

Wyndham City 2018-2019
State of the Environment
Summary Report





Acknowledgement

Wyndham City Council recognizes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Custodians of the lands on which Australia was founded. Wyndham City acknowledges the Wathaurong, Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which Wyndham is being built.

For tens of thousands of years, the Werribee River has been a significant meeting place for Aboriginal people to build community, exchange resources, and share responsibility for its lands.

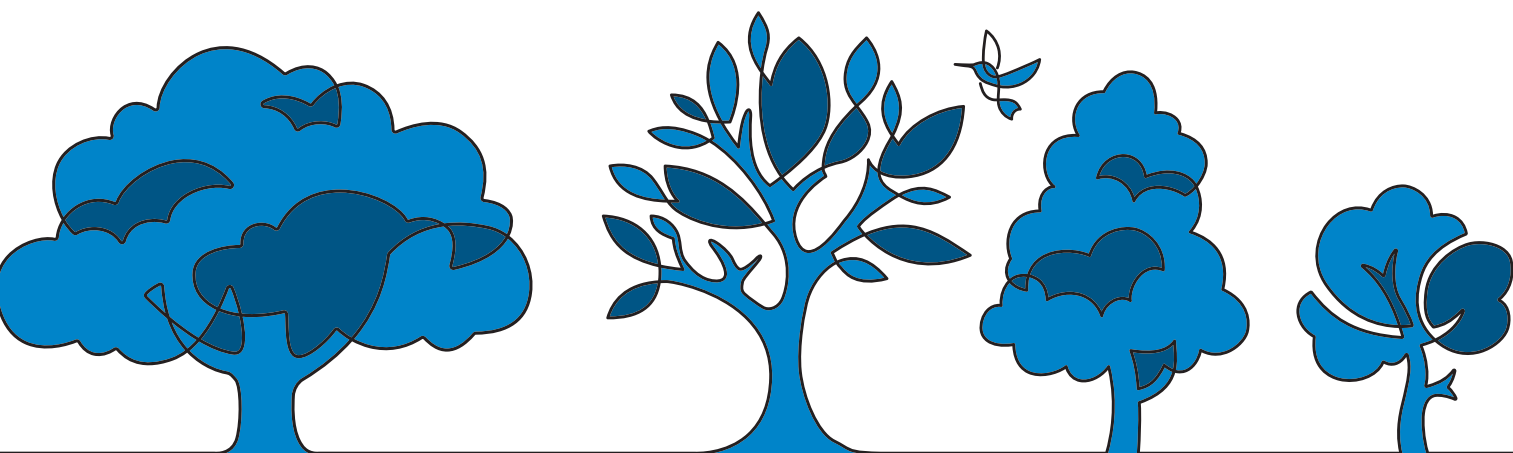
Wyndham City pays respect for the wisdom and diversity of past and present Elders. We share commitment to nurturing future generations of Elders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



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The 2018/19 State of the Environment Summary Report provides highlights of Wyndham City's environmental achievements and progress towards the targets of the Wyndham City Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2016-2040, Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan, Waste and Litter Strategy 2016-2040 and City Forest & Habitat Strategy 2017-2040. It reports on the progress that Council has made towards the short-term targets within these work areas during 2018/19, including highlights and case studies.

This report summary complements Wyndham's State of Environment Data Report 2018/19, which includes comprehensive information on Council's progress towards the targets of the Wyndham strategies. This report is available on the Wyndham City website **www.wyndham.vic.gov.au**



Wyndham City Overview

Wyndham is one of Melbourne's designated growth corridors and has one of the fastest growth rates in Victoria. Wyndham City's population as of 2019 is 270,478 and is forecast to grow to 489,379 by 2041. This increase in population has put strain on the natural environment and requires ongoing investment to keep up with demands for sustainable services and to ensure the ongoing health of our natural assets.

Wyndham is home to many significant waterways, wetlands, coastal areas and grasslands, such as the Werribee River, Skeleton Creek, Port Phillip Bay coastline, Truganina Cemetery remnant grassland, Point Cook Coastal Park and the Western Treatment Plant Wetlands.





Sustainable City

Rapid growth and urban expansion has led to a number of environmental challenges in Wyndham, including growing congestion on road networks, increases in waste and the challenges of a changing climate.

Wyndham's work to support a sustainable city is diverse, reflecting the wide range and context of our environment. This work ranges from community renewable energy to managing urban environments and sustainable transport infrastructure.

Wyndham City businesses and residents are embracing renewable energy. Over 40,000kW of solar has been installed since 2014/15 and postcode 3029 is ranked 7th in Australia for its uptake of solar energy.

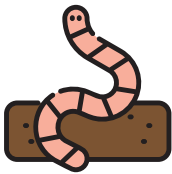
Reliance on landfilling is shifting with reductions in waste token allocations, subsidised green waste bins and the introduction of a third hard waste collection helping to achieve greater resource recovery.

Wyndham residents are wanting to learn more about living a sustainable lifestyle, with over 4,000 attendees at the Green Living Series in 2019. An additional 48.6km of bike paths have been installed over the past 12 months, encouraging bike travel within Wyndham.

Our urban tree canopy cover is expanding with an increase of public tree plantings and support for residents to improve tree canopy on private land. Our significant trees are also being identified and incorporated into Wyndham's first ever Significant Tree Register.

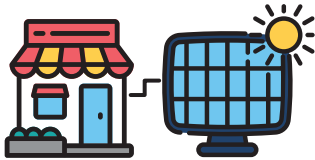
Planning for growth is a complex issue, and Wyndham is identifying how to best enhance our environment through the planning system. The Wyndham Planning Scheme now includes an Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) policy to ensure sustainability is considered in the early stages of development throughout Wyndham.





Subsidised Home Composting

2018/19 saw a change to local worm farm and compost supplier Wormlovers. Council subsidised **105** worm farms, **24** worm packs, **36** Hungry Bins, **24** Bokashi Bins and **93** compost bins for Wyndham households.



