

### 9.3 MITCHELL SHIRE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES 2019-2020 ACTION PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

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**Attachments:** 1. Mitchell Shire Council 2019-2020 Environment Strategies annual report

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#### SUMMARY

This report provides the annual update on the implementation of the *Mitchell Shire Environment Strategies 2019-2020*.

81 Per cent of the 201-2020 environment strategy actions were achieved, with the remainder either in progress or under review. Highlights include on ground environmental works, policy development, community environmental education and engagement and the successful delivery of National Tree Day 2019.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** Council review and note the annual report for the *Mitchell Shire Environment Strategies 2019-2020 Action Plan*.

#### BACKGROUND

Local Government has an important role to play in environmental management, through its controls over strategic land use planning, infrastructure development, facilitating community involvement and education, local laws and as a public land manager.

Council has adopted various environmental strategies and plans to help facilitate Council's role in environmental management. The *Environment Strategies 2019-2020 Action Plan* combines actions from the following documents;

- *Mitchell Shire Environment Strategy 2014-2024*;
- *Mitchell Shire Rural Roadside Environmental Management Plan 2016-2026*;
- *Mitchell Shire Sustainable Resource Management Strategy 2011*; and the
- *Monument Hill Management Plan 2014*.

This report provides an update on the delivery of the Strategies and Plans

#### ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

At the conclusion of the 2019/2020 year, of the 20 actions:

- 17 (81 Per cent) actions completed and delivered;
- Three (14 Per cent) actions in progress and will be delivered; and
- One (Five Per cent%) action is under review and may not be delivered.

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MITCHELL SHIRE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES 2019-2020 ACTION PLAN ANNUAL REPORT (CONT.)

Actions were fully delivered due to impacts of COVID-19 and resource constraints.

Key highlights of the annual report include:

- The adoption of the inaugural Mitchell Shire Council Environment Policy
- The successful delivery of National Tree Day in July 2019. This event was supported by 576 volunteers (including seven local schools). As part of the event, participants were asked to complete an evaluation. The feedback showed that:
  - 66 Per cent of volunteers reported an increase in knowledge about native vegetation;
  - 74 Per cent learnt about the importance of planting native vegetation;
  - 56 Per cent learnt about their local environment;
  - 59 Per cent reported an intention to implement positive behavior change as a result of being involved;
  - 47 Per cent were first time volunteers at National Tree Day in 2019.
- Approximately 712km of roadsides were treated as part of the roadside weed control program. This was partly funded through a \$69,000 contribution from Council as well as a \$32,331 state government grant.
- The Environment team supported 24 community environmental events including National Tree Day plantings, a land management forum in partnership with the City of Whittlesea and Hume City Council, the Aussie backyard bird count and a move to online events due to Covid-19 including the 2040 sustainability documentary screening and an online fungi workshop. In total there were 1188 participants at these events.
- 636 pieces of environmental information distributed, including 69 new rural landholder kits.
- Council presented at the Parliamentary Inquiry into tackling climate change in Victorian communities.
- The solar panels on the Seymour Sports and Aquatic Centre has reduced CO2 emissions by 136.71 tonnes per annum and saved Council approximately \$40,000 in electricity bills. At this rate the system will have a payback period of approximately 2.5 years.
- The provision of environmental advice on statutory and strategic planning matters continues to be a focus for the environment team. Environment officers have been involved in the internal working groups for many strategic planning projects including the Rural Land and Activities Review, the Kilmore Creek Precinct Landscape Masterplan, Mitchell Shire Landscape Assessment Study, Precinct Structure Plans and Integrated Water Management Plans.
- The Environment team has collaborated with external government and community partners on at least 21 individual projects including erosion control, interpretive signage, fire prevention, environmental education and sustainability advocacy.

## MITCHELL SHIRE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES 2019-2020 ACTION PLAN ANNUAL REPORT (CONT.)

- 6 Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee meetings were held throughout 2019/2020. The committee provided written advice on 5 matters to Council and had 3 guest speakers.

The projects that are in progress to be delivered in 2020/21 include the Monument Hill reserve track renewal project, the installation of solar panels and a sustainability assessment of the Greater Beveridge Community Centre, a fact sheet on roadside vegetation and a second mail out of new rural landholder kits.

The one project that will not be delivered is the annual review of the Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce. Given there was only one meeting held, a meaningful 12-month review cannot be undertaken.

## CONSULTATION

Not applicable for this report.

## FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The cost to Council of the initiatives in the 2019-2020 Environment Strategies Action Plan include officer time and use of funds within the 2019-2020 adopted budget.

Council's Environment Team were also successful in attracting \$58,000 state government funding to implement environmental projects.

Many projects could not be possible without the collaboration other Council departments including Communications, Parks, Gardens and Arboriculture Engineering, Strategic and Statutory planning, Capital works, Risk management and Community Development.

Council staff also maximised Council resources by collaborating with other government agencies and community groups such as Landcare to deliver improved results for our community.

## POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of the *2019-2020 Mitchell Shire Environment Strategies Action Plan* assists Council in delivering the *Caring for the Environment* strategic objective of the Council Plan 2017-2021.

The Mitchell Shire Environment Strategies and Plans supports our third goal 3 in the Mitchell Shire Council Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021.

The Strategies also sits within the context of Council, Local, Regional, State and National legislation and policies.

## RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risk Ranking is determined using [ROHS201-G1- Corporate Risk Matrix](#). Risk is identified as Low, Medium, High or Very High.

