# Environmental Education Strategy

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**Aboriginal Land Statement**

Nillumbik Shire Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri as the traditional custodians of the land now known as the Shire of

Nillumbik and values the significance of the Wurundjeri peoples’ history as essential to the unique character of the Shire.

Contents

## Executive Summary

Environmental education is an important responsibility of Council for several reasons.

• The local environment impacts directly on a broad range of community wellbeing issues.

• Wider environmental issues are of increasing concern to both our residents and for Council service delivery.

• Nillumbik residents demonstrate a keen awareness of, and interest in, the environment in which they live.

• Council has obligations arising from various Council and Victorian Government policies and strategies.

This Environmental Education Strategy provides a coordinated approach to the delivery of environmental education programs across different sections of Council.

There is an emphasis, where appropriate, on lifelong learning and achieving behaviour change through environmental education rather than knowledge alone.

Environmental education is clearly defined as an important objective in the *Council Plan 2009–2013*, *Climate Change Action Plan (2010)*, *Edendale Masterplan (2008)*, *Sustainable Water Management Plan (2007)*, *Green Wedge Management Plan (2010)* and *Environment Strategy (2001)*.

Direct Council programs include those provided for preschools and schools at Edendale and through courses at Living & Learning Nillumbik. A broad range of

environmental events and workshops are delivered across the Shire, often in cooperation with community organisations including Landcare, Friends and Transition Towns groups.

The overarching vision established by this Strategy is:

*‘Empowering our communities through environmental education to take action for a sustainable future’.*

Four key objectives guide the strategic implementation of this vision.

1. Develop, promote and deliver innovative and targeted environmental education programs.

2. Achieve community awareness of ecological sustainability and increase skills and knowledge to enable the community to live sustainably.

3. Implement a coordinated and integrated approach to environmental education program development and delivery across Council.

4. Foster strong relationships that encourage wide community participation and dialogue.

Education programs are valuable in overcoming individual apathy, ignorance and inaction. Community building initiatives that bring people together and build networks and goodwill can successfully raise awareness of complex environmental issues and lead to action and solutions.

Effective environmental education requires a coordinated approach and communication between all involved organisations, including Council, state and federal governments, not-for-profit environmental and educational organisations and businesses. This will ensure that environmental messages are aligned to assist communities, individuals, schools and businesses to take positive action.

## Introduction

This Environmental Education Strategy will assist Council to develop and deliver a proactive and integrated approach to environmental education for Nillumbik.

Environmental education is clearly defined as an important objective in the *Council Plan 2009–2013*, *Climate Change Action Plan (2010)*, *Edendale Masterplan (2008)*, *Sustainable Water Management Plan (2007)*, *Green Wedge Management Plan (2010)* and *Environment Strategy (2001)*.

The Nillumbik Green Wedge is distinguished by the quality of its environment and natural bushland. *Melbourne 2030* identifies the Nillumbik Green Wedge as being of social, economic and environmental value.

These strategic documents also identify community participation in environmental improvements as an integral part of good environmental management and as essential to achieving broader application of behaviour change and sustainable living practices.

In addition to the strategic documents, Council also delivers a series of environmental events and workshops through Edendale, Living & Learning Nillumbik, Environmental Planning, Nillumbik Environment Network, Landcare groups, Friends groups, Transition Towns groups and other community groups across the Shire.

This Environmental Education Strategy provides a coordinated approach to the delivery of environmental education programs across different sections of Council, including identification of responsibilities for the delivery and management of the different components of the programs. There is an emphasis, where appropriate, on lifelong learning and achieving behaviour change through environmental education rather than knowledge alone.

## Context

### Council’s role

The Shire of Nillumbik is located less than 25 kilometres north-east of Melbourne and has the Yarra River as its southern boundary. It extends 29 kilometres to Kinglake National Park in the north. The Shire stretches approximately 20 kilometres from the Plenty River and Yan Yean Road in the west to Christmas Hills and the Yarra escarpment in the east.

The Shire covers an area of 432 square kilometres and has an estimated population of 60,623 who live in close-knit communities which range from typical urban settings to remote and tranquil bush properties.