Solar in Wyndham

Wyndham residents and businesses have installed over **40,000kW** of solar since 2014 and reduced community emissions by almost **108,000 tonnes**.



Pop Up Recycling Day

237 residents took part in the Pop-Up Recycling Day, diverting over **7.27 tonnes** of waste from landfill.



The 2018 Garage Sale

88 households, **5** groups and **168** stalls were involved across Wyndham. It is estimated that **3,972** people in the community participated in the event.

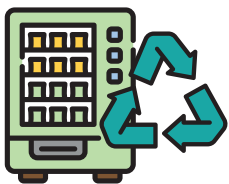
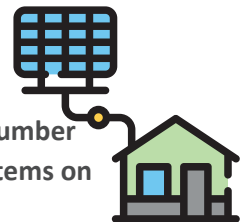
Getting Around Wyndham

48.6 kilometres of bike paths were constructed during 2018/19 making Wyndham a more bike friendly community.



Going Green

Postcode 3029 is ranked **7th** in Australia for the number of solar photovoltaic systems on residential properties.



Reverse Vending Machines

Wyndham City became the first Victorian Local Government to install reverse vending machines in December 2016. The four reverse vending machines have collected a combined total of **62,772 items**.

Landfill Gas Conversion

The RDF has captured **75%** of the gas generated from landfill for the past 3 financial years. Once captured, this gas is converted into electricity and fed back into the grid.



Hard Waste Collections

Council introduced a 3rd Hard Waste Collection in 2018, resulting in **7,247** additional collections. This is an increase of **33%** with a total of **28,676** collections for the year.





Sustainable City - Case Study

Recycling Stations

Many regular household items are recyclable yet cannot go into our commingled recycling bins. Items including light bulbs, CDs/DVDs, batteries, printer cartridges and mobile phones are all made from precious materials which can be recovered for reuse, keeping them out of landfill. This saves the need to mine raw materials and significantly reduces the energy and water required for producing new items.

This year Wyndham residents disposed of 2655kg of batteries, 567kg of globes and 2374kg of e-waste via the recycling stations. The recycling stations are located at the Wyndham City Civic Centre, Arndell Park Community Learning Centre, Manor Lakes Community Learning Centre, Tarneit Community Learning Centre, Featherbrook Community Learning Centre, Plaza Library and Point Cook Community Learning Centre.



For up to date information on the recycling stations visit:
www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/waste-recycling/other-recycling-services





Sustainable City - Case Study

Green Living Series

Each year Wyndham City hosts the Green Living Series, Council's premier environmental program that gives local community groups a platform to deliver workshops and seminars around important environmental issues. The Green Living Series aims to inspire and teach the local community about sustainable living practices. It also encourages social interaction with likeminded, environmentally conscious community members from all walks of life.

The 2019 Green Living Series delivered a more diverse range of events than ever before with the inclusion of Indigenous cultural workshops and a strong focus on connection to the Wyndham environment. Popular events include the DIY Low-tox Cleaning Workshop, Koala Tours at the You Yang's, Wyndham Food Trail, Be a Worm lover, Op Shop Tour, Seaweed Walk and Solar Information sessions.

From just ten events in 2014 and 179 attendees, the Green Living Series has grown to over 60 environmental events in 2019 attended by more than 4000 people. Twelve events were solely community led, demonstrating a fantastic, ongoing partnership between Council and local community groups. The Green Living Series is a testament to our resident's thirst for knowledge and a sustainable future.





Sustainable City -Case Study

Environmentally Sustainable Design Framework

In 2015, Council adopted the Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Framework, which embeds ESD principles into all Council buildings. These ESD principles include energy performance, water resource management, indoor air quality, transport, waste management and urban ecology.

On the 18 October 2018 the framework was extended to the wider community through the inclusion of a local 'Environmentally Sustainable

Development Policy' into the Wyndham Planning Scheme. The policy will ensure that development within the municipality achieves best practice in environmental sustainability. The policy applies to all new residential developments, where a permit is granted for two or more dwellings, and all new non-residential developments that exceed 500m². The adoption of the 'Environmentally Sustainable Development Policy' strengthens Council's commitment to creating a more sustainable city.





Valuing Nature

Wyndham is home to a number of significant waterways, wetlands, coastal areas and native grasslands. The health and security of these significant environmental sites cannot be taken for granted as most native vegetation types they support have been cleared elsewhere and are classified as endangered, vulnerable or depleted. Wyndham City has a number of strategies to protect these special areas.

Protecting our critically endangered native grasslands is of high importance and Council remains a contributor to the Western Grassland Reserve Weed Management Group and an invited member of the Adaptive Management Working Group for the Western Grassland Reserve. Wyndham City continues to advocate for collaborative projects to undertake large scale weed control to help reduce the impacts of invasive species on rural properties within Wyndham.

Over the last financial year, the Land Protection Grant Scheme directly supported private landholders in Wyndham's rural areas with weed control and biodiversity protection. Over 2800ha of weed control and revegetation works were undertaken on more than 50 properties. Landholders were supplied with

over 2,500 indigenous plants for revegetation on private property, representing an almost 60% increase on the previous year. In partnership with the State Government, we plan to expand this Scheme in the coming years as we work to preserve the endangered grassland ecosystems in the rural areas of our municipality.

The annual Biodiversity and Weed Expo was held in Little River in March 2019 with a focus on education and fostering local action to protect our biodiversity.

Almost 31,000 indigenous tube stock plants were planted in Wyndham's conservation reserves to increase habitat values and biodiversity of these areas. Seasonal fauna survey data collected over recent years will be analysed in the coming

financial year and used to inform future management decisions and the development of additional Conservation Site Action Plans in 2019/20.

Litter within our environment continues to be an issue, however efforts have been made to tackle it. Two Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs) were upgraded on Skelton Creek with a further three along Lollipop Creek and the Werribee River planned in the coming financial year. The GPTs improve the health of our waterways by preventing large, non-biodegradable pollutants from entering the waterways and protecting our local fauna. Through the Local Litter Measurement Toolkit, this financial year has also seen a 40% reduction in the litter and illegal dumping across 15 monitored sites.