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
That remaining actions from the 2019-2020 action plan will be	Medium	Actions to modified e.g. moved to online platforms	Yes

## MITCHELL SHIRE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES 2019-2020 ACTION PLAN ANNUAL REPORT (CONT.)

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic.			

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)**

The implementation of the *Mitchell Shire Environment Strategies 2019-2020 Action Plan* focuses on the protection and enhancement the natural environment, including reducing Council's water and energy use and engagement with the wider community on environmental and sustainability initiatives.

**CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

The rights protected in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* were considered in preparing this report and it's determined that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

The Mitchell Shire Environment Strategies strives for inter-generational equity by applying best practice environmental management in Council's decision-making processes.

**OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

**CONCLUSION**

The annual report for the *2019-2020 Environment Strategies Action Plan* identifies that:

- 17 (81 Per cent) actions completed and delivered;
- Three (14 Per cent) actions in progress and will be delivered; and
- One (Five Per cent) action is under review and may not be delivered

Council officers will continue to collaborate with Council, the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee, other Council departments, external stakeholders and the wider Mitchell Shire community to deliver the remaining actions of the plan.

Major projects for 2019-2020 include the review of the Mitchell Shire Environment Strategy and the Mitchell Shire Sustainable Resource Management Strategy, the development of a framework to implement the Mitchell Shire Council Environment Policy, roadside weed control program, solar installation on the Greater Beveridge Community Centre and environmental reserve action plans.

**MITCHELL SHIRE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS 2019/2020 ACTION PLAN.**

INCLUDING:

- YEAR FIVE 5 MITCHELL SHIRE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY
- YEAR THREE 3 MITCHELL SHIRE RURAL ROADSIDE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
- YEAR FOUR 4 MONUMENT HILL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014
- MITCHELL SHIRE SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2011



Theme	Goal	Total actions	Status	Key Outcomes
Biodiversity	Protect, enhance and connect landscapes by increasing the extent and quality of native habitat	6	5  1  0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Tree Day 2019 – 4,300 plants, 576 volunteers</li> <li>• Annual reserve weed control program completed. targeting at least 15 weed species</li> <li>• Management of 12 environmental reserves covering 225ha.</li> <li>• Developed action plans for 45 roadside sites with very high conservation values.</li> <li>• Roadside weed control program completed covering approx. 712km</li> <li>• Broadford Common works completed, and grant acquitted</li> <li>• Fact sheet on roadside vegetation under development</li> </ul>
Waterways and Wetlands	Improve water quality, riparian condition and in-stream habitat of waterways and wetlands	1	1  0  0 	<p>At least 10 waterways projects completed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kilmore Creek revegetation</li> <li>• Erosion control unnamed waterway Colin Officer Flora Reserve.</li> <li>• Platypus monitoring workshop, Seymour</li> <li>• Supported DELWP blackberry extension project, Sunday creek Clonbinaine</li> <li>• Weed control along many local waterways</li> <li>• Three Dam safety reports completed</li> </ul>
Rural Land Use and Management	Development and land use are respectful of landscape values Implementation of sustainable land management practices on private rural land is encouraged and supported.	4	2  1  1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Covenant program successfully implemented with 18 properties covering 825Ha participating.</li> <li>• Three additional conservation covenants were registered in Mitchell Shire in 2019-2020.</li> <li>• 69 new rural landholder kits sent. The second mailout was not completed due to Covid-19 restrictions.</li> <li>• A meeting of the Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal taskforce did not take place, however email updates and survey distributed.</li> <li>• Whole Farm Plan guideline updated and made publicly available.</li> </ul>

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL



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Theme	Goal	Total actions	Status	Key Outcomes
<b>Urban Land Use Planning and Development</b>	Well planned and sustainable urban growth and development, incorporating open space, access to services, retail/trade and transport Rural living qualities including open space, landscape amenity and easy access to the natural environment are maintained	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Broadford Land Management Group meetings attended.</li> <li>• Four Seymour Bushland Park meetings attended</li> <li>• Environmental officer involvement in providing advice and/or part of project teams for the Rural Land and Activity Review, Broadford Structure Plan, Beveridge North West PSP, Wallan South PSP studies, Landscape Assessment Project, Planning Scheme Review and Southern Regional park advocacy.</li> </ul>
<b>Resilient Communities</b>	The connections between people and the natural environment in which they live is increased Local people respect, value and care for the natural environment directly, and in the way that they choose to live The knowledge, skills and capacity of the community to understand and practice natural resource management is increased Partnerships with agencies, industry, landholders and community groups are strengthened to achieve shared environmental goals	3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 environmental events ran and/or supported</li> <li>• 1188 participants environmental events</li> <li>• 636 pieces of environmental information distributed to the public</li> <li>• Over 21 collaborative environmental projects including with landcare, government agencies and neighbouring Councils.</li> <li>• Six meetings of MEAC. 93 hours of volunteer time</li> <li>• Monument Hills track upgrade not delivered. Will be delivered in 2020-2021 year.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	Mitchell will lead by example by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and water use through internal operations. Council will also continue to engage and support the community to improve energy and water efficiency.	5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inaugural Mitchell Shire Council Environment Policy was adopted in May 2020.</li> <li>• The installation of solar panels and sustainability assessment of the Greater Beveridge Community Centre is underway and will be delivered in 2020</li> <li>• Partnered with the Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance on seven projects</li> <li>• Quarterly reports on Council's energy and water use are being provided to the Executive Leadership Team. Six monthly reports to Council to commence in August 2020.</li> <li>• Council entered into a renewable energy power purchase agreement for street lighting accounts.</li> </ul>

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL

