



Sustainable Environment Action Plan 2022–2024



1. Introduction

The Sustainable Environment Action Plan 2022-2024 (Action Plan) sets out the actions Council will focus on delivering in the first two years of the Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032 (Strategy).

This includes both the ongoing services that support the delivery of the Goal 4 outcomes and new actions that support specific programs and initiatives.

It is made up of the key actions from the six long-term thematic plans that underpin the Sustainable Environment Strategy. These six long-term plans cover the key focus areas related to environmental sustainability, namely, biodiversity, city forest (greening), climate change, Green Wedge, waste and recycling and water.

Community empowerment represents a cross-cutting element that enables us to deliver the outcomes identified for each of these six focus areas by delivering education and engagement programs for our community.

Majority of the actions listed in this Action Plan include actions that Council has already committed to for the delivery of Council’s endorsed long-term plans as follows:

- Biodiversity Strategy 2019-2029
- Whittlesea Water For All 2020-2030
- Greening Whittlesea City Forest Strategy 2020-2040
- Rethinking Waste Plan 2021-2030

The Action Plan also includes proposed actions from the emerging Green Wedge Management Plan 2022-2032 and Climate Change Plan 2022-2032. (Notes: The Draft Green Wedge Management Plan was out for community consultation between 23 May and 3 July 2022, and is currently being finalised).

Actions are set out under each of the three key directions, the outcomes they are contributing to, and Council’s role in delivering on each action. The outcomes and how we will monitor progress are detailed in the Sustainable Environment Strategy. An Action plan for every two years will be developed in line with Council’s Community Plan and annual budget process. Actions listed in this document are subject to consideration in Council’s annual budget process.

2. Council services

Council delivers important services that help achieve a sustainable environment.

Ensuring that Council delivers these services in an effective and efficient manner is critical to achieving the outcomes listed within the Sustainable Environment Strategy for the whole community.

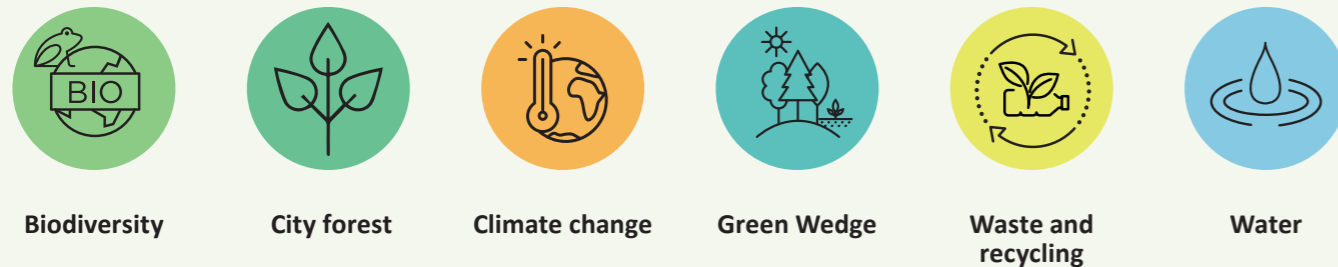
Council will work to continuously improve these services to ensure they meet legislative requirements and community expectations.

Across all Council services consideration and incorporation of corporate environmental sustainability must be considered.

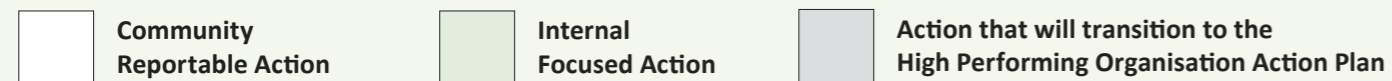
3. Council's role

Role	Aim	What Council may do?
Provider	To implement projects, programs and campaigns for use by residents and businesses for a sustainable environment.	Initiate campaigns, incentives and education programs.
Facilitator	To establish partnerships and collaborate with stakeholders, to foster collective action to contribute to environmental sustainability.	Partner with key stakeholders and provide contributions (funding, knowledge and expertise, networking opportunities) to roll out programs.
Advocate	To support broad systemic changes required for a sustainable future through promotion and influencing decision-making, rather than direct involvement.	Educate key stakeholders including other levels of government to address provision gaps, influence policy and decision making.

Focus Area key:



Priorities key:



4. Action Plan

Invitation for Partnership with Traditional Owners

Council recognises the rich history of environmental protection and custodianship of Traditional Owners of this land, waters and sky of the City of Whittlesea.

Council acknowledges that Traditional Owners have a different way of recognising Country. Western approaches to planning, land management and environmental protection can create fragments and divisions that are not reflective of Traditional Owner understandings.