Clean Up Australia Day



32 groups participated in clean-up activities across Wyndham, including **23** community groups, **3** businesses, and **6** schools.

Weed Management



2,700 ha of rural weed control was supported through Wyndham's Land Protection Grant Scheme in 2018/19.



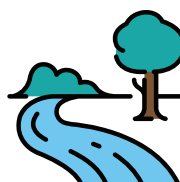
Increasing Wildlife Corridors

79 indigenous gardens were established on private property through the Habitat Heroes program, helping to increase local biodiversity.



Ecological Burns

Over the 2018/19 financial year, more than **20** controlled burns, totalling **8,400m²**, were successfully completed within Council reserves, supporting regeneration of those sites.



Water Quality

Only one algal bloom was recorded in Werribee River in the 2019 summer period. Ongoing water quality monitoring is supported by the Werribee River Association.

Conservation Reserves

Council manages over **200 hectares** of reserves and more than **200km** of roadside for biodiversity values.



Indigenous plantings



30,975 indigenous tube stock plants were planted in Wyndham's conservation reserves during 2018/19 with the aim to increase local biodiversity and habitat values.





Valuing Nature- Case Study

Habitat Heroes School Program

Rapid urban growth in Wyndham means that much of our native vegetation and ecosystems exist as isolated patches with poor connections. This can make it challenging for wildlife to move safely through our urban landscape and find shelter and food sources.

To help combat this, Council's Habitat Heroes Program supports residents to establish pockets of indigenous vegetation, also known as habitat gardens, on private property to create safe havens and pathways for native fauna to move around the municipality. Planting habitat gardens using locally indigenous plants has the added benefit of establishing a drought tolerant garden. Indigenous plants are adapted to our localised soil and weather conditions and can better withstand our hot dry summers with less watering requirements than most gardens.

The Habitat Heroes program has seen over 200 habitat gardens established on private property in the last four years and 2019 was the first year to see this popular program rolled out into local schools. Two schools per year are currently taking part with Werribee Primary School the first to complete the program.

Grades 1 and 3 students undertook fauna surveys around the school grounds to first determine what sort of habitat garden they would need to create to best support local fauna. This was followed by garden design activities and the planting of 100 indigenous tube stock in a dedicated section of the school grounds.

Guided by dedicated teachers, the students decided to create an indigenous garden to attract birds, butterflies and native bees and contribute to increasing local biodiversity. It will also become an inviting outdoor learning space. These eager Habitat Heroes had a ball getting their hands muddy and finding interesting insects in the soil whilst planting their selected plants into their new habitat garden.

Werribee Primary School will continue activities within their new habitat garden to keep the students connected to nature and support our local indigenous fauna.





Valuing Nature- Case Study

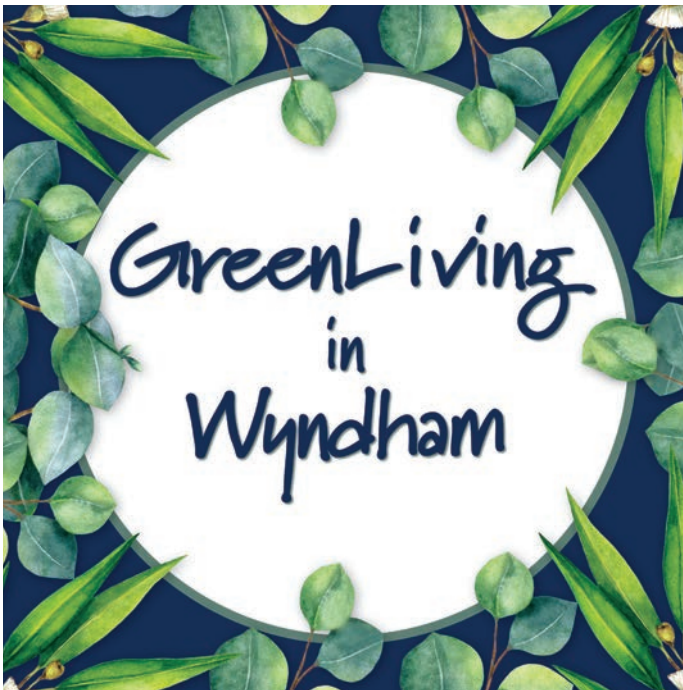


**wyndham's
building blocks**
developing leaders develops communities

Green Living in Wyndham Building Blocks Community Leadership Program

Wyndham City's Building Blocks Community Leadership Program is a free program facilitated by Victoria University Polytechnic that has been operating since 2014. The program provides an opportunity for residents to build and strengthen their capacity in community leadership and participation. During the Green Living iteration of the program, participants were given the opportunity to utilize their leadership skills to develop behaviour change and educational projects that support Wyndham's natural environment and living a sustainable lifestyle.

March 2019 saw 25 residents begin the Green Living in Wyndham Building Blocks Program. Fifteen weekly sessions covered various skills, competencies and confidence building themes in community leadership. Participants then formed groups based on common Green Living interest and developed the following project ideas to contribute to our community.



The projects were:

Nude Recycling

Inspired by the War on Waste and Wyndham's ongoing challenge of waste and litter education, this project focused on a campaign to educate the Wyndham community about soft plastic recycling.

Smart Food Choices

A project to encourage the community to make more sustainable food choices in their day to day lives and in turn, reduce their impact on the environment. Choices include those that are S-sustainable, M-money saving, A-achievable, R-reduces waste, and are T-tasty.

Water 4 Life - Werribee South Activation

Promoting the activation of our valuable coastal area of Werribee South Beach with a focus on building community connections, promoting the area's natural assets, encouraging youth participation and a sense of ownership and belonging.

Community Composting

Educating residents about the need to reduce the quantity of food scraps going to landfill, the benefits of composting and it's uses in the garden.

