

**VICTORIAN FINALIST**

**MELTON  
SHIRE COUNCIL**

**2007 AUSTRALIAN  
SUSTAINABLE CITIES AWARDS**

**Inaugural Principal Sponsor**

**Hungry Jack's 'Bag it and Bin it' Program**

<b>Victorian Finalist:</b>	Melton Shire Council 3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Victorian Sustainable Cities Overall Winner
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**Overview:**

Melton Shire Council was the winner of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Sustainable Cities Award announced by Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria on 25 May 2007. Melton was also the recipient of the Zero Waste Management and the Heritage and Culture individual category awards, while an impressive collection of eighteen separate, but often related projects, contributed to Melton Shire Council taking out the overall award.

The Melton Shire Council has put an enormous amount of time, personnel and financial backing into community initiatives which are designed to encourage participation by local residents across an array of activities.

Funding has been provided for community markets, cultural diversity forums, community leadership training, leisure and open space strategies and active lifestyle programs and youth activities.

The Council has also put great emphasis on environmental issues through their own work or in supporting the many 'Friends Of' groups. The Melton Regional Park development, the acquisition of Mount Cottrell, the maintenance of Bush's Paddock and the very effective Environment Enhancement Policy and Proud Schools such as Caroline Springs and Mowbray College are all part of the community and Council's efforts to preserve and enhance the natural surroundings of Melton.

Add their recycled Water System Development Project, Public Place Recycling and the Waste Management Education and Strategy Project and it is easy to see how Melton clearly encapsulates all of the Sustainable Cities award category ideals.

Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria is pleased to nominate Melton Shire Council as the Victorian Finalist in the Inaugural Australian Sustainable Cities Awards to be held in Canberra on 28 October 2007.

## **Community Action**

### *Community Funding Program*

The Community Funding Program was set up to encourage individuals, schools, church, commercial, youth, senior, environmental and sporting groups who have a community focus and an active involvement in the Shire of Melton to apply for a grant to assist their activities.

The grant may be used to initiate and run new groups, for one-off projects, activities and for improvements to facilities or events. The Council has allocated \$225,000 per annum but due to the success of the scheme it may consider increasing this amount. Where possible those that receive a grant have to match the funding usually "in kind". So far 116 grants have been made. Once a grant is received the recipient has twelve months to spend the money and they must be accountable and provide reports and photographic evidence.

The Council contact, Brenton Hancock, acts as an advocate for those seeking funding and provides advice and guidance to the applicant to ensure they have a good chance of success. Brenton also sources other grants from Federal or State bodies and passes the information to the appropriate groups.

The successful applicants have used the funding for a wide range of activities such as:

- . Community leadership training
- . Cultural diversity awareness
- . Expo days
- . Building refurbishments
- . Literature, poetry or manuscript development
- . Health promotion
- . Local publications
- . Seating, fencing or paving
- . Public art pieces
- . Stationery

. Insurance, incorporation fees & venue hire

. Launches & promotions

The Community Funding Program has had great success in achieving its aims of providing community members with a means to be active and participate in worthwhile activities.

### *Leisure & Open Space Strategy & Active Lifestyle Project*

A part of the Active Lifestyle Project was to conduct a survey of residents. The results indicated that there was only a 30% participation rate in activities amongst residents. This was seen to be far too low.

The Melton Shire Council Recreation Coordinator, Howard Scott, has attempted to present many different ways for residents to become active. A "Come & Try" program gave residents a chance to have a go at an activity and if it suited them to join a club or organization. To assist the actual clubs to establish and remain viable the Council ran the "Club Network." This program provided the clubs with the training and skills needed to be able to operate effectively.

Several areas of Melton are new residential developments and new facilities are still being constructed. To maximize use of facilities several will be shared between groups such as schools and other community groups. While some of the activities are highly physical others are simply walkers who join together to motivate each other. It has been found that those involved in any of the activities not only gain physical benefit but also generate a sense of community. The social interaction is a major force in the making of a cohesive community.

A combination of the Open Space Strategy and the Active Lifestyle has also seen the development of the McPherson Park Equestrian Centre. This very large area has been developed by the uniting of five local riding clubs. The area has ample space for dressage and cross country events and it caters for all ability levels from pony club juniors up. The many members have carried out extensive planting, put in tanks and established excellent club room facilities. A recent 2 day horse trials had over 320 competitors making it one of the largest in the state.