The major townships are Eltham, Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge. Twenty-two primary schools, five secondary schools and one TAFE service the family-oriented population. There are over 300 hectares of nature and recreation reserves, in addition to the many forested areas of the Kinglake National Park in the north of the Shire.

Council’s vision for Nillumbik is a Shire which has:

* safe, healthy and engaged communities
* a sustainable and well-managed natural and built environment
* a vibrant local economy
* a respected and accountable Council, committed to innovative and continuous improvement.

The Municipal Association of Victoria promotes the following roles and responsibilities to all Victorian local governments.

* Minimise resource use and consumption in Council’s own operations.
* Manage Council assets and infrastructure to increase longevity of assets and reduce resource consumption.
* Manage Council’s linear reserves, recreational areas and bushland reserves to respect indigenous cultures, conserve native flora and fauna, control pest plants and animals and reduce fuel.
* Encourage lifestyle behaviour of residents, ratepayers and visitors to reduce resource consumption and be responsible global citizens.
* Lead by example

### Background

Creating a sustainable community requires that individuals and organisations have the knowledge, skills, values, capacity and motivation to respond to the complex sustainability issues they encounter in their personal and working lives.

Responsibility for creating a sustainable future requires that development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need.

Council plays a pivotal role in developing and delivering environmental education programs to provide the knowledge, skill, value, capacity and motivation to encourage Nillumbik residents to work with Council to achieve the objective of a sustainable and well-managed natural, land and built environment.

### Environmental education

Environmental or sustainability education encompasses a vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2004).

The framework adopted for this Strategy is based on the Education for Sustainability principles.

The Education for Sustainability framework is used by the Australian Government in their Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) and *Educating for a sustainable future: a national environmental education statement* (2005). The Education for Sustainability framework is also implemented by the following Victorian Government departments.

* Department of Education and Early Childhood (DEECD) through their *Education for Sustainability: a guide for implementing sustainability in school* (2010).
* Sustainability Victoria through their ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic school program.
* Victorian Association of Environmental Educators through their training of environmental educators and teachers.

### Education for Sustainability principles

Education for Sustainability aims to tackle the underlying causes of unsustainable trends. It focuses on building capacity to reorient the way we live and work.

Education for Sustainability in Australia has evolved over the past 30 years. Since the first environmental education conference in Australia in 1970, the focus has shifted from knowledge of natural ecosystems – and the threats posed to them by overuse and depletion of resources – to equipping all people with the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to make decisions based upon their full environmental, social and economic implications.

Education for Sustainability facilitates change by:

* working in conjunction with and complementing other approaches
* building capacity in individuals and organisations for transformational change fostering new knowledge
* fostering new behaviours, systems and practices
* emphasising creative, critical and innovative approaches.

To help Australians achieve sustainable and quality-of-life outcomes and contribute as responsible global citizens, it is important to incorporate learning-based approaches within environmental initiatives.

The components of Education for Sustainability are:

• envisaging a better future

• critical thinking and reflection

• participation

• partnerships for change

• systemic thinking.

Education for Sustainability promotes:

* understanding – by going beyond awareness raising to address the underlying issues causing unsustainable practices
* values clarification – by creating a sense of personal relevance in and connection to change for sustainability
* people as the key to change – by promoting capacity building opportunities that help individuals act as agents of change
* systemic change – by helping learners develop skills that influence change within a system, organisation or wider society
* integration, transformation and innovation – to change organisational and individual behaviour
* alternative futures – by using positive methods such as futures thinking to create alternatives to the current situation that lead to action plans for change
* reflection, negotiations and participation – by challenging the role of the educator as the conveyor of information, encouraging a collaborative learning process using critical reflection, negotiating ideas and building trust, the capacity of the learner is built with life skills for sustainability.

Education for Sustainability is an ongoing learning process which actively involves multiple stakeholders in change to achieve sustainability.

In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development confirmed this relationship in declaring Education for Sustainability as critical for promoting sustainable development.

The principles and practical application of Education for Sustainability have been recognised internationally as fundamentally important to critical global challenges we all face. Through information and awareness, but more importantly by building people’s capacity to innovate and implement solutions.