The Wyndham Nature Nerds- Learn & Live

The formation of an ongoing community group that will begin their journey with a small environmental expo focused on environmental education, Wyndham's local flora, fauna, habitat and biodiversity.

Council's Green Living in Wyndham team will provide ongoing support to the program's passionate participants as they mobilise and empower others in the community to make positive change for a greener Wyndham.





Council Leadership

As an organisation that provides community services and manages buildings and open spaces, Wyndham City has the opportunity to role model and showcase environmental sustainability in practice. Technology and innovation have been employed to help Wyndham City meet greenhouse gas reduction targets including the trialling of the Toyota Mirai Hydrogen Vehicle and the installation of solar PV on over 30 community buildings.

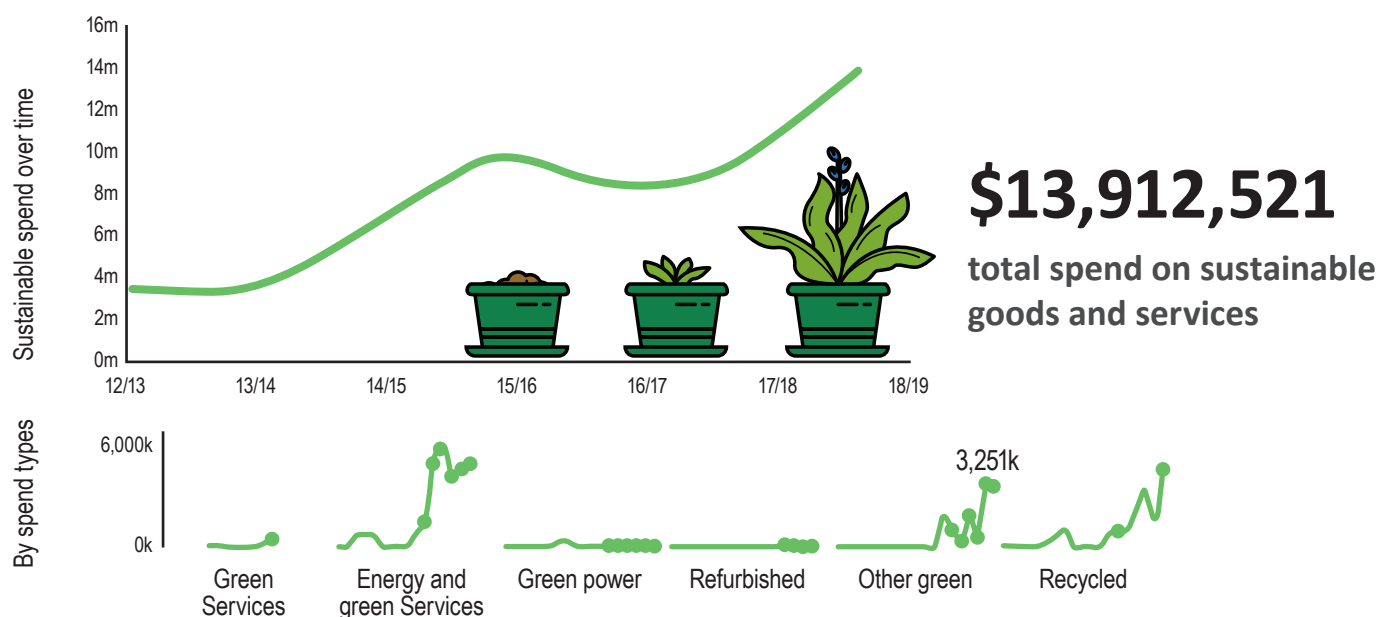
Wyndham City has taken a lead in the 'war on waste' by adopting a single use plastic policy, which will see the elimination of single use plastics within Council facilities and events. The policy includes a commitment to introduce an organics collection within the Civic Centre early in 2019/20.

Wyndham City is also committed to improving stormwater treatment with over \$3.5 million in capital works committed to the upgrade of 9 wetlands and 11 litter traps to current best practice standards. The first two litter trap upgrades were completed in June 2019 and the first wetland upgrade is due to start later in 2019.

We continue to reduce the environmental impact of our purchases, by requiring environmentally sound goods and services in our procurement. Total spend on sustainable goods and services increased to \$13.9 million in 2018/19.



Sustainable Purchasing Summary 2018/19



Relative sustainable spend



6.3%
of total council expenditure



\$146
per rateable property

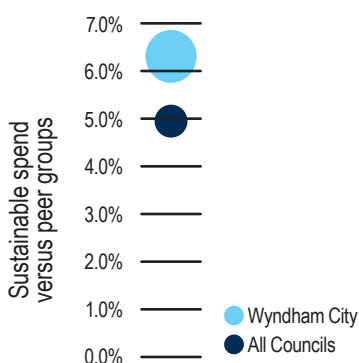
Top 5 sustainable purchases



1. Lighting
2. Vehicles (efficient)
3. Outdoor (green products)
4. Road and footpath (recycled content)
5. Asphalt (recycled content)

Recycled Content

Council has been using recycled content materials including recycled asphalt and concrete in the production and repair of roads and footpaths.



Environmental Savings

Savings from the purchase of compost, paper and mobile garbage bins, and recycled asphalt have contributed to environmental savings of:



2.9ha of land



731 tonnes
of carbon dioxide equivalent

Recommended Actions

Solar: The solar program in 2019/20 will focus on sporting pavilions and kindergartens. Council will be installing up to 300 kW across 10 sites.

Lighting: Continue to upgrade street lighting to LEDs.

Electricity: Pursue renewable energy options for new electricity contracts.

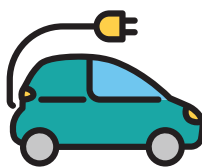


Civic Centre Green Waste

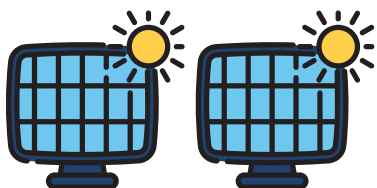


Organic waste collection service to commence in August 2019 with the potential to divert over **70%** of waste from the Council waste stream.