### *Visitor Information Centre Volunteer Guides for Heritage & Ecology Trail*

The Melton Visitor Information Centre is situated in the old Melton Court House which was constructed in 1892. Being centrally located on the main road, the building was ideally placed to be the tourist information centre. The historic building was fully restored and refurbished providing generous offices and space for visitors to browse. As it was sited in central Melton the staff noted that there were many heritage sites within close proximity. With this in mind they developed a Heritage Trail Walk.

The walk takes approximately 45 minutes and can be with or without any accompanying guide. The Centre, through the North Melbourne Institute of TAFE, has trained 10 volunteer guides. The guides have a good knowledge of both European and indigenous history of the various sites visited. Points along the trail have interpretive signage providing additional information. The tours are free of charge and are offered monthly, with special group bookings being available. Several schools and garden groups have been amongst the 300 who have walked the trail. The Information Centre works closely with the Historical Society to continually update and improve their service.

## **Heritage and Culture**

### *Dry Stone Wall Conservation and Driving Trail*

Melton and all the surrounding district is built upon an ancient volcanic plain. In the early days of European settlement these ancient lava flows have provided an abundance of bluestone rock for construction of many local buildings. Once farming began in the area, this same rock, which was strewn thickly across the paddocks, prevented adequate tilling of the soil. As in many parts of the world where this situation occurs the farmers began clearing the paddocks of rocks and put them to good use by using them for fencing.

The Melton Council recognized that these dry stone walls were of historic significance to the Shire. A \$200,000 grant was obtained from the State Government for the purpose of mapping and recording construction methods and their present condition. When this was done they made amendments to the planning scheme to ensure their protection.

During 2005 Council staff and outside consultants visited 1200 properties and recorded the height, length, condition, stone size and type and heritage value of each wall on the property. In all 319 walls, totaling 155 kilometres, were assessed using criteria from the Dry Wall Association. The Council's new mapping software and the use of hand held GPS units made the accurate mapping of each wall relatively easy.

With all the data recorded the Council provided information for the landowners and public generally about the history and construction of the walls. A driving trail has been mapped so visitors can move around the district looking at notable walls. Working with the local Historical Society a replica dry stone wall, with explanatory signage, has been erected at the historic Willows property.

#### *Willows Heritage Site and Dry Stone Wall Sculpture*

The Willows Historical Park is based around a National Trust listed homestead built in the 1850s. After serving the pioneering families for many years the property was abandoned and became badly neglected. In 1972 the Melton Council purchased the property and a gradual restoration by the Council and National Estates Program has been undertaken. The fully restored original homestead, now the headquarters of the Melton Historical Society, is the centre piece of the Park.

The Park also contains several other buildings moved to the site. Dunvegan Cottage, a bluestone cottage which was once the local police station and Mac's Cottage, a smaller weather board house are typical of the early homes. The Djerriwarrh employment services in conjunction with the State Government ran a program teaching building skills to the unemployed. This group erected a large shearing shed stables complex typical of the era.

The Willows is now a valuable public facility and resource. The large grounds, which can hold up to 3000 people, are ideal for events such as Australia Day citizenship celebrations. The Historic Society runs the museum in the homestead and the site is also home to the Melton Arts Network which runs the Art Beat Festival and uses Mac's Cottage for classes and a gallery. The Australian Plants Society is also based at the Park and they have formed and maintained the many native garden beds at the site. The Park, which is free to enter, is a part of the Heritage trail walk and is the start of the dry stone wall driving trail. A typical dry stone wall, erected as a sculpture, is a feature of the park.

The residents of Melton are fortunate to have this beautiful heritage site located so centrally in their community. It is a wonderful asset providing a valuable contact with the areas past.

## **Environmental Innovation**

### *Environmental Enhancement Policy*

During the 1990s it was noticed that within the Shire there was a great deal of land degradation through weed or feral animal infestations or erosion. Serrated tussock was a particular problem throughout the region. To reverse this situation the Council devised the Environmental Enhancement Policy of Rate Rebates for environmental works.

In practice the rebate is available to all properties over 2 hectares and since inception 1300 properties have been part of the scheme on an annual basis. A landowner lodges a Proposed Works Form detailing what work will be undertaken as part of the rates assessment process. Later in the year, the Council's Land Management Officers visit each property to see if the proposed work has been completed. Approximately 95% of properties retain their rebate each year. The Council Officers keep close contact with the landholders providing advice on pest animal and plant eradication and which vegetation to retain or plant. This innovative rate rebate scheme has been widely recognized and it has won two State awards for its environmental initiatives and was a finalist in the National Landcare Awards.