Education for Sustainability includes:

* Mentoring
* Facilitation
* Participative inquiry
* Action learning
* Action research

### Phases of Education for Sustainability

In the journey of Education for Sustainability the learner experiences the following phases:

### Awakening

This is where individuals or community groups realise that sustainability and resource management need to become a focus point of their activities and that there may be a ‘case for change’. Typically this phase starts with a broad interest in environmental issues and does not necessarily mean that ideas are underpinned by facts or information – it is more of a ‘gut feeling’ process.

### Discovering

Following on from realising that things should be different, the individual or community group engages in finding out more information about issues, concerns, contexts and who may be around to help. Individuals and community groups should be included as key sources and leaders in the exploration of issues and contexts.

### Transforming

Individuals and community groups become actively engaged in observing, designing and constructing a systems approach to resource use and sustainability issues. Transforming work needs to occur at the strategic level of the organisation, community group and home as well as in daily routine.

### Sustaining

This phase clearly shows continuous learning and systems improvement. This is where social, behavioural, technical and logical systems are consistently monitored and reviewed and the ‘change’ can be measured through the baseline data (starting point).

### Celebrating and leading

Having sustained a number of social, behavioural and resource systems across all levels of the organisation or community group, this is when the individual, organisation or community group acknowledges their journey and achievements.

Leadership can be the most rewarding phase of all. Individuals, organisations and community groups can act as a model for the wider community to show others how to progress on their sustainability journey.

Education for Sustainability is education:

* **About the environment** focusing on participant’s understanding of important facts, concepts and theories
* **In the environment** involving participants in direct contact with a river, creek, bushland, street or park to develop awareness and concern for the environment
* **For the environment** aiming to promote a willingness and ability to adopt lifestyles compatible with the wise use of environmental resources.

Table 1: Legislation and policy context

| **Government Level** | **Legislation** | **Strategies** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| National  Australian  Government | *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*  *1999* | *Living Sustainably: The Australian Government’s National Action Plan forEducation for Sustainability (2009)*  *Educating For a Sustainable Future: A National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools (2005)*  *Caring for Our Future (2006)*  *Sustainability Curriculum Framework: A guide for curriculum developers and policy makers (2010)*  *Australian Pest Animal Strategy (2007)*  *Australia’s Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2020*  *National Alert for Environmental Weeds (2009)*  *National Weed Strategy (1999)* |
| **State**  Victorian Government | *Catchment and Land Protection*  *Act 1994*  *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*  *Local Government Act 1989*  *Commissioner for Sustainability Act 2003*  *Planning and Environment Act 1987*  *Environment Protection Act 1970*  *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*  *Road Management Act 2004* | *Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth*  *Victoria’s Native Vegetation Management: A Framework for Action (2002)*  *Securing Our Natural Future: A white paper for land and biodiversity at a time of climate change (2010)*  *Biodiversity is Everybody’s Business: Victoria’s Biodiversity Strategy 2010 – 2015*  *Administration Guidelines for Education for a Sustainable Environment (2011)*  *Education for Sustainability: A guide for implementing sustainability in school (2008)*  *Victorian Local Sustainability Accord (2005)*  *Living with Fire – Victoria’s Bushfire Strategy (2008)*  *2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission*  *Looking Ahead: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2010)*  *Victorian Pest Management: A Framework for Action (2002)*  *Victorian Pest Management: Rabbit Management Strategy (2002*  *State of the Environment Report (2010)* |
| **Regional**  Port Phillip and  Westernport  Catchment  Management  Authority | *Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Catchment*  *Strategy 2004 – 2009* | *Port Phillip and Westernport Rabbit Action Plan (2003)*  *Port Phillip and Westernport Weed Action Plan (2003)*  *Regional River Health Strategy* |
| **Local**  Nillumbik Shire  Council | *Nillumbik Planning Scheme*  *Municipal Fire Prevention Plan Local Law No.5* | *Nillumbik Council Plan 2009-2013*  *Edendale Masterplan (2008)*  *Edendale Business Plan 2011-2013*  *Nillumbik Green Wedge Management Plan (2010) Parts 1 & 2*  *Living & Learning Nillumbik Strategic Plan 2010-2013*  *Education for Sustainability at Edendale (2011)*  *Nillumbik Sustainable Water Management Plan (2008) Implementation*  *Progress Report 2008-2009*  *Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy (2012)*  *Community Environment Recovery Action Plans*  *Nillumbik Land Management Incentive Program*  *Nillumbik Weed Action Plan (2008)*  *Nillumbik Rabbit Action Plan (2009)*  *Nillumbik Climate Change Action Plan 2010-2015*  *Nillumbik Roadside Management Plan (2011) (in prep.)*  *Healthy Waterways Waterwatch Melbourne Agreement*  *Nillumbik Environment Strategy Actions for a Sustainable Future (2001)*  *Open Space Strategy (2005)*  *Nillumbik Recreation Trail Strategy (2011)*  *Individual Reserve Management Plans*  *Sites of Faunal and Habitat Significance in North East Melbourne (NEROC*  *report) (1997)*  *Nillumbik Land Capability Study (1998)*  *Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System Management Plan (2011)*  *Nillumbik Shire Council Aboriginal Heritage Study (1996)* |