Council Fleet Vehicles-



Wyndham trialled two hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles for a period of three months. Although currently not available on the Australian market, these trials are an important step towards hydrogen as a future fuel option.



Large Scale Solar Project

The combined energy generated by all of Council's solar PV installations (**1.85MW**) can produce enough power to charge over **1000** mid-sized electric vehicles per year for the next **20** years.



Battery Storage Systems

Over **350kWh** of batteries have been installed at community centres and sporting pavilions to store excess solar energy generated during sunlight hours. The batteries have the potential to supply enough energy to run **20** average sized Wyndham homes per year (**12kWh/day**).

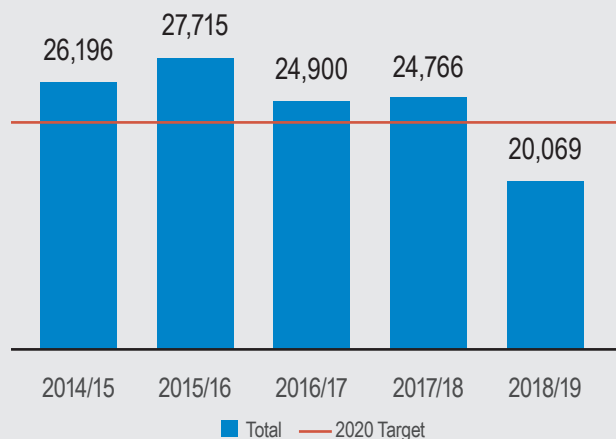
Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre



The almost completed Wyndham Aboriginal Community and Integrated Family Centre will achieve a **5 Star Green Star** rating, a first for Wyndham Council.



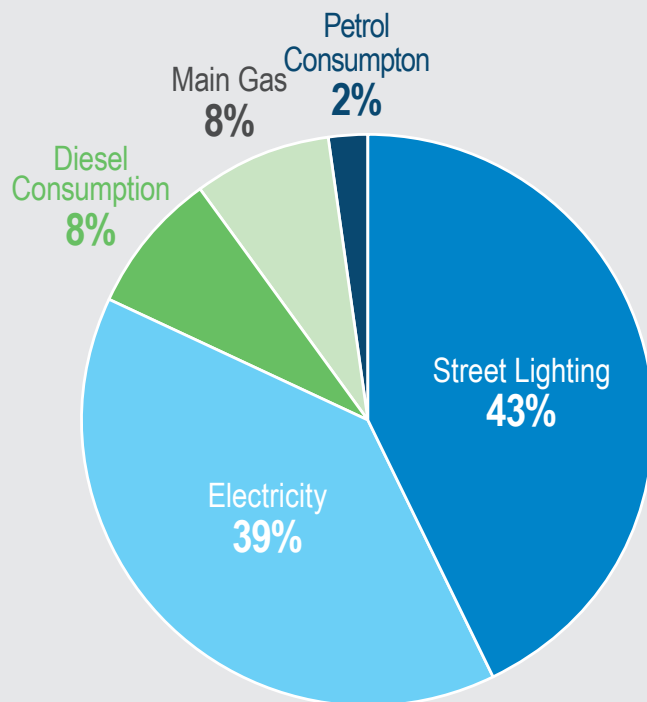
Wyndham City's Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions (tonnes CO₂)



Wyndham City's greenhouse gas emissions from operations decreased by 19% or 4,697 tonnes of CO₂ in 2018/19 compared to the previous year. This is the result of significant investment in solar PV and energy efficient street lighting upgrades. 2018/19 emissions are 12% below Wyndham City's 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target.

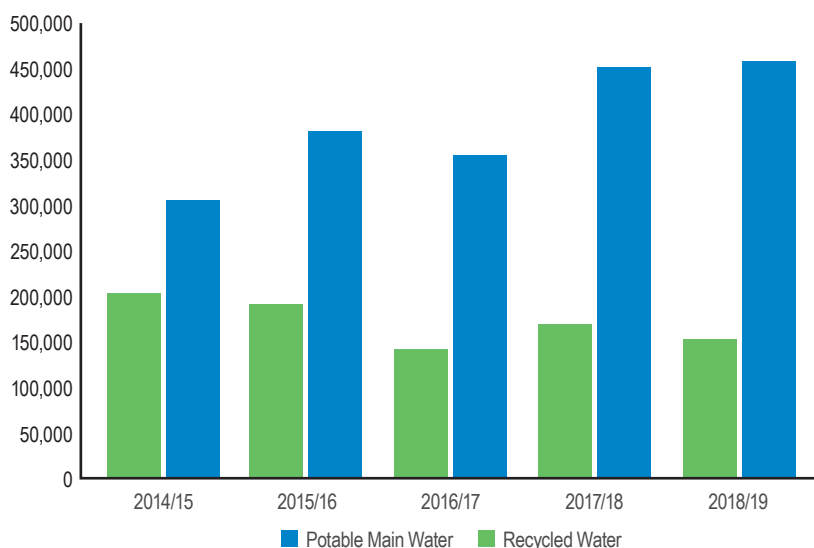
Note that actual savings from renewable energy and energy efficient projects are considerably higher than 4,697 tonnes of CO₂, however many of these savings are 'consumed' by new buildings and streetlights installations as part of Wyndham's rapid growth. These figures exclude the RDF.