One property that had not complied with the rate rebate scheme was "Mount Cottrell." Council took the opportunity to purchase this property in April 2007 in order to protect the State and Nationally significant flora and fauna and geological features of the site. Council has now instigated a weed removal and revegetation program and begun working with local Landcare groups and Trust for Nature to restore and maintain this site. In addition Council will fund detailed flora and fauna surveys that will be undertaken this spring.

To further assist rural landowners the Council offers Green Wedge Grants. The funds are directed to properties that have significant environmental features worth retaining, such as endangered native grasslands. The funds can be used to improve fences, spray weeds or plant native vegetation. Over 100 rural landholders and 2000 hectares have been assisted with this program, often with multiple grants. Approximately \$100,000 is available per annum through this program.

### *Integrated Environmental Mapping Project*

The Melton Shire Council, as do all Councils, has a need for a great many maps along with associated data. Many departments such as Planning, Environmental Services or Engineering all had their own maps and overlays of different maps were difficult. The entry or retrieval of data was found to be very time consuming and was not widely available to staff.

The decision was made to install a new mapping system on the Council's networked computers. The software known as "Intramaps" is based on satellite imagery and enables quick and easy entry and retrieval of information from any department's data base. All the data storage is real time and the satellite images are updated annually. Data that is collected in the field can be immediately entered using a PDA with GPS. Many different overlays are able to be displayed and all can be printed out on a large scale plotter.

All waterways, dams, roads, water and power lines and contours can be readily accessed and overlaid in any form. The system displays property boundaries with all relevant data such as the size of the property, the owner, all rating details and services. The images are clear enough that the operator can identify vegetation types such as weed infestations or other problems over the entire shire. All previous data is retained and is able to be recalled so comparisons can be made to see what progress has been made over a period of time.

Local organisations such as Landcare are able to obtain maps of any relevant area and others are supplied to schools, service clubs and charity groups. The next step planned is for the public to get a limited access via the Internet; this will further enhance the usefulness of the Integrated Environmental Mapping Project.

## **Environmental Innovation - Water**

### *Sunbury Melton Recycled Water Pipeline*

Melton Shire contains a large section of designated green wedge land. Unfortunately, the rainfall in the area is only 400 to 600 millilitres per year. To try to ensure a water supply for the area the Melton Shire Council met with Western Water Management to develop a plan for the future of the area.

A plan was devised which would see most of the water from the Sunbury Treatment Plant piped 30 kilometres to Melton. The Class B water is suitable for agribusinesses such as for vines, crops or grazing and for local parks, gardens and golf courses.

For the plan to go ahead it was necessary for Melton Shire Council to negotiate and work with three Government Departments, the Environment Protection Authority, neighbouring Hume and Macedon Ranges Councils, the Country Fire Authority and many farmers and businesses along the route of the pipeline.

The pipe, starting off as a 375 mm diameter pipe, and capable of supplying 2200 ML, is one of the longest recycled pipelines in the state. Along its length it supplies parts of Sunbury, Diggers Rest, Rockbank and Melton.

The water that reaches Melton is stored in a holding pondage at the Melton Golf Course. The Council uses the water on its parks and gardens plus revegetation sites and road construction which saves large volumes of potable water. All users of the water are trained in its use regarding safety, when and where it may be used, and general handling.

The provision of this water has ensured the survival of many agribusinesses in the region and resulted in new jobs and economic growth. Melton Council and Western Water are to be congratulated on this important and significant initiative.

## **Litter Prevention**

### *Public Place Recycling Project.*

The Melton Shire Council recognized that the bin system in and around the main business precinct of Melton were not adequate and did little to encourage best practice in litter prevention, resource recovery and waste management. The bins had been in place for 24 years and were showing their age. The bins were also just single units which did not allow for any recycling as everything went in together. A waste audit had shown that a good deal of recyclable material was placed in the bins.

The Melton Shopping & Business District Committee approached the Melton Shire Council to see if the problem could be addressed. In turn the Melton Shire Council applied for funds from Sustainability Victoria for Public Place Recycling Bins.

When the funding was made available the Council installed 30 recycling bins and 52 litter bins with cigarette disposal facilities. These were placed in noted high litter areas such as outside food outlets.

To ensure the public used the bins correctly the Council held an education program beginning with the launch using Vox Bandicoot along with the local primary schools. Competitions were run and promotional posters were produced showing the local shop owners using the bins and the Melton Environment Group advertised the use of the new installations.

The collection of the litter and recycling bins is through a local contractor who importantly made modifications to one of his vehicles to keep the two bin collections separate.

The success of the bins is being monitored and the amount of recycled material is gradually rising leading to less landfill material. Following the success of the bins, the program is being extended to other shopping areas of Melton as funds permit. The Council and traders are to be commended for their cooperative efforts in defining a problem and achieving a successful outcome.

## **Resource Recovery**

### *'It Starts With Zero'*

Melton Shire Council has recently fully implemented its Waste Management Strategy, titled, "It Starts With Zero" across the Shire. This multi-pronged approach is based on the principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. It aims to use best practice methods to achieve waste minimization and the management and control of litter.

To ensure the best possible results the Council has actively sought and gained the participation of other groups such as Sustainability Victoria, Conservation Volunteers, Corrections Victoria and Melton CFA, Rotary and Freecycle. The Waste Management strategy is complemented by a comprehensive Waste Education Strategy.

All residents now have a choice of two sizes of litter bins collected weekly, a large recyclable bin and the choice of having a green waste bin. A daily report is made concerning bin contamination and offending householders are contacted to overcome the problem.

There is no hard waste collection in Melton Shire, but residents have two free vouchers to use at the Melton Recycling Depot. This depot is set up with various bays for depositing anything recyclable including an oil collection tank. A paint and chemical section is planned to open shortly. Extensive education material has been produced and distributed by the Council to ensure the residents use the bins correctly.

Melton is growing very rapidly and as a result there is also a great deal of building of new residences and factories. All contractors are given a kit explaining the requirements for containment and disposal of all rubbish from building sites. The fencing of sites and litter collection has greatly reduced the pollution of streets and streams. To further reduce waterway pollution the Council has installed 22 Gross Pollutant Traps with more planned. All developers must also install Gross Pollutant Traps on key outfalls.

The Council's Environmental Education Officer, Linda Bradburn, works very closely with the many schools in the region. Many of the schools are working towards gaining Waste Wise or Sustainability accreditation and Linda is able to supply many information sheets, survey forms and activity sheets and be on hand to assist in organizing activity days for the pupils.

The Melton Council also works closely with Melbourne Water for waterway litter collection and with Vic Roads along the main roads. The Council cares for all other streets using contractors to sweep and collect litter.

Each year the Council organizes the Clean Up Australia Day involving many community groups and activities take place at 11 local sites. The Council distributes collection bags and provides a barbecue for all participants following the clean up.

During the year there are several community activity days or festivals and the Council plays a big part in ensuring they are run with the minimization of waste and litter as a key focus. Strict

guidelines are given to stallholders and audits of litter closely monitor the success of the days. The 2006 Djerriwarrh Festival had as its theme, Going Green and many floats and activities echoed this theme.

A recent addition to the Melton area has been the introduction of a local Freecycle Web site. The site matches up people who wish to give away any article to someone who wants it. The aim is to reduce the number of goods being sent to landfill. This service is part of a worldwide Freecycle organization and is run privately but with assistance provided by the Melton Shire Council. Membership is rapidly expanding and over 700 items have been swapped between members thus far.

The Melton Shire Council is to be congratulated on their very comprehensive attack on litter and waste minimization.

## **Community Partnership**

### *Caroline Springs Community Market*

In 2006 the idea was floated to run a community market to encourage and promote the sale of local produce, art and crafts and services. It was proposed that it be run along sustainable lines whilst encouraging local social and economic growth. An eight member steering committee was set up with members from the Melton Shire Council, businesses and community and auspiced by the Caroline Springs Community Development Association.

A policy of hand made or hand grown in the western region was aimed at stimulating local production and value adding thus improving the social and economic wealth of the area. It was also recognized that tourism would also be boosted once the market became established. The market runs on a non-profit basis with all proceeds going back to the community.

Prior to the market beginning extensive planning was undertaken with many bodies to ensure requirements were met and to gain support for the venture. Those involved included Melton Shire Council; Caroline Springs Community Development Association; Bendigo Bank; Delfin Lend Lease; Regional Development Victoria; Department of Victorian Communities; Department of Transport; SES; Lend Lease Retail.

