

# **Environmental Sustainability Strategy**

**Progress Summary 2012-2016**

## Table of Contents

Environmental Sustainability Strategy .....	1
Table of Contents .....	2
Introduction .....	4
Seven priority areas .....	4
How is Council tracking? .....	4
1. Water .....	5
Key achievements .....	5
What does Council still need to work on? .....	5
2. Land.....	5
Key achievements .....	6
What does Council still need to work on? .....	6
3. Climate change .....	6
Key achievements .....	7
What does Council still need to work on? .....	7
4. Biodiversity.....	7
Key achievements .....	8
What does Council still need to work on? .....	8
5. Urban and built environment .....	8
Key achievements .....	9
What does Council still need to work on? .....	9
6. Waste and resource recovery .....	10
Key achievements .....	10
What does Council still need to work on? .....	10
7. Change strategies .....	11
Key achievements .....	11
What does Council still need to work on? .....	11



## Introduction

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2012-2022 provides the City of Whittlesea with a framework through which Council works to be a sustainable city that protects our biodiversity and promotes a healthy and sustainable population. It is designed to help guide Council's activities and address environmental sustainability at a local level. This 2016 Progress Update highlights some of the achievements that have been made over the first three years of implementation and provides a snapshot of key work Council has undertaken across the seven Priority Areas.

### Seven priority areas

1. Water
2. Land
3. Climate change
4. Biodiversity
5. Urban development and built environment
6. Waste management and resource recovery
7. Change strategies

### How is Council tracking?

Category	Number of Strategies or Approaches	Percentage
Achieved	40	19%
On track	59	29%
In progress	73	35%
Unsuccessful	6	3%
Not started	28	14%
Total	206	100%

Six of 206 actions were unsuccessful for a variety of reasons such as external factors and resourcing. Where possible those actions will be revisited for further consideration when opportunities arise.

## 1. Water

Category	Percentage
Achieved	17%
On track	22%
In progress	39%
Unsuccessful	0%
Not started	22%

Total number of water strategies: 23

### Key achievements

- Council's Melbourne Markets Stormwater Harvesting Project will save more than 48 million litres of drinking water every year and ensure that nearby sporting fields and gardens can be watered sustainably in the future, especially during drought periods.
- An Integrated Water Cycle Management local planning policy has been drafted. Once approved this will require additional water saving and reuse in developments and extensions, lowering the stormwater runoff from private properties.

### What does Council still need to work on?

- Increased engagement and support for local business in reducing water consumption.
- Co-ordination of Council's efforts to reduce its own water consumption.
- Strengthening policies and controls on new dam constructions to maintain and enhance stream flows in local waterways.

## 2. Land

Category	Percentage
----------	------------

Achieved	20%
On track	40%
In progress	20%
Unsuccessful	20%
Not started	20%

Total number of land strategies: 41

## Key achievements

- The ‘Street Tree Management Plan: Greening Our Streets’ guides Council’s vision for... “Healthy, well managed street trees [that] will be a defining feature of the City’s attractive streetscapes and liveable neighbourhoods”.
- Each year approximately 150 rural land owners have taken part in Council’s Sustainable Land Management Rebate Scheme or Environment Works Grants Program. The programs offer financial incentives for the sustainable management of rural land and environmental works such as weed control, revegetation and protection of remnant vegetation and waterways.
- Since introducing a proactive approach to Council’s Pest Plant Local Law education and compliance program there has been a marked decrease in the extent of infestations within the target areas.

## What does Council still need to work on?

- Raising community awareness of the benefits of investing in land rehabilitation works by providing educative signage at high profile and high use sites.
- Reviewing the lease arrangements and management of Council owned rural land based on an assessment of the biodiversity value of the land.
- Increasing support to new and emerging land management groups and building their capacity to address common land management issues.