Breakdown of Wyndham City's 2018/19 Greenhouse Gas Emissions



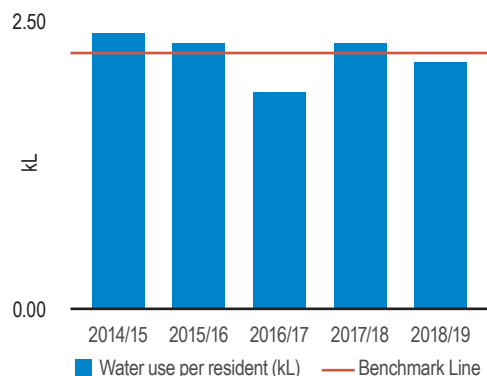
In 2018/19 electricity used to power Wyndham's streetlights was the greatest contributor to Council's greenhouse gas emissions. Refer to the Lighting the West Case Study to read more about what is being done to reduce these emissions. These figures exclude the RDF.

Wyndham City's Water Use



Recycled water supplies contributed to 22% of Wyndham City's water demand in 2018/19. Council's overall water consumption decreased by 1% compared to 2017/18.

Wyndham City's Water Use per Resident (kL)



In 2018/19 Council's water efficiency was 2.18kL/per resident, a decrease when compared to 2.32kL/per resident in 2017/18. This decrease is due to an increasing Wyndham population and an overall improvement in building water efficiency.





Council Leadership - Case Study

Lighting the West

Lighting the West is an ongoing project aimed at upgrading Wyndham street lights to energy efficient technology by 2021. This will replace lights on all major roads in Wyndham with smart LEDs. The smart technology allows the lights to be dimmed and notifies the maintenance provider if they fail, allowing for speedy repair of the lights and improvements in road safety.

Council has already upgraded more than 15,500 lights since 2014, including 3,500 with smart LEDs in the last 2 years. The project improves road safety, creating brighter, safer streets through use of reliable LED technology and will save Council more than \$15 million over 20 years in reduced energy use and maintenance costs.

Most importantly the project, when complete, will save over 3,000 tonnes per year in greenhouse gas emissions, reducing Council's carbon footprint by more than 10%.





Council Leadership - Case Study

Single Use Plastic Policy

Studies show that Australians discard 9.7 billion single use plastic items each year, with single use plastics such as water bottles, straws, plastic bags and coffee cups being discarded at alarming rates.

The disposable nature of these plastic items means they are commonly found littered within Wyndham, with some items making their way into our precious waterways.

To help combat this, Wyndham City introduced a Single Use Plastic Policy in March 2019. This policy aims to eliminate Council's usage and supply of disposable plastic items

including plastic plates, cups, containers, bags, cutlery, straws, balloons, disposable water bottles and coffee cups. It will also provide a practical demonstration and leadership on how a large organisation can achieve this.

Council departments are currently transitioning to align with the new policy, with full implementation scheduled for September 2019.



To read the full policy visit:
www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastic-policy-2019





Integrated Water Management

Traditionally, the urban water streams of potable water, wastewater, groundwater and stormwater have been managed separately to ensure a secure water supply, protection of human health, and protection from floods. However, the ability of these different management systems to deliver services is increasingly being challenged through issues such as climate variability and population growth. The approach no longer meets the growing community concern on the health of their parks and waterways.

An integrated, strategic approach is therefore necessary. Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) recognises the social, economic and environmental objectives of water in our communities and the shared responsibilities in delivering these objectives.

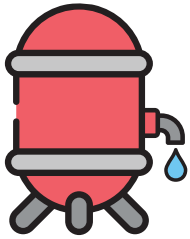
Wyndham City is implementing a range of IWCM projects including the upgrade of gross pollutant traps and wetlands to improve stormwater treatment and ensuring all new developments have plans to protect the environment and waterways during construction. Master planning for the location of new stormwater

treatment assets is also underway, along with ongoing assessments of planning permits for opportunities to include new integrated water management and sustainable design objectives. Wyndham has obtained grant funding from the Victorian Government to build Zone 5 of Greening the Pipeline which incorporates our first large scale storm water harvesting system.

Another aim of the IWCM is to improve collaboration and engagement with stakeholders. This is demonstrated through our partnership with Melbourne Water to deliver 'Greening the Pipeline';

the revitalisation of the Main Outfall Sewer. Wyndham City is currently hosting the Coordinator of this project. Residents have also taken onboard ways to improve their water usage and protect our waterways through the Green Living Series, for example the wicking bed workshop demonstrated how residents can use up to 50% less water in their vegetable gardens and our Waterway Wonders workshop helps people get to know the amazing local plants and wildlife that need healthy waterways to survive.





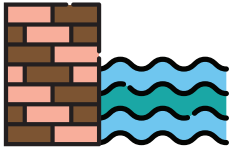
Water efficiency

Installation of **358** rainwater tanks was required through new planning permits with a total of **412** planning permits assessed for integrated water outcomes.



SEMP

265 site environmental management plans approved for waterway and environmental protection.



GPT Upgrades

2 industrial scale stormwater gross pollution traps upgraded with another **11** scheduled over the next three years.



Effective wetlands

Work is underway to upgrade **9** wetlands to reduce the annual nitrogen load discharge into our natural waterways.