The first market was held in September 2006 and continues to be held monthly. Each market has had between 120 – 150 stalls and upwards of 35,000 people have attended. Following Council's guide lines the market is plastic bag free. Stall holders are encouraged to use environmentally safe packaging and are required to remove all rubbish. The market is held at the Caroline Springs Square and it has the blessing of the adjacent shopping centre as sales are boosted considerably on market day.

As the market is growing, a Market Coordinator has been appointed and the Council provides office space, facilities and monthly training for the steering committee. Each market is now run with a base theme to further encourage community interaction. A recent theme of Try a Sport saw many local sporting clubs man stalls to encourage activity amongst the population. The local darts club signed up 35 new members over the day!

With the success of the market it also is being considered as a model which in turn could be brought to Melton itself and hence further engage the community.

### *The Cultural Diversity Communications Forum Project*

Melton Shire is the fastest growing council area in the state and it has 23% of its population born overseas. Six new homes are completed and occupied in the shire every day. A survey of

languages found the ten most common to be Tagalog (Filipino), Italian, Greek, Turkish, Serbian, Maltese, Macedonian, Croatian, Spanish and Arabic with many other smaller language groups.

In 2005 the Council ran a Communicating With Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Residents (CALD) program. This program highlighted that the Council needed to improve communication and participation with these communities. From this the Council's Community Development Team consulted the various CALD groups to establish the Cultural Diversity Communications Forum. The Forum allows close links to be formed between the groups and the many services that are able to be provided to them. It has been found that most of the groups feel regular personal contact is essential to good communication and partnerships. Many of the groups share little in common as they are ethnically different and possibly have different languages and religions. The Council staff are working to build up trust and maintaining relationships once they are established. The local radio station Melton 979FM has been found to be an easy and effective way of communicating with the various groups.

The Community Development Team is playing a vital role in ensuring that the many cultural groups are made aware of Council services and that they are more active members within the community at large.

## **Protection of the Environment**

### *Friends of Toolern Creek*

The Friends of Toolern Creek have restored an area in close proximity to the township which had been severely neglected and overrun for many years. The expressed charter of the group is 'the protection and restoration of riparian vegetation along the Toolern Creek and grassy woodland of the Melton Gilgai Woodlands Reserve.'

The creek is classified as Creek Line Grassy Woodland and the reserve is Riverina Grassy Woodland, both of which are classified as endangered. Once invasive weeds have been removed along the creek a broad range of indigenous riparian vegetation is planted and maintained. At the reserve the friends are protecting the remnant Greybox and Yellowbox woodland. The Friends, under the very capable leadership of Lyn Holdsworth, have a close working relationship with Melton Shire Council, CFA, Lions Club, Corrections Victoria, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and local schools.

Although the group has been working along the creek for 10 years the Friends were only officially formed in 2005. With official recognition they continued and even expanded their efforts. Over the last 12 months they have planted 4,000 new shrubs and herbs. They applied for, and were granted, an Envirofund grant for fencing and signage at the Gilgai Reserve and joined Parks Victoria in a Flora & Fauna Survey (Environmental Values Assessment). They have participated in several clean up days and with the assistance of the CFA removed 67 shopping trolleys from the creek. At the reserve they spread 360 cubic metres of mulch and installed 72 cubic metres of rocks along the creek banks to build an ecosystem for the protection of plants and animals.

To promote the beauty of the creek the Friends run weekly walking groups along the formed pathways. The group has also produced a promotional brochure which is distributed at local festivals or events. The Melton Council has assisted the Friends with the development of a management plan and the Council also recognized the group's work with two Australia Day Civic Awards. The Friends of Toolern Creek can be proud of their efforts in protecting and preserving the local environment for the benefit of all residents.

### *Melton Township Regional Park*

The southern area of Melton is rapidly being developed into housing estates. To ensure the area retained some open space, the Melton Shire Council passed control of a section of the Toolern Creek that had an identified environmental value over to Parks Victoria. The Government has set aside \$3.3 million for planning and development of this new Regional Park. The 100 hectare parcel of land stretches for 2 kilometres along the creek.

Within the park the creek has many escarpments, native grasslands and many mature River Red Gums. Due to heavy grazing over the years there is little remnant vegetation left but a management plan to eliminate pest plants and animals should assist re-growth of native species.

