

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

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**File No:** ET/01/001-03

**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
<b>Biodiversity</b>	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>
<b>Waterways and Wetlands</b>	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>
<b>Rural Land Use and Management</b>	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



#### 9.4 MITCHELL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**Author:** Elyse Kelly - Environmental Programs Coordinator

**File No:** ET/03/003

**Attachments:** Nil

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#### SUMMARY

The Mitchell Shire Environment Advisory Committee (MEAC) consists of members of the community, a Councillor and staff. The committee provides environmental advice to Council on key strategic issues and the design and delivery of specific environmental programs.

This report presents a summary of activities undertaken by the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee (MEAC) for the 2019-2020 financial year and is presented to Council in accordance with the adopted Terms of Reference for the Committee

#### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** Council:

1. Receive and note the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee 2019-2020 Annual Report.
2. The Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee is thanked for their contribution during the 2019-2020 year.

#### BACKGROUND

In July 2011 Mitchell Shire Council established the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee, (MEAC).

The purpose of the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee is to capitalise *‘on the knowledge, experience and skill available in the community to provide Mitchell Shire Council with strategic advice in respect to environmental sustainability and management issues and initiatives within the municipality’*.

The current membership of MEAC was appointed by Council at the 21 May 2018 Council meeting and extended to November 2020 at the 18 May 2020 Council meeting.

The Committee members for the 2019-2020 committee were;

- Geoff Clarke;
- Laura Mundy;
- Lesley Dalziel;
- Peter Chapman;
- Trevor Vienét;

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MITCHELL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT (CONT.)

- Marla Stone;
- Rhiannon Hardwick; (resigned May 2020)
- Ian Julian;
- Daniel Young;
- Geoff Mabbett; (resigned February 2020)
- Michael Watson;
- Lauren Hull.

## ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

During 2019-2020 MEAC held four (4) ordinary meetings and two (2) special meetings. This represents approximately 93 hours of volunteer time not including reading, correspondence and travel to meetings and events.

Of these meetings, two (2) were held online due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Committee adapted well to using this technology.

Two (2) resignations were received from community Committee members during the year, however it was decided not to advertise for new positions due to the complicating factors of Covid-19 and that the Committee still had the required minimum number of members in accordance with the adopted Terms of Reference.

At the 18 May Council meeting a six (6) month extension of the current MEAC membership was approved, again, due to difficulties of advertising for new MEAC members during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In accordance with the adopted terms of reference, the committee provided written advice to Council on the following matters:

- Wallara Waters park naming;
- Hudson Park Draft Master plan;
- Draft Kilmore Creek Precinct Landscape master plan;
- Ryan's Creek Draft Revitalisation plan;
- Beveridge North West PSP.

The information below presents a summary of the Committees activities from July 2019 to June 2020 under broad subject headings:

### ***Waterways and catchment planning***

The first meeting for the new financial year started with a guest presentation from Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) CEO Mr. Chris Norman.

Mr. Norman presented on the projects and programs of the GBCMA and spoke about opportunities for collaboration with Council.

The Committee also wrote to the GBMCA requesting that MEAC is considered as a stakeholder in the consultation phase of the Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment

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MITCHELL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT (CONT.)

Strategy renewal project. This letter has been acknowledged but consultation delayed due to COVID-19.

### ***Waterways and catchment planning***

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Mr. Norman presented on the projects and programs of the GBCMA and spoke about opportunities for collaboration with Council.

The Committee also wrote to the GBMCA requesting that MEAC is considered as a stakeholder in the consultation phase of the Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy renewal project. This letter has been acknowledged but consultation delayed due to COVID-19.

### ***Community Environmental Events***

MEAC was one of the supporting organisations successful in obtaining a DELWP grant to screen the 2040 sustainability documentary to the Mitchell community.

The film screening was originally to be an outdoor event in Seymour however, due to COVID-19 this was changed to an online viewing attracting 245 participants.

### ***Strategic Planning***

A presentation from Council's strategic planner and principle strategic planner on the Mitchell Shire planning scheme review was well received. Discussion around the planning scheme review included

- Consultation;
- Landscape considerations;
- Sustainability in subdivisions;
- The use of section 173 agreements;
- Sustainable transport options and active transport;
- Biodiversity reports;
- Erosion control; and
- Monitoring and review of the goals set in planning policy.

The Committee also received and noted updates on the Rural Land and Activities Review, the Beveridge North West Precinct Structure Plan and the Integrated water Management Plans for the Upper Merri Creek and Kilmore, with four (4) committee members attending the community consultation session for the Greening Kilmore - Integrated Water Management Plan in July 2019.

### ***Open Space***

The Wallan Regional Park continued to be a regular feature of MEAC meetings. This is a project the Committee continues to monitor and support.

The Committee also provided input into the preparation of the Kilmore Creek Precinct Landscape Master Plan and the Ryan's Creek Revitalisation Plan, providing written

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MITCHELL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT (CONT.)

advice on both draft waterway plans and taking the opportunity to present to Council on the Ryan's Creek Revitalisation Plan in February 2020.

### ***Environment Policy***

The development of the inaugural Mitchell Shire Council Environment Policy was a key project for the Committee, including a special meeting to focus on this key strategic document.

### ***General business discussions***

A wide variety of topics were raised during MEAC meetings and included in these discussions were:

- Illegal rubbish dumping;
- Cat curfews;
- Roadside vegetation;
- Revegetation opportunities;
- Urban forestry;
- A Parliamentary Inquiry into The Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities.

## **CONSULTATION**

The committee consults regularly with Council and the community across the year

## **FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There is an annual budget allocation provided to support and to co-ordinate the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee meetings.

Administration tasks associated with the operation of the Committee are undertaken by Council's Environment Team and currently amount to approximately 80 hours of officer time per year.

## **POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

This report is presented in accordance with the adopted Terms of Reference for the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee which states that "*The Committee will be given the opportunity to present to Council at least once per annum*", in addition to this the *Council Plan 2017-2021* includes the action "*The Environment Advisory Committee regularly reports to Council*".

The operation of the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee assists Council in delivering the following actions of the *Council Plan 2017-2021*:

- "*Increase the use of the Environment Advisory Committee as a mechanism for community engagement on relevant environment matters*;
- *The Environment Advisory Committee is engaged on environmental matters impacting the community*;
- *Support Council's Advisory Committee members*; and
- *Support the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee*".

MITCHELL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT (CONT.)

### 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?
Some meetings and events may be impacted by COVID-19	Medium	Move to online platform for meetings	Yes

### SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)

The purpose of the Mitchell Shire Environment Advisory Committee is to provide advice and make formal recommendations to Council on matters concerning the management of the natural environment.

This report illustrates that the Committee has successfully fulfilled its role and purpose for the 2019-2020 year.

### 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 Environment Advisory Committee seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment for future generations.

### 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

During 2019-2020 financial year, the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee has operated in accordance with the adopted Terms of Reference, holding four (4) ordinary meetings and two (2) special meetings.

The Committee provided written advice to Council on five (5) different matters and were pleased to see Council's inaugural Environment Policy, be adopted by Council earlier this year.

MEAC looks forward to continuing to provide quality environmental advice to Council on key strategic matters.