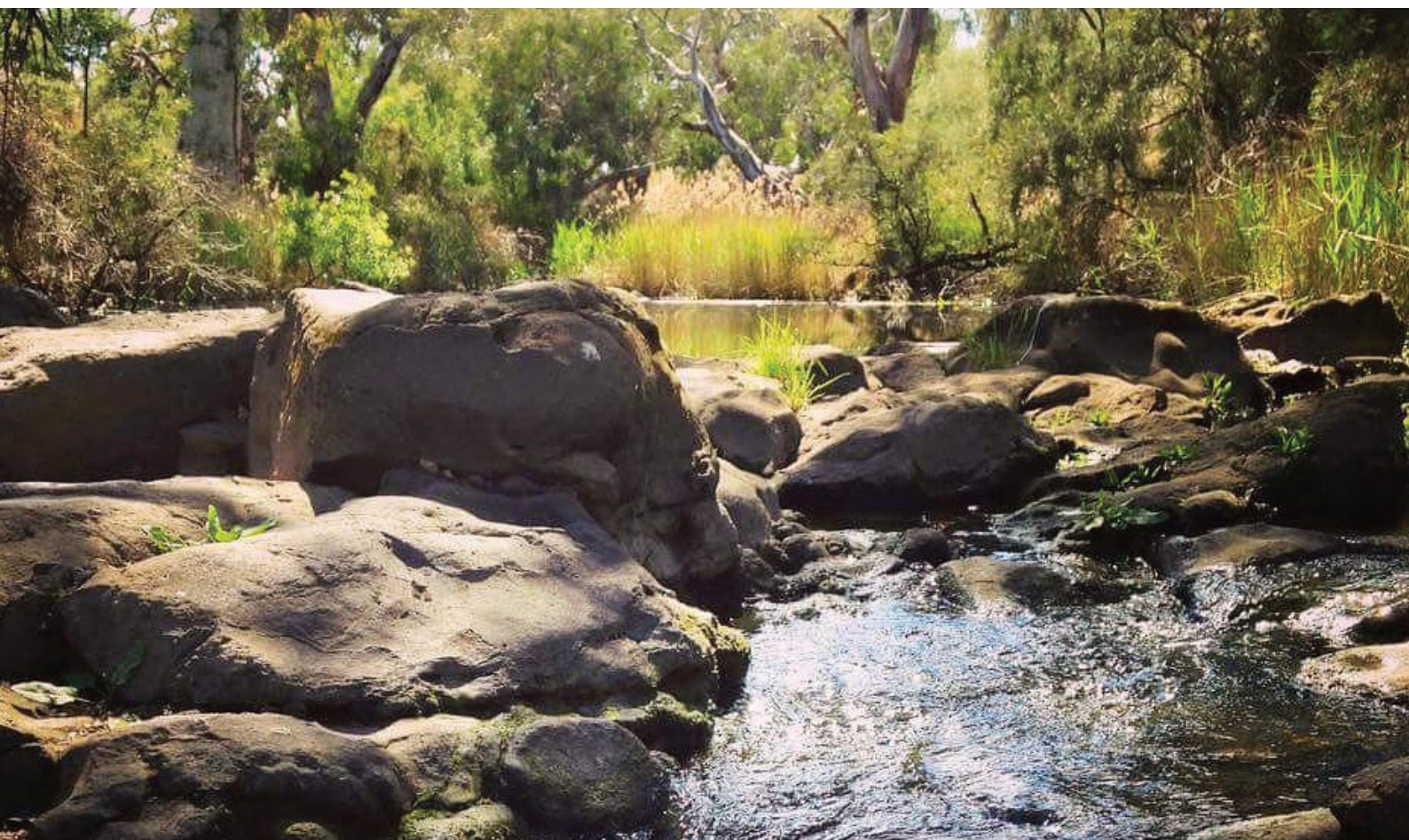
Community Engagement

106 residents attended four Green Living Series events with a focus on water and coastal issues.



Greening the Pipeline

\$10.3 million in funding approved for a large-scale stormwater harvesting scheme and parkland.





Management- Case Study

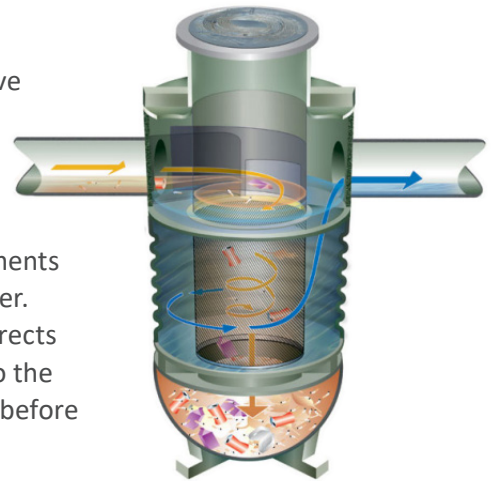
Wyndham's Healthier Waterways program

The volume of litter and nutrients entering our rivers, creeks and Port Phillip Bay is growing every year with sometimes deadly impacts on local wildlife, including the protected platypus. To respond to this challenge Council has committed more than \$3 million to upgrade existing underperforming litter or gross pollutant traps (GPTs) and stormwater treatment wetlands.

The upgrade program has been developed in response to a comprehensive audit of the performance of all Council's wetlands and GPT's against current best practice standards for stormwater treatment. Over the next four years these upgrades will substantially improve the health of our major urban waterways, including the Werribee River, Lollipop Creek and Skeleton Creek, as well as providing significant improvements for local residents and biodiversity through new native habitat planting and park furniture additions to wetland reserves.

The first two GPT upgrades in the program were completed in June 2019 and have already trapped a significant amount of litter from entering Skeleton Creek. Next year we will be replacing a further three GPT's and upgrading wetlands along the Werribee River and Lollipop Creek.

The new GPTs trap 98% of gross pollutants down to 3mm in size and 95% of sediments down to 1mm in size by diverting the stormwater into a vortex (whirlpool) chamber. The vortex motion within the chamber provides a continuous circular flow that directs the pollutants away from the screen towards the centre where they then sink into the storage sump below. The remaining stormwater is then passed through a screen before it continues to the waterway.





City Forest & Habitat

Wyndham's City Forest and Habitat Strategy (2018-2040) was adopted by Council in 2018. It's vision for Wyndham is a vibrant living ecosystem with shade and green spaces that support healthy communities and resilient, connected, natural environments. This will be achieved through a range of interconnected actions that will create an urban forest, enhance our biodiversity and link our community to green and natural spaces.

After the first year of delivery, the City Forest and Habitat Strategy is largely on track to achieving this vision. Progress of the strategy is being tracked through a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

2018/19 saw significant changes implemented through Council's tree planting program with a view to increasing Wyndham's tree canopy cover in future years. Larger numbers of trees are now being planted into Council streets, parks and reserves to help make Wyndham greener. Through a collaborative approach, trees are being given more consideration in planning, development and delivery of infrastructure projects. The first ever Wyndham Significant Tree Register has also been adopted.