The restoration work will be complemented by the work of the Friends of Toolern Creek and the Pinkerton Landcare group which are working at either end of the Park. The area has a significant amount of fauna, particularly birds and reptiles plus the recent sighting of a platypus. The Park is planned to be a passive recreational facility and pathways will eventually wind their way along the creek.

### *Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group*

Pinkerton Forest is a Greybox Woodland and Bush's Paddock contains Plains Grassland & Grassy Woodland which is considered endangered and the project involves the protection and restoration of threatened vegetation in Bush's Paddock, Pinkerton Forest, Werribee River Volcanic Gorge and Rockbank Railway Station."

The Council originally purchased Bush's Paddock to act as a buffer from a quarry. At that time it was full of serrated tussock and Chilean needle grass so an intensive weeding program was instigated. The 50 hectares of the paddock were eventually fenced, weeded and rabbit baited down to where the Greybox woodland started. Areas of the grassland are regularly burnt which allows the native grasses, mainly kangaroo grass, to regenerate. A flora and fauna survey has found the area has several endangered grasslands species and PhD students are researching the area.

Bush's Paddock is owned by the Melton Shire Council and it adjoins the Pinkerton Forest which belongs to Western Water. The Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group are involved in caring for both areas. They help to plan and carry out the annual management of the area. To achieve the best results they have worked closely with Melton Council, Western Water, World Wildlife Fund, Bird Observer's Club of Australia and Indigenous Flora & Fauna Association of Victoria. The group collects seed from private properties to replant and establish pockets of native grasses to ensure its survival.

The Melton Council's recent acquisition of nearby Mt Cottrell has extended the Greybox forest wildlife corridor and greatly reduced the number of weeds being blown into reserves. The health of the forest areas is indicated by the large numbers of regenerating Greybox trees which are even beginning to encroach into the grasslands. Many rare indigenous wildflowers and shrubs are now able to be identified amongst the grasses. Bird watchers particularly, were thrilled recently when a pair of wedge tailed eagles nested in Pinkerton Forest and an eaglet was successfully hatched.

Everyone concerned with the protection and maintenance of these areas is to be commended. With so few areas such as these remaining it is important that they are carefully nurtured.

## **Young Legends**

*Melton Shire. On the Move. On the Map.*

One of the shops in the main street of Melton has been taken over by the Melton Shire Council and is used as a drop in Youth Centre. There are activities available plus it is set up as an Internet cafe. It is open in the afternoon, Monday to Friday, but on Tuesday it is female only. The Youth Workers, Josie & Jade, are trying to reconnect and work with the young at risk of being homeless and they also work closely with police and the schools.

The project On the Move On the Map was designed to get police and youth working together. With the assistance of Melton District Police, the Youth Services organized a Police & Youth Forum. Five Secondary Schools participated and each was given an issue to base a project on.

The Catholic Regional College of Melton selected to undertake the topic of 'Town Pride - Town Clean Up Day'. The event was planned by the Year 10 students and 150 Year 7 students were involved in the actual clean up. The students were given a good deal of support by the College which gave them time to plan the exercise. Police and Council representatives also attended planning meetings to assist. The clean up day, entitled, "Clean up your Town – or Else" aimed to thoroughly clean the school and its surrounds. On the day the Council supplied the garbage bags and the police ran a sausage sizzle after the event. There was a good coverage of the event in the local press.

As a result of the activity those who took part are pleased to have been able to contribute to their community and the links between Youth Services, Police and Schools have been strengthened.

### *Mowbray College*

Mowbray College is a Primary to Year 12 facility with over 1700 students on 3 campus sites. The College surveyed the parents of the students to ascertain what issues they felt were important in today's world. Global warming and environmental issues were seen by many to be of great relevance and importance. Mowbray already had a policy of caring for the environment and with the assistance of CERES (Community Environmental Organisation) the College set out to become a Sustainable School. At the start of 2007 all staff participated in sustainable schools training and there are now junior and middle school committees and a body of 15 students making up the Science & Environment Committee.

Programs have been devised to cater for the four areas of water, energy, waste and biodiversity. In the energy area an electrician has been employed to gradually replace older fluorescent tubes with newer more efficient T5 units. Most 3 tube units have now been reduced to one tube. Classrooms are being fitted with movement sensors which turn off lighting when no one is in the room and students are encouraged to turn off all computer monitors and complete units when not in use. The staffroom urn has also been put on a timer and halogen lighting is being replaced with lower wattage globes. In the Year 7 area, known as The Mill, these initiatives have seen savings of \$3500 and 48 tonnes of greenhouse emissions on an annual basis.