The Background Paper accompanying this Strategy provides further detailed information on the legislation, planning and responsibilities associated with environmental education.

## Current approach in Nillumbik

Nillumbik Shire Council delivers a range of environmental education programs to all age groups within the community.

A broad range of tools are utilised to deliver key environmental messages, including school and preschool programs, workshops, courses, tours, activities, displays, letters, publications and Council’s website.

Edendale, Council’s community environment farm in Eltham, is a key site for the delivery of Council’s environmental education programs and aims to demonstrate best environmental practice in all its operations.

Table 2 outlines Council’s current environmental education programs and projects aligned to Council’s areas of responsibility (governance, people and community, economy and environment). Table 3 outlines Council’s environmental education publications aligned to the same areas of responsibility. The environmental category is broadened to include biodiversity, energy, sustainability, waste and water.

Table 4 graphically displays how current environmental education resources align to the Education for Sustainability framework.

**Table 2:** Council’s current environmental education programs and projects aligned to Council’s areas of responsibility (governance, people and community, economy and environment).

| **Local Government area of responsibility (Council Plan)** | **Council Program/Project** | **Target Audience** | **Sustainability Area\*** | **EFS Stage^** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Governance | EcoTeam  Environment Advisory Committee  Environment Coordination Group  Edendale Advisory Committee  Ecological Sustainable Development  requirements on scoping forms for all projects  Purchasing Policy requirements for  environmental considerations  Cultural Plan - a six year strategy with strong  environmental themes; for example, earth, fire,  spirit and Indigenous | Internal, committee  members | Biodiversity  Waste  Water  Energy  General sustainability | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming  Celebrating |
| People and community | Laughing Waters Artist-in-Residence program within Parks Victoria bushland  Art exhibitions – environmental influences very common at exhibitions  Community Art Projects  Fringe Focus Newsletter  Edendale school and preschool programs focusing on biodiversity, energy, waste, water  Healthy Waterways Waterwatch program  Composting workshops and composting project  Reusable nappy workshop  Environmental Events Program  Education programs relating to Edendale– biodiversity, energy, waste, water, animal husbandry and sustainable land use  Practically Green Festival at Edendale  Arbor Week grants | Community,  schools, residents,  community groups | Biodiversity  Water  Energy  General sustainability | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming  Sustaining  Celebrating |
| People and Community | Environmental events e.g. Clean Up Australia Day and National Tree Day  Small projects like the edible garden program at Eltham and Diamond Creek Senior Citizens, art courses with environmental theme and organic cooking  OH&S training that includes environmental hazards  Edendale, animal husbandry and farm management skills  Environmental education activities are included in Council displays at each festival.  Sports grounds public place recycling program  Teachers’ Environment Network (TEN)  Student environment placement with Council  Edendale indigenous plant nursery including propagation aligned to planning scheme and volunteer program | Community,  schools, residents,  community groups | Biodiversity  Waste  Water  Energy  General sustainability | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming  Sustaining  Celebrating |
| Economy | Kerbside calendars  MobileMuster  Bulk Buy Solar program  Sustainability information for Green Business Network  Attending internal meetings to provide sustainability information in relation to Council operations | Residents,  business, internal,  community | Waste  Energy  General sustainability | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming |
| Environment | Actions from a range of environmental plans  Urban Fringe Weed Management Initiative four year project  GRO waste collection service  Environmental publications, presentations and information  Land management training for Friends and Landcare groups and interested residents  Ensuring contractors working with Council’s bushland reserves have relevant environmental skills and qualifications | Community,  schools,  residents,  community groups,  contractors | Biodiversity  Waste  Water  Energy  General sustainability | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming  Sustaining  Celebrating |

\* The 5 areas of sustainability are biodiversity, energy, general sustainability, waste and water.

