parks and reserves and a monitoring protocol has been prepared.

2.4.1 a Investigate and develop a framework articulating Council's role and responsibilities in community food production, supply and distribution (2016-18)

Background research on community gardens was undertaken and formed the first stage of the framework to be developed. The second stage to be undertaken in the future is determining the roles and responsibilities of Council.

2.1.1. c Implement the Street Tree Strategy (2016-2026) Following the adoption of the Strategy in June 2016, approximately 14 streets were chosen for street tree renewal in the 2016/17 year.

In response to the community feedback, Council adopted an extensive evaluation and community consultation process which will be applied before streets are chosen for tree removal and replacement going forward. The new process is outlined in [Urgent Business motion- Street Tree Strategy Implementation and Consultation](#).



2.3.1 a Develop, implement and support education, behaviour change programs and incentives that deliver biodiversity stewardship and enhancements on public and private land, especially properties adjoining Council's conservation reserves (2016-2026)

Council has made a concerted effort to engage the community on the topic of biodiversity over the past two years. The Monash Gardens for Wildlife encourages residents to plant indigenous species in the gardens in an effort to increase biodiversity in the area. A free educational booklet is available in print and electronically to guide residents, and is available in English and Chinese. This booklet is complemented by community workshops delivered by La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary which detail habitat gardening principles.

Since the program's inception 18 months ago, over 35 households have signed up to create their own habitat garden which Council will support through the contribution of 20 free indigenous seedlings. In addition to this, hundreds of seedlings have been given away at festivals to residents interested in starting their own indigenous garden.

Workshops on specialised topics relevant to habitat gardening such as native plant propagation have been held through collaboration with the Friends of Dandenong Valley Parklands and community bush walks with the Friends of Scotchmans Creek and Valley Reserve. Council is now also investigating ways to broaden the program's audience to involve schools.

2.4.1 a Implement education programs relating to community and household food production and healthy eating (2016-26)

As part of Council's community engagement program, a range of educational workshops have been held on topics relating to food production. Topics include beginners vegetable gardening, fruit and vegetable preserving, backyard chickens and backyard beekeeping.

To increase Council's ability to engage the community and deliver program relating to food, Council applied for a Love Food Hate Waste Local Activity Grant from Sustainability Victoria. The grant would provide 1:1 funding support to deliver a 6 month community education campaign on the issue of food waste. Outcomes of the application will be known in 2017/18.

Priority 3: Climate Change

2016/17 ACTIONS

3.2.1 a Complete a feasibility study to determine an achievable greenhouse gas reduction target for Council and provide recommendations on how to achieve the target (2016/17)

In order to undertake the feasibility study, analysis of utility data is required to inform the development of the greenhouse gas reduction target. Due to issues identified with the ability of Council's utility tracking system to provide the analysis at the level required, it was deemed advantageous to first investigate upgrading the system. This action has been allocated funding in the 2017/18 budget to be completed.

Investigation of return on investment from energy efficiency upgrades to council facilities was undertaken in 2015/16, as well as a preliminary study on setting benchmarks. Both of these will also provide an increased understanding of ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and monitor our impact.

3.2.1 b Complete a feasibility study to determine an achievable renewable energy target for Council and identify council assets suitable for alternative energy infrastructure including the analysis of life cycle costs and benefits of the infrastructure (2016/17)

As per reasoning for Action 3.2.1 a, funding has been allocated in the 2017/18 budget to complete work for this action.

CASE STUDIES

Save It For the Game

The Save It For The Game project through EAGA saw five club facilities assessed for energy savings opportunities. These included both infrastructure and behavioural actions. The major and most cost effective opportunity was the replacement of lighting with LED which occurred in three of the five sites and was paid by Council and grant funding.



Priority 4: Waste and Resource Management

2016/17 ACTIONS

No Waste and Resource Recovery actions were specified to be completed within the 2016/17 financial year. However, refer below to a number of actions which were completed.

OTHER ACTIONS

4.1.1 c Develop waste services criteria for new apartments and multi-unit dwellings (MUDs), commercial and industrial development that defines appropriate waste and recycling collection processes (2016-18)

Guidelines for preparing a Waste Management Plan were developed for MUDS (developments of three or more dwellings). These guidelines specify what is required in a Plan, including details such as land use summary, collection location and frequency, OH&S and signage.

4.1.2. a Review, update and implement the Litter Prevention Strategy 2009-2012 (2016-26)

Building on the success of the previous litter strategy, development of an update commenced in 2016/17. This strategy will tie into Council's new Waste Strategy which is also under development.

4.3.1. a Continue to implement kerbside bin inspection and monitoring program (Annually)

Monash conducts visual inspection of recycling and green bin contents on collection day to create greater community awareness of contamination and correct recycling procedures and provide immediate feedback to residents on correct recycling procedures.

In March 2017, the program was updated with new education tags placed on bins following inspections. These tags attach to the bin handle and have supporting information on the back. Great recyclers (those without contamination) receive a postcard that the resident can send in for a chance to win a \$50 movie voucher. The program collects data on all bins inspected, not just those with contamination, and contaminated bins are re-audited within 8 weeks.

During 16/17, a total of 1,694 bins were inspected, with 801 bins with contamination or presentation issues, and 194 gold star tags issued.

4.3.2. a Implement a strategic approach to community waste and litter infrastructure, education, monitoring and evaluation, dependent on funding (Annually)

Students (early learning, Kindergarten, primary and secondary), teachers and community groups were able to book recycling education incursions with our part time Recycling Education Officer (funded through the Visy recycling contract). This program saw 3,369 people attend recycling education programs in 16/17.

The Teachers Environment Network development sessions on Sustainability (including waste) to teachers in partnership with City of Boroondara. During 16/17, total attendance at these sessions was 90.

Public litter and recycling bins were installed at reserves with play space upgrades and to replace damaged bins at activity centres, reserves and bus stops.

Recycling education tours to Visy were attended by community members during National Recycling Week to provide an insight into the recycling process for residents.

Recycling education posters are displayed periodically around Monash bus shelter posters.

Education flyers designed to reduce the incidence of bins left permanently on the street were developed in 16/17, which were distributed to all letterboxes within neighbourhood identified as particularly prone to this problem. These education materials complement our Waste Services guide, developed with minimal text and clear photos and delivered with new bins to all new residents.



Priority 4: Waste and Resource Management

CASE STUDIES

Dumped rubbish

Launching in early April 2017, Monash Council is trialling a new approach to discourage the incidence of dumped rubbish in our neighbourhoods.

Normally, Council removes dumped rubbish at considerable cost from public areas within 24 hours of it being reported. Under this six month trial, Council will tape the dumped rubbish and write to all properties near where the rubbish was dumped, reminding people that it is illegal to dump rubbish and asking for information about who may have left the rubbish there.

Council will give the person who dumped the rubbish five days to remove it. If they don't, they face receiving a \$500 fine. It is the expectation that the offending dumpers will choose to remove the rubbish within five days rather than risk a \$500 fine. If just 50 per cent of the dumped rubbish in Monash is removed by the person who dumped it within the five days, it is estimated Council could save approximately \$30,000 per year in disposal and pick-up costs. The program also sends a message to the community that Council is responding to illegal dumping and committed to maintaining our garden city environment.

Graffiti prevention

Monash Council also has a comprehensive graffiti prevention program in areas prone to being defaced. Prevention is facilitated by creating attractive murals in hot spots around Monash, which both discourages graffiti and tagging while also creating more inviting public spaces. The rationale behind this approach is that those who typically tag or graffiti buildings will often respect the work of street artists, such as those commissioned to produce these murals, and will not tag or graffiti their work.

In early 2017, three graffiti prevention education sessions were held in local schools. These workshops provided the impetus for our third mural project which was led by students from Huntingtower School who are creating street art on the eastern wall of a supermarket in Stephenson Road, Mount Waverley. These projects build on the success of past street art projects in Monash and are evidence of Council's continued approach in addressing the issue of graffiti and enhance community pride around Monash.



Priority 4: Waste and Resource Management

Paintback scheme

Monash Transfer Station is one of the best in Victoria and has often been the first to pilot and implement a range of recycling programs. Monash was the first council to offer residents and tradespeople the opportunity to drop off unwanted paint and its packaging through the 'PaintBack' scheme. Through collaboration with statutory bodies, the waste industry, local government partnerships and residents, Monash Council continues to strive to reduce the environmental impact of waste

Visy education officer

Council attracted grant funding from Visy to allow for the delivery of fully-funded recycling education incursions for schools and community groups, as well as at major Council festivals. These interactive activities are suited to a range of ages and cultural groups, allowing for increased engagement with the Monash community.

Sustainable purchasing

In 2016/17, at least 4 per cent of total council expenditure contributed to the purchase of products or services with sustainable features or credentials. Fleet vehicle purchases were a major sustainable spend with 85 per cent of vehicles rated Euro 5 or above, which demonstrate improved air pollution standards.

Single-use plastics

In May 2017, a motion was carried stating that Council commits to eliminating the use of single-use plastics bags and other single use plastic items across all facets of Council business. Other objectives of the motion included requirements for organisations or individuals organising an event on Council land to refrain from using single-use plastic items, and for Council to advocate to the State Government for a state-wide ban of single use plastics bags. Actions to achieve these objectives will be undertaken in 2017/18.



Priority 5: Integrated Water Management

2016/17 ACTIONS

5.2.2 a Complete a water saving feasibility study that identifies water saving and non-potable water recommendations for Council's facilities and operations with a view to setting targets (2016/17)

Background work was completed, investigating the implementation of the current Integrated Water Management Plan. Funding has been allocated in the 2018/19 budget to complete this work due to prioritisation of other projects and programs including the biodiversity strategy.

CASE STUDY

Dwarf Galaxias

A project partnership with the EPA and Melbourne Water is being undertaken to support the Dwarf Galaxias, a nationally threatened, native fish common to the region. This initiative is one of four programs implemented over a five year period. Key aims of the 'Enhancing our Dandenong Creek' project include the creation of new threatened fish habitat, improving the surrounding natural environment and protecting the creek from pollution. By researching local hydrology, water balance and changes in floodplain habitats, the project can best match the environmental requirements of the Dwarf galaxias.