To reduce water usage two tanks have been installed on primary classrooms for grounds watering and two more next to the newly established kitchen garden area. The current drought has seen the introduction of the policy of using only drought resistant native plants in all gardens.

The college produces a good deal of waste and it has begun recycling many items to reduce goods going to landfill. Boxes are provided for collecting paper, some of which is shredded for the local pet store. Cans, mobile phones and corks are collected and the grounds have bins for general waste and commingled waste.

As a practical application of their ecology lessons the Year 9 students were given the task of constructing a frog bog. This required a good deal of research of the frogs of the area, what they require to survive and how to construct the bog and its surrounds. Cross curricula maths activities such as scale drawings and costing of the project were also involved. A large area next

to the home eco room has been given over to the creation of a kitchen garden and many groups of students are involved in its setting up.

The students have also been involved in community actions working with the Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group. The pupils assisted by collecting seeds, planting, mulching, watering and general clean ups along the Werribee River embankments.

The College is to be commended on the steps it has taken to become sustainable and it is showing the way in a positive manner for its students

### *Caroline Springs College Sustainability Day*

The Caroline Springs College Creekside Campus has students from Kinder to Year 9. In the last three weeks of the 2006 school year the pupils were given a challenge to apply the knowledge they had gained about sustainability. The children reacted enthusiastically and developed several projects including writing to the former Premier, Mr Bracks, asking why level 3A water restrictions had been put in place instead of Level 4. They received replies from both the former Premier and the Minister for Water.

Senior students decided to run a Sustainability Expo for the College and the community at large. Local businesses, such as Bunnings and Reece Plumbing and the Melton Shire Council were approached for sponsorship, assistance in presentations and donations of environmental equipment to be given away. During the day the students demonstrated many of the lessons they had learned such as recycling, healthy eating or water saving techniques. The day was such a success that it is to become an annual event as a means of highlighting the sustainability message within the community.

While the senior students planned their expo the Year 5 and 6 students conducted a survey on bicycle riding. They found only 11% of students rode to school. To improve this situation they conducted a Ride 2 School Day. The pupils sought outside assistance and worked closely with the YMCA, Delfin, Goldcross Cycles, Yoplait, the Police Bike Squad and Bike Victoria. On the Ride 2 School Day they found 55% had ridden to school and while this number has not been sustained many more are regular bike riders. Joel, the Year 5 SRC Rep said, "The aim is to get people to be active."

Caroline Springs has a large lake with a considerable number of water birds in residence. At this time there is very little vegetation available for the birds for nesting. Several Year 8 students decided to construct nesting boxes for the ducks and so contacted Field & Game experts and the Shire for information. With parental assistance an appropriate box has been constructed and Delfin will assist in locating it at the lake. A further 10 boxes are planned.

Year 9 students at the Brookside Campus began liaising with the Shire, Delfin and the Caroline Springs Community Development Association. They decided to assist with the Community Garden to build a relationship between the community and the College. Delfin provided many plants and the students enjoyed the day assisting local residents in their garden plots.

The students are to be commended on their successful activities, their desire to reinforce their message of sustainability and hopefully to gradually extend their impact into the broader community.

## **Dame Phyllis Frost Award**

*Nora Peters*

Nora Peters was a member of the Toolern Vale Landcare Group where she did a great deal of planting of trees and shrubs. She now does volunteer work as a member of Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Program.

Over the years she noticed that as the plants grew the number of birds in the area increased significantly. Being a keen bird watcher Nora began photographing the many types of birds she saw. Nora gradually bought better equipment and became far more proficient in identifying bird species.

In the Melton area there have been sightings of 136 different birds and Nora now has photographs of 93 of them. To assist in her work Nora researched the Net and joined Birdforum.net . Nora now also reports sightings to 'Birdline Victoria'

As Nora's work became known she received requests for information and photographs from local schools, groups, friends and the Council. To supply all this information Nora now has a Website, "Oz Wild Birds" to which she is continually adding new sightings. Many large charts of the various types of birds found in the Melton region have been produced from Nora's photos.

Nora is to be commended on her dedication to locating and capturing on film the many birds of the area.

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