Council acknowledges the recently released Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy and the integrated approach to empower Traditional Owners to lead planning and activate cultural knowledge and practices to manage Country.

Council acknowledges that supporting Traditional Owners to manage Country as a cultural landscape benefits people and benefits Country. Creating pathways for collaboration with Traditional Owners is critical for the success of all key directions and outcome areas within this action plan.







Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
		Biodiversity	City forest	Climate change	Green Wedge	Waste and recycling	Water
Explore land management partnership opportunities with Traditional Owners	Facilitator	●	●	●	●		●
Invite Traditional Owners to self-determine involvement and opportunities for collaboration and partnership within all sustainable environment actions	Facilitator	●	●	●	●	●	●
Coordinate environment, resource recovery, greening, water and climate actions to align with Wurundjeri and Taungurung Country Plans and to support indigenous communities to meet their social, cultural and economic needs (self-determination)	Facilitator	●	●	●	●	●	●
Invite Traditional Owners to share traditional climate resilient practices with Council, and when appropriate facilitate opportunities for this to be shared with the local Aboriginal community and broader community	Facilitator	●	●	●	●		●
Assist in identifying partnership opportunities with Traditional Owners to support the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, improve land and water management and other Caring for Country practices in the Green Wedge	Facilitator	●	●	●	●		●



Key direction 1

Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
							
Outcome 1.1 Our landscapes, waters and species are protected, improved, and valued.							
Continue to manage population of Matted Flax-lily relocated from the Mernda Rail site	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Help our community learn and connect with the environment through the Nature Stewards Program	Provider	●	●	●	●		●
Advocate to protect the grassy eucalypt woodlands	Advocate	●	●	●	●		
Better protect conservation reserves through rezoning	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Map our biodiversity assets to help protect and enhance them throughout the planning process	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Renew and upgrade Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park	Provider	●		●			●
Implement a Planning Scheme Amendment to better protect biodiversity, waterways and landscapes using appropriate zones and overlays	Provider	●	●	●	●		●
Advocate to ensure all conservation areas identified within the Urban Growth Boundary are appropriately protected and managed	Provider	●	●	●			●
Develop a Biodiversity Planning Policy to ensure all new conservation reserves are handed over in an appropriate condition	Provider	●	●	●			
Review all Council owned land for biodiversity and waterway values and ensure management and lease arrangements are appropriate	Provider	●	●	●	●		●

Key direction 1 Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
Outcome 1.1 Our landscapes, waters and species are protected, improved, and valued. (cont.)							
Ensure that all Council conservation reserves are managed effectively and support rare and threatened species conservation	Provider	●	●	●			
Continue long-term targeted fauna survey program within conservation reserves	Provider	●	●	●			●
Enhance and improve the management of conservation and tree assets on rural roadsides to manage native vegetation, remove priority weeds, improve habitat connectivity, and reduce fire risk	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Undertake a review of rural land, water and biodiversity incentives programs to maximise community and environmental benefits	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Undertake a review and develop a business case into urban biodiversity and greening to encourage residents, schools, community groups and early years services to maximise community and environmental benefits	Provider	●	●	●			●
Undertake a review of the water education program to ensure investment to maximise community and environmental benefits	Provider	●	●	●	●	●	●

Key direction 1 Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
Outcome 1.2 Our land management and land use are sustainable.							
Work with Traditional Owners to obtain Aboriginal cultural heritage permits for land management works in conservation reserves	Facilitator	●	●	●	●		●
Explore opportunities to generate local carbon sequestration offsets on Council owned and private land	Provider	●	●	●	●		●
Continue to lead the Local Government sector in utilising Smart Sensors and citizen science to monitor waterway and ecological health of our city	Provider	●	●	●	●		●
Advocate for effective regional kangaroo management across land tenures and diverse stakeholders	Advocate	●	●	●	●		
Support opportunities for the Aboriginal community and broader community to learn from Traditional Owner practice and Care for Country	Facilitator	●	●	●	●		●
Continue to provide specialist support and advice to rural land managers that maximises environmental and community benefit and highlights the value of sustainable land management and improves soil health	Provider	●	●	●	●		●
Outcome 1.3 Our natural environment and biodiversity are resilient to climate change.							
Undertake a habitat connectivity study to better understand impacts of fragmentation, urban growth and climate change on our biodiversity, and to inform our incentive programs, land management and planning scheme for better biodiversity outcomes	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Undertake study to understand the current and future carrying capacity of wildlife populations on Council owned and managed land	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Continue to partner with neighbouring councils to act and advocate for biodiversity and waterway health including but not limited to via the Merri Creek Management Committee, Darebin Creek Management Committee, Melbourne Strategic Assessment Local Government Liaison Group, Biodiversity Planning Network and Bushland Managers Network	Facilitator	●	●	●			●



