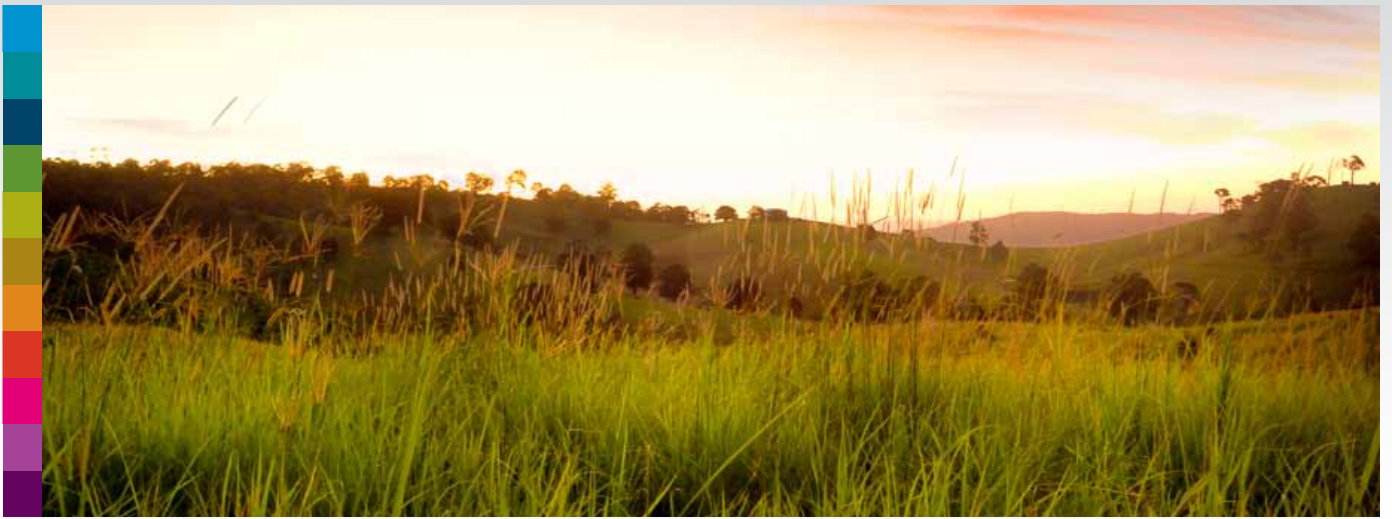


# Our Environment

A photograph of a seal swimming in clear, turquoise water. The seal is dark brown and is moving from the bottom left towards the center right. The water is very clear, showing ripples and some underwater rocks. The sky is a bright blue with a few wispy clouds near the horizon. The overall scene is bright and clear.

#Balancing  
**environmental**  
and **population**  
needs





## Our Environment

There are many challenges facing local governments when protecting the environment and meeting the needs of growing populations.

In community surveys used to help formulate council's first corporate plan, our residents strongly identified with the need to focus on creating sustainable places in which to live. As a result, ways to enhance sustainability have become key drivers of council's decision-making process.

### Addressing climate change

Council was one of the first in Queensland to prepare a report on the impacts of climate change. The report, *Scoping Climate Change Risk for Moreton Bay Regional Council*, is now available to the public on council's website. This high-level analysis brings a consolidated view of the likely climate change impacts, and is intended to lead to more detailed assessments to assist council when making decisions on this issue.

Council also participated in the preparation of the State Government's draft SEQ Climate Change Strategy.

The amalgamated council has continued to be part of the Regional Energy Efficiency Street Lighting study to assess the options for reduced energy consumption for residential streetlights. This is a three-year project due for completion at the end of 2010.

At the organisational level, council facilities continue to be upgraded with energy efficient lighting, appliances and improved metering to monitor and manage energy use, leading to a reduction in emissions and energy costs. As an example, work on the Strathpine Civic Centre energy efficiency upgrades included installation of energy efficient lights, lighting circuits linked to movement sensors, improved efficiency of heating, ventilating and air conditioning and increased window shading. The estimated greenhouse gas savings of these upgrades is approximately 20 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year with a financial saving of \$20,000 per year. The upgrades are expected to pay for themselves in four and a half years.

Other activities include:

- **Sustainable Home Caboolture** – a partnership involving the State Government, a developer, a builder and Moreton Bay Regional Council. This open house at Caboolture East, which operated until October 2008, provided a practical demonstration of sustainable home features to the community and industry.
- **Solar array installation** – Council has installed solar panels at a number of its facilities and now has a grid-connected solar capacity of 31 kilowatts. This reduces carbon dioxide emissions by an estimated 56.5 tonnes a year.
- **Environment Centre sustainability improvements** – CREEC Environmental Centre at Burpengary, Kumbartcho Sanctuary at Eatons Hill and Osprey House at Griffin, have undergone sustainability auditing and energy efficiency upgrades. These works will result in more efficient facility operation, reduced greenhouse emissions and will also serve as an example of sustainable living to residents.
- Council has been involved in the **Bribie Island Climate Adaptation program** conducted by SEQ Catchments and Sunshine Coast University.