## 3. Climate change

Category	Percentage
Achieved	26%

On track	30%
In progress	35%
Unsuccessful	9%
Not started	0%

Total number of climate change strategies: 23

### Key achievements

- 255 kW of solar power and building energy upgrades has avoided over 900 tons of CO2 each year and Council's new buildings Environmentally Sustainable Design guidelines ensure future facilities are energy efficient.
- LED and fluorescent street lighting has avoided a further 2,500 tons of CO2 each year.
- Annual reporting on Council's greenhouse gas emissions has helped us track this progress, compare it to other organisations and achieve the Council target of maintaining annual emissions at 2012 levels.

### What does Council still need to work on?

- Climate change adaptation planning and risk management.
- Proactive advocacy on key issues where control lies with the State and Federal Governments.
- Increasing our support for the community to mitigate carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

## 4. Biodiversity

Category	Percentage
Achieved	23%
On track	23%
In progress	35%

Unsuccessful	17%
Not started	2%

Total number of biodiversity strategies: 40

### Key achievements

- Strengthening of measures to protect biodiversity has been incorporated into the Municipal Strategic Statement via Amendment C197, which is awaiting Ministerial approval.
- Increased controlled burning in Council reserves for enhanced biodiversity and ecological values on public land.
- Council has endorsed the Native Vegetation Offset Plan. This will allow for the acquittal of Council’s existing Native Vegetation Offset liability

### What does Council still need to work on?

- Implementation of the Native Vegetation Offset Plan.
- Collection of baseline data mapping current values and threats; and development of a Municipal Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Improved management of Council waterways, lakes, ponds and wetlands to enhance their ecological values.

## 5. Urban and built environment

Category	Percentage
Achieved	4%
On track	43%
In progress	45%
Unsuccessful	4%
Not started	4%

Total number of urban and built environment strategies: 28

## **Key achievements**

- **Completion and adoption of the Housing Diversity Strategy and the Integrated Transport Management Strategy.**
- **Council helped develop and support our community to run the successful Access Denied campaign that saw all major political parties commit to funding the Mernda Rail Extension in the lead up to the last State election**

## **What does Council still need to work on?**

- **Continue to increase the capacity of staff to better utilise existing development assessment processes to achieve sustainable outcomes with particular focus on Green Travel Plans and Environmental Sustainable Design.**
- **Look for opportunities in the planning process to gain further environmental outcomes.**

## 6. Waste and resource recovery

Category	Percentage
Achieved	30%
On track	17%
In progress	44%
Unsuccessful	0%
Not started	9%

Total number of waste and resource recovery strategies: 28

### Key achievements

- Received State Government funding for a Litter Prevention Officer position to investigate dumped rubbish and run an anti-littering education campaign along Council's waterways.
- Winners of the 2015 Keep Australia Beautiful Victorian Sustainable Cities award for the Raspberry Pi Program. The program educates children about reuse of old electronics while teaching them to build and code computers.
- Reviewed Council's Recycling Bin Inspection Program which acknowledges and rewards correct recycling practices. A number of changes were then implemented that have seen significant increases in participation since 2013.

### What does Council still need to work on?

- Improving procurement processes across Council to increase the proportion spent on sustainable materials.
- Working to increase food waste diversion at key Council facilities.

## 7. Change strategies

Category	Percentage
Achieved	18%
On track	18%
In progress	39%
Unsuccessful	7%
Not started	18%

Total number of change strategies: 28

### Key achievements

- Since beginning in 2012 the Sustainability Outreach Whittlesea (SOW) program has reached over 800 people and 18 different community groups. The types of groups are wide ranging from children to seniors, gender based and cultural groups, educators as well as community gardens. SOW supports community groups to develop a self-directed program of learning aimed to build their environmental awareness and capacity.
- Relaunched the internal staff environmental group, Green CoW - a group committed to improving the sustainable work practices of Council.
- Development and publication of Council's Environmental Indicators Framework and Report to help track Council performance in each Environmental Sustainability Strategy Priority Area.

### What does Council still need to work on?

- Establishing Council buildings and facilities as best practice sustainability projects.
- Strengthen Green CoW's profile and role in fostering sustainable work practices across the organisation.
- Improving data quality and reliability for indicator monitoring.
- Building the capacity of new and existing environment groups by increasing their opportunities for information sharing, training and mentoring.