Key direction 2 Climate ready



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
Outcome 2.1 Our city's green cover is enhanced to reduce the risk of extreme heat.							
Deliver the annual tree planting programs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main Roads and High Profile Streetscapes Planting Program - Parks Tree and Major Facilities Planting Program - Conservation Reserves Tree Planting Program - Residential Street Tree Renewal Planting Program 	Provider	●	●	●			●
Participate in Greening the North to develop regional initiatives to deliver greening and urban heat mitigation outcomes and advocate for the protection of existing and future canopy	Advocate	●	●	●	●		
Review planning controls and local laws and their enforcement to identify where tree and vegetation protection measures can be strengthened at all development stages. Implement findings of review	Provider	●	●				●
Advocate for an evidence-based review of setback requirements of service providers (e.g. AusNet Services) that limit canopy and vegetation planting	Advocate	●	●	●			
Undertake a review on the protection and management of publicly owned River Red Gums across the municipality to ensure their ongoing health in the landscape	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Develop 'shovel-ready' concepts and supporting business cases to anticipate funding and grant opportunities for greening initiatives across public and private land	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Develop a comprehensive Ten-Year Planting Program which addresses the recommendations from the equity focused health impact assessment	Provider	●	●	●			
Develop a place-based guideline and approach to landscape planting programs across the city	Provider	●	●	●			●
Develop a green infrastructure policy to ensure canopy loss is compensated for within the city	Provider	●	●	●			●

Key direction 2 Climate ready



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
Outcome 2.1 Our city's green cover is enhanced to reduce the risk of extreme heat. (cont.)							
Ensure all canopy cover targets are met in all Urban Design Frameworks, Integrated Community Facilities Planning, Public Space Planning and New Works Public Space projects	Provider	●	●	●			
Carry out an assessment of community behaviours, perceptions, and barriers regarding tree and green cover planting on private land, and review the effectiveness of previous incentive schemes given the findings	Provider	●	●	●	●		
Outcome 2.2 Our communities and businesses are supported to become climate ready.							
Enhance understanding and knowledge about localised impacts of climate change and potential solutions including impacts on local food security and vulnerable groups	Provider			●	●		●
Deliver innovative, engaging and accessible education programs about climate risk and adaptation to communities and businesses	Provider		●	●			●
Develop a program to support vulnerable residents and communities to improve the sustainability, thermal comfort and efficiency of their homes	Provider			●			
Continue to partner with the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) to achieve broad climate action across municipal boundaries	Facilitator	●	●	●			
Advocate to the state government for incorporation of climate change responses, risks and costs into decision making and financial planning	Advocate			●			
Develop and demonstrate environmental leadership in our community through a community environmental scholarship program and/or an awards program to recognise community achievements in environmental and climate action	Provider	●	●	●	●	●	●

Key direction 2 Climate ready









Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
Outcome 2.3 Our built environment and infrastructure are built to support safe and healthy communities in a changing climate.							
Ensure that all developments are assessed using the Sustainable Subdivision Framework	Provider	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ensure the Planning Scheme discourages new settlements in areas prone to extreme natural hazards	Facilitator	●	●	●	●		●
Work with State Government to provide for future infrastructure and energy needs within the Green Wedge	Advocate		●	●	●		●
Evaluate emergency relief centres and other community facilities to make sure they are climate resilient	Provider			●			
Ensure that all Council design manuals address Environmentally Sustainable Design and climate change	Provider	●	●	●	●		●
Establish a corporate Environmental Sustainability Committee to support sustainable environment initiatives and embed climate change responses into Council decision making	Provider	●	●	●	●	●	●



Key direction 3

Leaders in clean, sustainable living



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
							
Outcome 3.1 Our city becomes a net zero emissions municipality.							
Support our business community to improve the sustainability of their facilities using Environmental Upgrade Agreements	Facilitator			●			
Improve the energy efficiency of Council buildings and facilities including solar and lighting upgrades	Provider			●			
Continue to replace our streetlights with energy efficiency bulbs	Provider			●			
Support community renewable energy initiatives such as solar farms, micro-grids, and battery storages	Facilitator			●	●		
Advocate for access to renewable energy Power Purchase Agreements for businesses and non-for-profit organisations	Advocate			●			
Continue to partner with the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) to advocate for increased standards to achieve zero emissions and climate resilient developments	Facilitator	●	●	●			●
Advocate to other levels of government for retrofitting existing buildings for a zero emissions and climate resilient future	Advocate	●	●	●			●
Ensure Council capital programs integrate active transport supporting 20-minute neighbourhoods	Provider			●			
Commence implementation of the Walking and Cycling Plan to enable more use of sustainable and active transport by the community including increasing tree planting along connected open space and pathways	Provider		●	●			
Complete community wide EV Transition Plan and commence implementation	Provider			●			