## Protecting biodiversity and ecosystems

### Charlie Moorhead Nature Refuge Designation

In April 2009, the new council entered into its first Nature Refuge Conservation Agreement with the Minister of Sustainability and Climate Change.

The nature refuge status allows for perpetual protection and recognition at State level of the Charlie Moorhead Nature Refuge at 650 Campbells Pocket Road, Campbells Pocket. The property contains significant natural values, including 25 hectares of remnant vegetation providing habitat for rare and threatened animals and plants. Importantly, 35 critically endangered Bahrs Scrub Croton (*Croton mamillatus*) shrubs exist on the property – a species discovered a few years ago with only about 100 plants known to exist in the world.

### Dohles Rocks

Council purchased 24.5 hectares at Dohles Rocks Road, Griffin, with \$1.5 million from its environmental levy. The land, which will become the new Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve, is next to Osprey House Environmental Centre and provides an important wildlife corridor between neighbouring natural areas and the Pine River. The area, although previously cleared, contains nine hectares of endangered Swamp She-oak Forest ecosystem including Swamp Water Fern, with rhizomes once used as a food source by Aboriginal people in Moreton Bay. The conservation value of the area will increase significantly as the land regenerates. Council will monitor and measure the expansion of this critical coastal habitat.

### Godwin Beach Environmental Reserve

Council has begun improvements at Godwin Beach Environmental Reserve. The 26-hectare reserve of coastal lowlands bordering Moreton Bay Marine Park is recognised as one of the most significant archaeological sites in South-East Queensland and is home to more than 200 plant species and a diverse range of birds and native animals.

Council, in consultation with representatives of the Gubbi Gubbi people, formulated a land management plan and cultural heritage management plan for long-term

improvements and maintenance of the reserve. Initial work in 2008/09 involved adding fencing, removing weeds, planting indigenous species and carrying out a fauna survey. In November 2008, the reserve's Cultural Heritage Management Plan received meritorious recognition at the Planning Institute Australia (Qld division) Awards for Planning Excellence.

### Other locations

Council continues to maintain and enhance the 90 hectares of properties previously purchased under the environmental levy. For example, the building at the Greenwoods site, 240 Church Road, Eatons Hill, is being refurbished to become an environmental conference centre in partnership with Bunya Community Environmental Association.

### Managing coastal and catchment areas

To achieve a sustainable environment, council has a commitment to responsible management of the region's water resources and protection of natural ecosystems. During the reporting period, council was involved in a number of projects and initiatives that furthered this commitment.

- Mapping of shorebird habitats was expanded to include the entire region. Shorebirds are vulnerable to a number of threats throughout their migratory ranges, including inadequate protection of shorebird roosting and feeding sites, plus pollution. This mapping project will aid in the protection of internationally significant shorebird habitat found within the region. In June 2009, council's Shorebird Management Program was shortlisted as a finalist in two categories in the United Nations Australia World Environment Day Awards - Best Specific Environmental Initiative, and Excellence in Marine and Coastal Management.
- Council undertook a significant review of the Sandstone Point Foreshore Parkland Land Management Plan. The revised land management plan, when completed, will ensure compliance with relevant legislative requirements and protection of ecological, physical and cultural values of the land while still allowing for lawful general maintenance.



- Sediment and nutrients pollute our waterways, often flushing into our rivers after heavy rains. Council has spent \$284,000 on event monitoring using five existing automatic sampling stations along the Pine River, and Freshwater and Four Mile Creeks and two new ones installed on the Caboolture River and Wararba Creek. The information gained from these stations will help council work on ways to reduce the pollutants in the region's waterways.
- Council has also expanded its stream health monitoring program across the region.
- Environmental officers are measuring water quality in 150 freshwater and estuarine sites to monitor water quality and to identify any problems and further action needed. Council is restoring riverbank vegetation and tightening sediment controls on development to help protect these essential resources.
- Council completed mapping of Acid Sulfate Soils at Bribie Island, Beachmere, Toorbul, Meldale and Donnybrook. The mapping identified existing and potential acid sulfate soils which will aid in the planning and management of developments and infrastructure in these areas.