Biodiversity values have improved through multiple Wyndham initiatives. The addition of the Wyndella Reserve conservation area and the incorporation of habitat plantings as part of the Wyndham Parks 2021 Program

are contributing to the expansion of habitat in our urban areas. In addition to the extensive planting of indigenous tubestock, environmental burns now play a significant role in the management of Council's native grasslands and assist in increasing the quality of existing habitat.

An expanded community engagement program has seen increased participation in environment and conservation focused initiatives such as the Habitat Heroes School Program and new events being added to the Green Living Series with record workshop attendees. Wyndham City has made important progress with increasing engagement with Indigenous communities, particularly in the management of cultural heritage within conservation areas. A Community Engagement Plan has been developed and will guide the planning and preparation of exciting new community programs into coming years.

The initial twelve months of strategy implementation has seen several positive unintended outcomes including the facilitation of tree-related advocacy within Council, a stronger than expected partnership with DELWP and the establishment of the Tree Amenity Fund.





Case Study

Ecological Burns for Conservation

Fire is an important ecological process for native grasslands but is now often absent throughout this sensitive ecosystem. Once covering the vast areas of western Victoria, native grasslands of the Victoria Volcanic Plains are listed as a critically endangered ecosystem with less than 1% remaining. They are faced with the relentless pressures including grazing, cropping, invasive weed threats and development.

Wyndham City is fortunate enough to manage large areas of this endangered ecosystem. To remain healthy, grasslands require various management techniques with one of the most effective being controlled burning. This is a technique practiced by Indigenous land managers for millennia.

Council's controlled burn program aims to rejuvenate indigenous plants, reduce biomass and control annual weed species in conservation reserves along Skeleton Creek, Lollypop Creek and Little River. This allows native grasses such as Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) the opportunity to regenerate into the newly open spaces with less competition from introduced weeds.

Over the 2018/19 financial year, more than 20 individual controlled burns, totalling 8,400m², were successfully completed within Council reserves. Initial results of these burns were mixed due to the extended dry period experienced after summer, however once the winter rains of 2019 began, plant growth and new seed germination became increasingly evident.

The nature of this grassland management practice means that weather variables such as air temperature, wind speed and the moisture content of grass determine if a controlled burn can go ahead on schedule or not. Because of the unpredictable seasonal conditions, a number of planned burns were cancelled during the Autumn 2019 burn period.

Successfully completed scheduled burns in Wyndham have allowed for intensive weed control to be undertaken within the sites post-burn.

Council plans to roll out its controlled burn program every Spring and Autumn to regenerate our threatened native grasslands, improving biodiversity and habitat values for our native fauna.





City Forest and Habitat - Case Study

Significant Tree Register

While developed on a natural grassy plain, Wyndham does contain some very special and important trees. Some are remnant vegetation that have been nurtured by the traditional owners over hundreds of years, others were planted by early European settlers around the newly built settlements or to commemorate people or occasions.

As one of the fastest growing urban development zones in Victoria, some of these significant trees are at risk of being lost to make way for housing, roads or other development.

Wyndham's City Forest & Habitat Strategy identified a Significant Tree Register as a key management tool to protect trees that hold significant scientific, historical, cultural and amenity value.

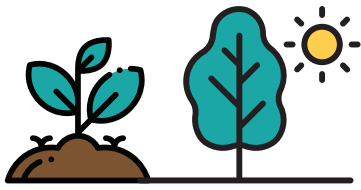
Significant Tree Registers are a great way to promote and celebrate the special trees that are valued by the community. Wyndham aims to also incorporate our Significant Tree Register into the Wyndham Planning Scheme, to ensure these trees have planning controls and cannot be removed without an approved planning permit.

Based on the independent criteria developed for the National Trust's Significant Tree Register, Wyndham's first ever Significant Tree Register, containing 40 significant trees, was submitted to the Victorian Planning Minister in November 2018 to be incorporated into the Planning Scheme.

A second round of nominations for trees located on land owned or managed by Council was conducted between January and March 2019 resulting in approximately 150 trees being nominated by the community. Arboricultural and heritage assessments are now underway. The 150 trees will be shortlisted based on the scientific, historical, cultural and amenity criteria.

An individual Statement of Tree Significance will be developed for each significant tree feature and the shortlisted trees will be added to the 40 trees previously assessed and qualified during the first round of nominations. Planning controls that will protect the trees will be submitted to the Planning Minister for approval in the 2019/20 financial year.





Greening Wyndham

Over **7,000** advanced sized trees are scheduled to be planted in streets each year across the municipality.

Working together



Many strong working partnerships have been forged between Council and organisations such as Melbourne Water and DEWLP, allowing us to better support local biodiversity through strong initiatives.

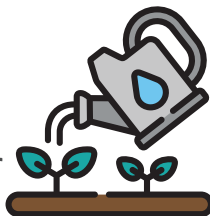


Tree Trials

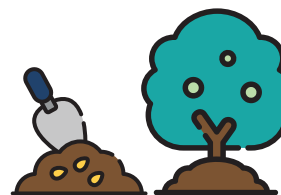
Projects are underway to trial different water-sensitive urban design techniques and species selection for trees to ensure the health and growth of Wyndham's future urban forest.

All Hands on Deck

10,000 tube stock trees were planted by community volunteers in reserves to help create greener open spaces and building stronger wildlife corridors.



BOBITS



24 Bits Of Bush In The Suburbs (BOBITS) have been planted into local parks during 2018/19 to increase native habitat pockets throughout our suburbs. There are another **61** BOBITS to be installed in parks by 2021.



Significant Tree Register

40 local trees of significance have been included through the first round of nominations for Wyndham's Significant Tree Register. Further rounds of nominations will occur in the following financial year.





With thanks...

To the members of the Wyndham community for providing information for this report. Are you doing any environmental monitoring in Wyndham?

If so, we would like to hear from you!

Please contact:

Wyndham's Department of Environment and Water

Phone: 9742 0777

Email: mail@wyndham.vic.gov.au