

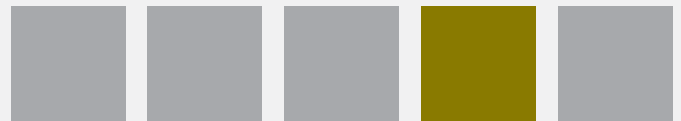
our  
**ENVIRONMENT**



# A sustainable environment for all

**Council's key environmental challenge is to accommodate a rapidly growing population while ensuring important environmental resources and services are safeguarded for future generations. Council is committed to promoting sustainable practices across environmental protection and development activities to create high quality outcomes for current and future residents.**

**Strategies include responding to climate change, reducing pollution and greenhouse emissions and promoting energy efficiency.**



### Addressing climate change

Council formed a special committee to consider the likely impacts of climate change. In June 2010, based on the committee's recommendations, council adopted a climate change policy position to actively plan and prepare in those service areas that fall under its responsibility.

At an organisational level, council began assessing energy and water usage at its main administration buildings. Using the National Australian Built Environment Rating System, Strathpine's administration building achieved a two-star energy rating and five-star water efficiency rating. Work is under way on an assessment of Caboolture's administration building. By rating its buildings, council can then evaluate how to make the most effective changes to improve efficiencies.

A sustainable facilities working group is further examining energy, water and waste efficiency in council premises. Ongoing energy efficiency upgrades include:

- installation of power consumption monitors and solar power generation at selected sites
- upgrades and improvements to air conditioning and building management systems
- installation of automated lighting at numerous sites



### Looking ahead ... gas extraction flares

As waste material at landfill sites decomposes it emits greenhouse gases including methane and carbon dioxide.

Council is planning to install three gas extraction flares at Bunya, Dakabin and Caboolture landfill sites in September 2010 with the aim of reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by up to 75 per cent.

The flares will be monitored over 12 months to assess whether the gas produced can be harnessed as a renewable energy source. A smaller unit is also planned for Alexander Barr Oval at Caboolture.



The following environmental education and conservation activities were carried out during 2009/10.

**Community Bushcare** – Council supports a network of bushcare groups throughout the region. These volunteer groups help manage 60 sites and provide their members with social activity as well as the opportunity to enhance their environments. In the year to 30 June, the groups planted about 66,680 plants. For council, the most challenging aspect of the Community Bushcare program is keeping up with community demand.

**Land for Wildlife** – This voluntary program supported by council provides resources to private land holders and community groups managing land with existing wildlife habitat, as well as those working to re-establish habitat through revegetation and restoration projects. Through the program council assists with the management of 5,096 hectares of private land. At 30 June 2010, 309 properties were fully registered with the program while a further 107 were working towards full registration.

**Backyards for Wildlife** – This program supports and recognises the efforts of owners of smaller bushland blocks working to preserve local wildlife habitat and link corridors in the urban environment. In the region there are 123 properties registered with this program and interest in joining Backyards for Wildlife remains strong.

**Living with the Environment** – Council conducted 15 Living with the Environment workshops throughout the region to promote a greater understanding of aspects of our local environment. Topics included native stingless bees, frogs, revegetation, nature and wildlife photography, butterflies and marine life. The workshops were very popular and will continue in 2010/11.

**Koalas Survey Day** – This voluntary survey involving residents helps identify koala habitats while promoting greater awareness of koalas and the local environment. The 2009 survey held on 18 October reported 289 koalas regionwide.

**Schools Education for Sustainability** – Council provided in-school education modules on catchment care and energy efficiency to 33 schools, involving 4,295 students in 170 presentations. Additional modules were delivered at our environment centres at Osprey House, Kumbartcho and CREEC (Caboolture Region Environmental Education Centre). Biodiversity modules were developed as part of the 2009/10 budget and will be trialled in schools from July 2010.

**Don Perrin Bursary** – Student Laura Cox won the inaugural Don Perrin Environmental Bursary and spoke as an environmental ambassador at the Hays Inlet Festival. The \$2,000 bursary is awarded to a graduating student to support their environmental studies at a tertiary education level.



To achieve a sustainable environment, council works with the community to manage the region's water resources and protect natural ecosystems. During the reporting period, council was involved in a number of projects and initiatives that furthered this commitment.

**National Tree Day** – This event attracted 780 volunteers who helped plant 6,340 trees in Moreton Bay region. The plantings were carried out at 12 locations, including school sites, on Friday 31 July and Sunday 2 August.

**Caboolture River Recovery Plan** – A recovery plan has been developed to help improve the health of the Caboolture River. Stage one recommendations list 11 key actions for implementation over the next three years by council, Unitywater, SEQWater, SEQ Catchments, the Department of Environment and Resource Management, the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation and SEQ Healthy Waterways Partnership.

**Caboolture River Bank Revegetation** – Council continued its support for revegetation work at Weier Road, Caboolture. More than 5.5 hectares of land along the Caboolture River has been revegetated in the past eight years. In the financial year to June 2010, council supported six volunteers who have added another 2,000 plants to the site. The project has improved water quality and created a wildlife refuge that is home to an expanding number of recorded species.

**South Pine River Project** – In the year to June 2010, 23 volunteers supported by council added 9,000 plants on nine kilometres of riverbank from Cash Crossing, Albany Creek to Church Road at Eatons Hill to restore endangered rainforest. Volunteers clocked up 3,100 hours, weeded 18,000 square metres of riverbank and collected 4.5 kilograms of native seed to grow plants for next year. This project has been ongoing for the past nine years.