## Making our vehicles greener

To reduce pollution in our environment, council has implemented several initiatives across its plant and fleet operations making them more fuel efficient.

When renewing the fleet, there is an emphasis on replacing six-cylinder utilities with vehicles that have dual fuel systems that allow them to run on both LPG and unleaded fuels.

Four-cylinder vehicles are preferred over larger ones and now make up 60 per cent of council's passenger and utility fleet. E10 is used as council's preferred unleaded petrol.

Meanwhile, biodiesel is now servicing all equipment at landfill sites across the region. The cleaner fuel gives off less carbon than traditional fuels.

## Conserving koalas

Council endorsed the commencement of the Moreton Bay Koala Conservation Partnership Project in March 2009. The scope of the project extends to a range of planning, works and ongoing maintenance tasks. Council is working with representatives of relevant government agencies and key community groups to align initiatives to achieve the best long-term results for koala conservation. The first phase of the project is expected to extend across three years.

Meanwhile, in July 2008, council endorsed a koala habitat map produced for the region by external consultants in partnership with a range of stakeholders including council. The map was produced through a joint initiative of the three former councils and the Environmental Protection Agency (now known as the Department of Environmental Resource Management). The mapping updates previous versions and reflects a more localised understanding of koala populations and habitat areas within the region. Ahead, the mapping is to be incorporated into council's planning schemes.

## Improving our waste record

A key component of improving sustainability is to reduce the amount of unnecessary waste produced. This is one area where residents can make a significant difference.

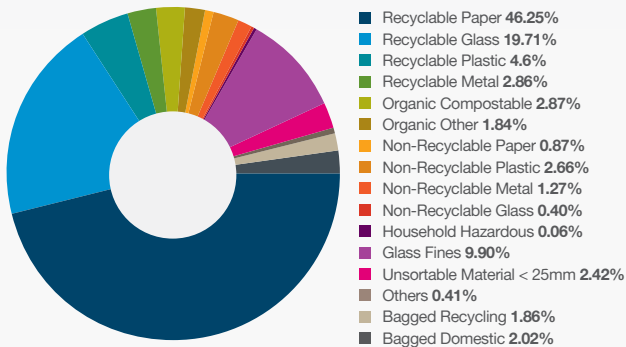
A 2008 waste audit showed the average Moreton Bay region household generates about 19 kilograms of waste a week, of which 64 per cent goes in general bins and 36 per cent is placed in recycling bins.

Council's audit shows that almost a quarter of the waste in general bins could have been recycled. Organic material such as food scraps, newspapers and cardboard make up the bulk of the material that could have otherwise been recycled.





## What we are putting in our recycling bins



### Reducing waste at work

Council, in partnership with Amcor, has instigated a Recycle @ Work program which resulted in more than 13 tonnes of recyclable waste diverted from landfill to recycling between April 2008 and June 2009.

### Narangba Industrial Estate program

Council is partnering with the Department of Environmental Resource Management to facilitate the EcoBiz program for a number of businesses located at Narangba Industrial Estate. The program helps businesses find ways of reducing the amount of electricity, water and waste they use and produce. Businesses identify their current levels in each area and then work towards making improvements. An action plan is put in place and an audit, scheduled for January 2010 will measure success.

### Recycling features at council events

Council has been working in partnership with the Department of Environmental Resource Management to ensure recycling facilities are now available at major council events such as Redcliffe's First Settlement Festival, Caboolture's Urban Country Music Festival, The Pine Rivers Aussie Arvo, Bribie Island's Aussie Beach Party and Redcliffe's Festival of Sails.

### Community responds to clean up call

Strong community support of council's continued commitment to Clean Up Australia Day was demonstrated in March, 2009, with 103 cleanup sites registered in the region – an increase of 67 per cent on 2008's site numbers. More than 6,500 volunteers took part and helped collect more than 200 cubic metres of general litter and nearly 27 cubic metres of recyclable rubbish.

### Educating future generations

Council works closely with schools in the Moreton Bay region to encourage active participation in looking after our environment.

Between January and June 2009, council reached more than 3,130 students during 112 lessons on catchment care and more than 1,170 students who took part in 42 lessons on energy conservation.

During 2008/09 more than 2,790 students from 93 classes in 19 Moreton Bay region schools took part in council's waste education program aimed at teaching waste minimisation strategies such as recycling, composting, reduction of litter and the reduction of packaging waste. Council's school education program is now available to the 92 primary and high schools across the region and aims to give the next generation practical advice on how to reduce waste and the resulting benefits.

Council's E-Team, which conducts environmental education in schools, was recognised in the 2008 United Nations Australia World Environment Day Awards as a nominee for the Local Government – Best Specific Environmental Initiative category.