Priority 6: Partnerships and Leadership

2016/17 ACTIONS

6.1.1. b Continue to coordinate Monash's community Environmental Advisory Committee (2016-26)

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC), consisting of local residents and Councillor representatives, met five times in 2016/17 to be informed of and provide advice on Council's environmental and sustainability projects and initiatives and played an integral role in the development of the strategy. .

Examples of projects considered for advice during EAC meetings included the:

- » Draft Open Space Strategy
- » Draft Integrated Transport Strategy
- » Implementation of the Street Tree Strategy.
- » Development of a council paper for the introduction of Fossil Fuel Divestment
- » Input into the Domestic Animal Management Strategy, including the introduction of a cat curfew from 2020.

OTHER ACTIONS

6.2.1 b Strengthen partnerships that lead to sustainability networking, capacity building, innovation, research and monitoring outcomes and opportunities.

The Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) is a group of seven councils in the Eastern region working together to reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions through investment in energy efficiency, renewables and climate adaptation.

The EAGA partnership, Biodiversity Monitoring in Melbourne's East, received a Premier's Sustainability Award and World Environment Day Award. As mentioned previously, the Save It For The Game program was successfully delivered.

The EAGA also received grant funding to implement the Solar Savers program to assist low income residents to get access to affordable solar and Energy Performance Contracts to enable member councils to receive guaranteed savings for energy efficiency works in their council buildings. Both will be rolled out to Monash in 2018/19.

Living Links is part of the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority and in 2016/17 received \$1 million funding under the Our Catchment Our Community grant, along Dandenong Creek. As a partner, Monash successfully received funding to the value of \$90,000 over three years to improve bushland in Mulgrave Reserve, Drummies Bridge and Napier Reserve under this program, and facilitate engagement with the community through bird watching and planting activities.

Funding through the Melbourne Water Corridors of Green program was received, with over \$20,000 for revegetation works along Dandenong Creek near Shepherds Bush and lower Napier reserve to improve the stand of Yarra Gums and other vulnerable species.

CASE STUDY

Valley Reserve play space award

Set within the 15 hectare Valley Reserve and opened to the public in September 2015, the Valley Reserve Adventure Playspace provides a strong connection between community and the local environment. The playspace forms part of the education and community engagement, highlighting the environmental significance of Valley Reserve. Extensive community feedback informed the Socially Inclusive, Playful, Active, Relevant and Connected (SPARC) philosophy seen throughout the nature based activity space.

As a result of the extensive community consultation which was undertaken and the resulting infrastructure at Valley Reserve, the playspace won the Parks and Leisure Australia Award of Excellence for the best playspace in Australia (in the above \$500,000 category) in October 2016, in addition to the 2016 National Kidsafe play award for the best playspace.



Priority 7: Education, Engagement and Reporting

2016/17 ACTIONS

7.2.1 a Develop and implement sustainability indicators, targets and processes for the purpose of monitoring and reporting on Council's progress in delivering the Built Environment, Urban Ecology, Climate Change, Waste and Resource Management and Integrated Water Management priority areas (annually)

A range of community education workshops were held on topics including beginners vegetable gardening, fruit and vegetable preserving, energy efficiency, gardening with native plants and native plant propagation, bird watching training and walk, and backyard beekeeping and chickens. Several documentaries were also screened including 'Catching the Sun', 'Baykeepers' and 'REUSE'.

Sustainability stalls were also held at four festivals (Ashwood Family Fun Day, Glen Waverley Chinese New Year, Clayton Festival and Live at Warrawee). The focus was biodiversity education, highlighting the importance of gardening with native plants and creating gardens for wildlife.

To improve Council's ability to monitor and evaluate the community education program, registrations are now taken through an online system. A regular online newsletter, 'Sustainable Monash', is also used to promote news and events to a subscriber list.

Council continued to assist schools and early learning centres integrate sustainability into their practices. Worm farming and composting again proved the most popular topic, with recycling and energy education sessions also delivered to students.

To ensure more efficient and effective reporting of energy and water usage, a review of utility tracking systems commenced to determine potential improvements to Council's current system. A more effective system will help to create robust targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and water consumption.

CASE STUDY

The Ted Mason Educational Hub opened in March 2017 and provides nature play pods created for schools, nature groups and the broader community to further enhance environmental awareness through education. The education hub was named in honour of Ted Mason, a founding member of the Friends of Scotchman's Creek for his extraordinary contributions to environmental preservation and protection of this important natural environment.

The educational hub creates a strong link between the playspace, environmental education, the Friends of Scotchmans Creek and Valley Reserve and environmental programs like ClimateWatch and Waterwatch.

The combined elements of play, preservation and environmental management at Valley Reserve in conjunction with community engagement and education offer the residents of Monash a community supported precinct with strong links to the local environment.





CITY OF MONASH

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