^ The 5 stages of Education for Sustainability (EfS) are awakening, discovering, transforming, sustaining, celebrating and leading.

**Table 3:** Council’s Environmental Education Documentation

| **Local Government area of responsibility (Council Plan)** | **Council Program/Project** | **Target Audience** | **Sustainability Area\*** | **EFS Stage^** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Governance | Edendale Masterplan (2008)  Edendale Strategic Business Plan 2011-2013  Council Plan 2009-2013  Green Wedge Management Plan (2010)  Environmental information included on Council’s website | Internal, visitors  to Edendale,  community | Biodiversity  Waste  Water  Energy  General sustainability | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming |
| People and community | Green Wedge Management Plan (2010) | Community,  Internal  Government | Biodiversity  Waste  Water  Energy  General sustainability | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming |
| Economy | Council Plan 2009-2013  Green Wedge Management Plan (2010) | Residents,  business, internal,  community | Biodiversity  Water  Energy  General sustainability | Awakening  Discovering |
| Environment: Biodiversity | Sustainable Gardening in Nillumbik booklet  Live Local Plant Local: A guide to planting in  Nillumbik  Nillumbik’s native fauna – A pocket guide to  local wildlife  Rabbit control in urban and peri-urban areas  Common weeds of Nillumbik  Land Management Incentive Program  Rabbit Action Plan  Weed Action Plan  Roadside Management Plan | Community,  schools, residents,  community groups,  contractors | Biodiversity | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming  Sustaining |
| Environment: Energy | Climate Change Action Plan 2010-2015 | Community,  schools, residents,  community groups,  business, internal | Energy | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming  Sustaining |
| Environment: General Sustainability | Environmental Events Program  Practically Green – sustainable building  products  Practically Green – sustainable home guide  Fringe Focus – an environmental newsletter  Green Wedge Management Plan (2010) | Community,  schools, residents,  community groups,  business, internal | General Sustainability | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming  Sustaining |
| Environment: Waste | Recycling and Reuse information (online and mailouts)  Successful Home Composting Booklet 2011  Waste Minimisation and Management Strategy  2002-2005 (currently under review)  Litter Prevention Strategy [2011]  (in development) | Community,  schools, residents,  community groups | Waste | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming  Sustaining |
| Environment: Water | Sustainable Water Management Plan  Stormwater information sheets | Community,  residents, internal | Water | Awakening  Discovering  Transforming  Sustaining |

**Table 4:** Council’s current environmental education programs and publications as they align to the participant’s five stages of the EfS journey.

| **Sustainability Area** | **Awakening** | **Discovering** | **Transforming** | **Sustaining** | **Celebrating/Leading** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Biodiversity | \*\*\*\* | \*\*\* | \*\* | \*\*\* | \* |
| Energy | \*\*\* | \*\*\* | \*\* | \*\* | \* |
| Sustainability | \*\*\*\* | \*\*\* | \* | \*\* | \* |
| Waste | \*\*\*\*\* | \*\*\*\* | \*\* | \*\* | \* |
| Water | \*\*\*\*\* | \*\*\*\* | \*\* | \*\* | \* |

**Key**

Occurring in all resources \*\*\*\*\*

Occurring in most resources \*\*\*\*

Occurring well \*\*\*

Occurring in some cases \*\*

Just occurring \*

## Future Direction

Education programs are valuable in overcoming individual apathy, ignorance and inaction. Community building initiatives that bring people together and build networks and goodwill can successfully raise awareness of complex environmental issues and lead to action and solutions.

There are currently a vast variety of environmental education programs and publications provided by Council (refer to Tables 2–4). The development of these programs and publications has been slightly ad hoc due to:

* Community interest and demand.
* Available Council and external funding.
* Staff skills.
* Implementation of Council plans and programs.