Key direction 3 Leaders in clean, sustainable living



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
Outcome 3.1 Our city becomes a net zero emissions municipality. (cont.)							
Develop and implement a behaviour change campaign for the community to move towards more active and sustainable transport options, including investigating if incentives would assist in this transition and the use of community shuttle buses	Provider			●			
Work with local schools and education institutions to develop Green Travel Plans	Facilitator			●			
Advocate to the state government for more investment in more public transport options for the city	Advocate			●			
Continue participating in the Victorian Energy Collaboration Power Purchase Agreement for 100% renewable electricity	Provider			●			
Update and implement Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) standards for Council assets and facilities (i.e. Council ESD Guidelines for Council works)	Provider	●	●	●		●	●
Develop and implement a plan to eliminate gas use in Council facilities	Provider			●			
Work with Council services owners to analyse and implement service improvements that address climate risk, zero net emissions and environmental sustainability	Provider	●	●	●	●		●
Complete and commence implementation of a Council fleet and plant Net Zero Emissions transition plan	Provider			●			
Develop a program to encourage Council staff to use active travel modes and/or public transport for work commute	Provider			●			
Develop a roadmap to comply with Council corporate emissions inventory with Climate Active and implement the roadmap to ensure compliance	Provider			●			

Key direction 3 Leaders in clean, sustainable living



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
Outcome 3.2 Our water resources are managed in an integrated way.							
Construct Wilton Vale Wetland Boardwalk in South Morang	Provider	●	●	●			●
Refurbish Janefield Wetland Boardwalk in Bundoora	Provider						●
Trial and demonstrate Integrated Water Management (IWM) initiatives in new Council buildings, facilities, and public realm projects	Provider	●	●	●			●
Develop a program to implement appropriate IWM responses and capital works actions in areas of flooding hotspots	Provider			●			●
Advocate for funding to undertake a feasibility study to provide rural areas access to alternative water supply within Whittlesea and neighbouring municipalities	Advocate			●	●		●
Continue to participate in the Yarra IWM Plan and the Upper Merri Sub-catchment Plan and contribute to action delivery	Facilitator	●		●	●		●
Complete and implement the water service plan to ensure that Council is resourced appropriately to manage the water service	Provider	●					●
Consider a policy position on composting toilets as part of the next review of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan	Provider			●			●
Ensure the Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) asset register is established, maintained, and responds to the Melbourne Urban Stormwater Institutional Arrangements (MUSIA) review	Provider	●		●			●
Collaborate with Melbourne Water to undertake functional design of stormwater harvesting schemes at strategically relevant sites	Facilitator	●		●			●
Ensure Council's engineering and design manuals address integrated water management	Provider	●		●			●
Ensure that the Council projects meet the Healthy Waterways Strategy Integrated Water Management Targets	Provider						●

Key direction 3 Leaders in clean, sustainable living



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
Outcome 3.3 Our city is low waste and transitions to a circular economy.							
Implement the Rethinking Waste Plan to support our community to become a leader in sustainable living	Provider			●		●	
Investigate options for introducing a local resource recovery shop	Provider			●		●	
Introduce a rebate program for reusable nappies, reusable sanitary products and composting tools	Provider			●		●	
Implement a glass recycling bin service as a fourth kerbside collection bin for residents, to further decrease waste to landfill and improve resource recovery	Provider			●		●	
Introduce an integrated waste policy that supports the community to understand how the waste charge is used, addresses organisational waste management approaches and ensures best practice waste service delivery	Provider			●		●	
Undertake a feasibility study on providing alternative residential bin sizes and changing the collection frequency	Provider			●		●	
Reduce barriers to participation in the food and garden waste service	Provider			●		●	
Advocate to support our community and businesses to rethink waste and for investment in the circular economy	Advocate			●		●	

Key direction 3 Leaders in clean, sustainable living



Actions	Council's Role	Links to Focus Areas					
Outcome 3.3 Our city is low waste and transitions to a circular economy. (cont.)							
Deliver innovative, engaging and accessible waste minimisation and resource recovery education programs to the community addressing contamination, service use and the container deposit scheme	Provider			●		●	
Advocate for the introduction of Right to Repair legislation to avoid generation of unnecessary waste and reduce embodied carbon in goods	Advocate			●		●	
Implement an annual contamination management plan to encourage the correct separation of waste	Provider			●		●	
Enhance the hard waste collection service	Provider			●		●	
Continue to encourage sustainable procurement across Council, selecting products that generate economic, social and environmental benefits whenever it is practical and achieves value for money	Facilitator			●		●	

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