**Bells Creek Rainforest Project** – In June 2010, Bendigo Bank provided the Bells Creek Rainforest Project at Margate with \$10,000 for plants and mulch. Members of the public, bank staff and Green Army workplace trainees planted 1,000 plants at the site.

**Woorim Oil Spill Project** – Council received funding support through SEQ Catchments and the Federal Government to help it with dune recovery work on Bribie Island following the Pacific Adventurer container ship oil spill in March 2009.

Council used the funding to promote dune care and restore degraded areas of the beach. By June 2010, the project was 80 per cent complete and included weed control over 10 hectares, signage for turtle and dune care awareness, installation of protective fencing, and the addition of 10,000 plants to degraded frontal dunes. A further 6,000 plants will be added to dunes north of Woorim by September 2010.

**Fire Management** – Council staff meet several times with Parks and Wildlife, Department of Environment and Resource Management, SEQ Water and Forestry representatives as well as Metropolitan and Rural Fire Brigade officers to plan a series of prescribed burns to reduce potential bushfire hazard. This collaborative approach enables all agencies to maximise the effectiveness of their respective programs. Prescribed burns are typically undertaken in the cooler months, between April and August.



Council regularly monitors the health of ecosystems to help improve environmental management processes and outcomes.

Projects included:

#### Protecting biodiversity

Council is developing a biodiversity strategy which will detail key areas of environmental significance within the region, such as ecological corridors and koala and shorebird habitat. This strategy will outline the actions required to ensure the protection of our natural areas in to the future. It is due for completion in early 2011 and will meet the requirements of council's corporate plan, the South-East Queensland Regional Plan and South-East Queensland Natural Resource Management Plan.

#### Koala Conservation Partnership Project

Council continued to work with representatives of relevant government agencies and key community groups as part of the Koala Conservation Partnership Project to achieve the best long-term results for koala conservation. The project covers a range of measures, such as council's koala conservation policy and the recent one-hectare revegetation of koala habitat along Dohles Rocks Road.

#### Stream health monitoring

Council's first stream monitoring and mapping project, covering all major catchments of the Moreton Bay region, was completed during the financial year. These results will help form a baseline for future waterways management planning.

#### Acid sulfate soils mapping

Council is working in partnership with the Department of Environment and Resource Management to identify acid sulfate soils in the Moreton Bay region. This mapping project will reduce the risk of environmental and infrastructure damage caused by acid sulfate soil disturbance. The current project is expected to be completed by December 2010. Mapping produced for the Beachmere, Toorbul, Meldale and Donnybrook areas in 2009 is already being used by council and developers.

#### Land acquisitions

More than \$1.4 million was spent during 2009/10 securing land for environmental purposes at Dohles Rocks Road, Griffin; Dundiella Way, Yugar; and Bunya Crossing Road, Eatons Hill.



Council treats, disposes of and recycles waste in accordance with best practice and legislative requirements

Part of this commitment involves developing innovative and sustainable waste management practices.

In 2009/10 council received just under 400,000 tonnes of waste through its waste management facilities, from households and commercial operators. Council was able to meet its target of recycling more than 40 per cent of this amount.

Via council's kerbside waste and recycling collection program an average of 25 per cent of recyclable waste is being diverted from landfills and recycled into new products.

However, an audit of the region's waste shows there is more that can be done to reduce the amount of potentially recyclable material ending up as landfill. Council has a range of programs, strategies and education initiatives to improve the region's waste and recycling record.

#### Clean Up Australia Day

In 2010, council helped organise the local Clean Up Australia Day campaign as part of its ongoing commitment to the program. Despite wet weather, more than 4,700 volunteers collected 82.4 cubic metres of litter and 14.5 cubic metres of recyclables at 124 sites on Sunday, 7 March.

#### Treasure Markets

Shops at the Caboolture and Dakabin waste management facilities are giving unwanted but still useable items a new lease of life, based on the idea that what is one person's trash can be another's treasure. During the financial year, an estimated 6,200 tonnes of recyclable items were saved from becoming landfill.

#### Reducing waste at work

Council, in partnership with Amcor, has a Recycle @ Work program. In the past year, almost 2,500 tonnes of recyclable waste has been diverted from landfill. This figure is expected to continue to increase as more organisations and businesses join the scheme. An audit of the waste collected through the program showed 83.8 per cent could be effectively recycled.

#### Recycling at council events

Council is using the Department of Environment and Resource Management's Recycling@Events program to help it improve recovery of event recyclable waste. Council will further promote the initiative to encourage patrons to dispose of their waste in the appropriate bins.

#### The Litter Action Program

Council's litter crews incorporated more than 660 requests for the removal of rubbish from public areas as part of their weekly clean up program. More than 1,550 tonnes of litter was removed from public areas including parks, roadsides and foreshores.

#### Recognition

Bunya Waste Management Facility won a 2010 Tidy Towns regional award for Resource Recovery.

St Pauls Lutheran School Caboolture won a 2010 Tidy Towns regional RACQ litter prevention award for its successful waste minimisation program as well as its litter-free lunch initiative.

#### Education

The community embraced council's waste education program in 2009/10, as indicated below:

Number of schools involved in council's waste minimisation program	60
Number of students who participated	3,937
Schools visiting the Materials Recovery Facility	23
Compost bins donated to community organisations and schools	26
Worm farms and worms donated to the community organisations and schools	27