There is a strong grassroots component to all of Council’s environmental education services. The grassroots approach has created community ownership of programs and publications that has led to good participation and implementation.

Nillumbik has a valuable environmental resource in Edendale, which provides not only a venue but a place for growing awareness in the community of the values of environmental education.

There are many strong partnerships between Council, communities and other educational organisations. These partnerships and future partnerships, especially with the ‘non-engaged’ members of the Nillumbik community will be the key to the successful implementation of this Strategy.

Publications and programs have been created to provide information relating to a specific action, issue, funding opportunity or strategic document. When each publication and program undergoes its review, the review process will assess:

* How the publication/program aligns with other educational resources within the same sustainability area (biodiversity, energy, sustainability, waste or water).
* How the publication/program can be updated or expanded to ensure that it contributes to the transforming, sustaining and celebrating/leading stages of a participant’s behaviour change journey.
* How this publication/program assists in implementing local government’s responsibility (refer to page 5 for detail).
* What the publication/program has achieved.
* How the publication/program has fulfilled the action/s that it was designed to fulfil.
* What other environmental education programs/publications can support, complement and assist in supporting behaviour change.
* How this information can be tailored to the target audience.

The development of new environmental education programs and publications also needs to follow this critical thinking process as well as ensuring that their content follows the Education for Sustainability principles.

The updating and alignment of existing and future environmental education resources and publications with Education for Sustainability principles will reduce current gaps.

Currently, there is no overall approach to developing and monitoring the environmental education activities of Council. The development and implementation of an Internal Environmental Education Group will allow greater coordination of environmental education activities throughout the organisation. The group will also provide a coordinated approach to reviewing and developing environmental education resources.

The new Australian Curriculum is being rolled out by the Australian Government during 2011–2014. Edendale’s current school educational programs and publications will need to be updated to align with it. The updating process of Edendale’s school resources should also include Education for Sustainability principles and where relevant, alignment with the Victorian Government’s ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic school framework (also based on EfS principles).

**Internal Council Environmental Education Group**

The establishment of an Internal Council Environmental Education Group (action S1) will allow a coordinated approach to the development and implementation of environmental education across Council.

Once established, the group will have a range of ongoing functions including but not limited to the following:

* Develop and oversee the implementation plan for the content and delivery of Council’s environmental education programs and publications.
* Promote this Strategy and provide progress reports on the implementation of this Strategy.
* Seek funding to implement this Strategy.
* Develop internal and external partnerships to raise community and staff awareness of this Strategy and its actions.
* Strengthen Council’s interdepartmental information sharing and networking.
* Investigate and capture the environmental education opportunities that exist within the environmental, arts, cultural, operations and youth areas of Council.
* Develop and implement a communications plan for environmental education.
* Ensure Council’s media and communications, website and social media communications regularly include information to assist residents, industry and businesses to reduce their environmental impact.
* Investigate social media opportunities to share the environmental education message, e.g. smart phone applications, Twitter and Facebook.
* Continue updating and maintaining Council’s database of individuals and community groups interested in receiving environmental information and advice on upcoming activities. Ensure the database is networked to other Council databases including youth and arts and cultural databases.
* Investigate how information relating to Council’s environmental education could be disseminated through community communication networks such as the Victorian Climate Action Calendar.
* Incorporate this Strategy into existing Council strategies, plans and documents when these documents are being reviewed and updated.
* Ensure all environmental education communications, programs and publications are correctly branded.
* Ensure that there is a fair distribution of Council support to all environmental community groups throughout the municipality.

## Action Plan

The Environmental Education Action Plan provides a response to environmental education with a focus on the roles and responsibilities of Council. This includes actions Council will undertake and what it can do to support residents and community groups.

The vision, objectives and actions in this document were developed by Council through interdepartmental discussions and a community stakeholder workshop.

**Vision**

Empowering our communities through environmental education to take action for a sustainable future.

**Objectives**

Nillumbik has four environmental education objectives.

**1.** Develop, promote and deliver innovative, targeted and viable environmental education programs.

**2.** Achieve community awareness of ecological sustainability and increase skills and knowledge to enable the community to live sustainably.

**3.** Implement a coordinated and integrated approach to environmental education program development and delivery across Council.

**4.** Foster strong, sustainable relationships that encourage wide community participation and dialogue.

**Actions**

Environmental education has been divided into the following key areas for action.

1. Strategic

2. Resource development

3. Community engagement and education

4. On-ground

These actions have been developed through considerable internal consultation and a community stakeholder workshop and are designed to ensure effective

implementation of the Strategy. The implementation of these actions will involve individuals, the community, Council and external organisations. All actions will be reviewed regularly and, where necessary, revised.

These actions will need to be supported financially by Council. All efforts will be made to seek external funding or in-kind support where appropriate. Larger projects associated with the Strategy will be included in Council’s Strategic Resource Plan and Major Projects Plan to ensure appropriate budget allocations are provided.

**Priority**

High **(H)** = Essential

Medium **(M)** = Should be done

Low **(L)** = Desirable, but dependent on resources

**Key**

CPLC = Community Participation, Learning and Culture

Comms = Communication

E = Edendale

ED = Economic Development

EP = Environmental Planning

ET = EcoTeam

EW = Environmental Works

L&LN = Living & Learning Nillumbik

WM = Waste Management

### Strategic

Environmental education requires a coordinated and strategic approach to be effective. Council already has a range of programs and publications in place to raise awareness of creating a sustainable future. This Strategy has a focus on developing a proactive approach.

Strategic (S) actions are actions that involve further policy and program development with an emphasis on Council leading the way.

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Priority** | **Timeframe** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S1**  Establish an Internal Council Environmental Education Group that allows for a coordinated Council approach to the development and implementation of environmental education. | EP | H | 2012 |
| **S2**  Broaden the scope of the EcoTeam Committee to include a representative from each area of Council. | EP | H | 2012 |
| **S3**  Align the creation and delivery of the environmental education components of the Nillumbik Cultural Plan with this Strategy. | CPLC/EP | H | 2012 |
| **S4**  Develop an environmental education participation monitoring and evaluation program for Edendale. | E | H | 2012 |
| **S5**  Develop internal Council processes to evaluate and monitor the success of environmental education programs and publications including information accessed from the website and via email. | EP/Comms | H | 2012 |
| **S6**  Develop environmental education information to support the environmental and sustainability actions within the *Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016* with a focus on the Green Business Network and ecotourism. | EP | H | 2012-2013 |
| **S7**  Ensure the development and implementation of new environmental education programs and publications are aligned with Education for Sustainability principles. | EP/E | H | Ongoing |
| **S8**  Continue Council’s Environmental Advisory Committee, Environmental Coordination Group, Agricultural Advisory Committee and Edendale Advisory Committee ensuring that environmental education is incorporated as part of their charters and  roles. | EP/E | H | Ongoing |
| **S9**  Review Council’s community development grant application process to incorporate an environmental component. | EP | H | Ongoing |
| **S10** Communicate Council’s environmental performance to staff and community. | EP | H | Ongoing |
| **S11**  Investigate projects and funding opportunities that provide environmental and social benefits to community health and wellbeing, e.g. environmental artists in residence and the VicHealth ‘flash mobs’ project. | EP/CPLC | H | Ongoing |
| **S12**  Investigate and implement opportunities for environmental education components to be delivered through the Living & Learning Nillumbik program, e.g. incorporating environmental components into existing and future programs. | L&LN/EP | M | Annually |
| **S13**  Develop the additional environmental education facilities at Edendale as per the *Edendale Masterplan* to provide covered learning spaces and toilet facilities. | E | M | 2013 |
| **S14**  Ensure that the environmental education programs delivered by Council complement and utilise environmental education programs delivered by other organisations and groups including River Keepers, Friends and Landcare groups, Transition Towns and schools. | EP | M | Ongoing |

### Resource Development

The Resource development (RD) actions have a focus on providing environmental educational resources and programs that are more than information sharing. These resources will align with the Education for Sustainability framework to guide the participant through awakening, discovering, transforming, sustaining and celebrating and leading steps of behaviour change.

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Priority** | **Timeframe** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **RD1**  Review and update all of Council’s existing environmental education programs and publications to align with Education for Sustainability principles. | EP/E | H | 2012 |
| **RD2**  Investigate how Council’s school environmental education program can be updated to incorporate all areas of sustainability and align it with the Australian Curriculum, the Victorian Government’s ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic framework and Education for Sustainability principles. | E | H | 2012 |
| **RD3** Update Council’s environmental school program to align with the Australian Curriculum. | E | H | 2012-2014 |
| **RD4**  Develop and deliver educational information to raise community awareness and understanding of the importance of the Green Wedge. | EP | H | 2012 |
| **RD5**  Update Council’s new resident information kit to include environmental information. | EP | H | 2012 |
| **RD6**  Continue to develop early childhood environmental education resources. | E | H | 2012 |
| **RD7**  Continue the development and implementation of environmental education at Edendale with a focus on biodiversity, energy, waste, water, farm animal husbandry, urban agriculture, local food and the Edendale visitor experience, linking to relevant frameworks. | E | H | 2012 |
| **RD8**  Develop a standard information package about the importance of sustainability and Council’s environmental education information and programs. | EP | H | 2012 |
| **RD9**  Update Council’s school programs to include direct reference and information on Council’s environmental responsibilities, programs and publications. | E/EP | H | 2012 |
| **RD10**  Develop specific environmental education resources and programs on:   * Saving energy and addressing climate change in Council buildings and operations. * Installing alternative septic systems including reed beds, worms and planning requirements. * Better management of existing septic systems • promoting the benefits of local food. * Showing secondary students how to be environmental leaders. * Showing ‘non-environmental’ community groups how to be involved in environmental education including Scouts, Guides, CFA, sporting clubs, RSL, Probus and Rotary. | EP  with assistance  from relevant  Council staff | H | Ongoing  (1-2  resources/  programs  each year) |
| **RD11**  Investigate the passive environmental learning opportunities at Edendale and Council’s bushland reserves. | E/EW | H | 2012-2013 |
| **RD12**  Continue to provide environmental education with Council’s waste and recycling operations especially with new and emerging opportunities for recycling such as e-waste, batteries, MobileMuster, mattresses and polystyrene. | WM | H | Ongoing |
| **RD13**  Ensure that all of Council’s environmental bulk purchasing programs includes an environmental education component. | EP | H | Ongoing |
| **RD14**  Provide environmental education information on the Organics Processing facility where organic material from Nillumbik and 10 other councils will be processed. | WM | H | 2013 |
| **RD15** Continue to develop secondary environmental education curriculum resources. | E | H | 2013 |
| **RD16** Investigate the development of a retrofit program to assist low income, aged and disabled households in Nillumbik. | EP | M | 2011 |
| **RD17**  Update Council’s emergency management bushfire educational information and presentations to include environmental information. | EP/EW/Emergency Management staff | M | 2011-2012 |
| **RD18** Develop a sustainable travel plan for Council staff that includes an environmental education component. | EP | M | 2012-2013 |
| **RD19**  Train Council’s Planning staff in the STEPS planning process and how to lead an applicant through the STEPS application process. | EP | M | 2013 |
| **RD20**  Expand Edendale’s schools program to include engaging with teachers and students pre and post Edendale visits. The pre and post visit information is to provide data to help Council determine if the Edendale school program is contributing to positive sustainability behaviour by the students and school. | E | M | 2013 |
| **RD21**  Incorporate an environmental education component into Council’s Land Management Incentive Program. | EP/CPLC | M | 2013 |
| **RD22**  Investigate the feasibility of creating, in partnership, a sustainable house educational display that shows residents how to be water, waste and energy wise. Investigation should include research into:   * ‘IMBY’ In My Back Yard festival Wodonga * “MBYR” My Back Yard Rules festival, house and resources in Wangaratta * Allwood Neighbourhood House * Greener Neighbourhood Houses * CERES sustainable house display * Whittlesea Sustainability house. | EP/E | M | 2013-2014 |
| **RD23**  Investigate the feasibility of developing an online partnership school environmental education model similar to the NECMA School Environment Education Directory (www.necma.vic.gov.au/seed). | E | M | 2013-2014 |
| **RD24**  Investigate how incentives, awards or certificates could be used to celebrate environmental education achievements and increase community engagement. | E/EP | M | 2013-2014 |

### Community Engagement and Education

The Community engagement and education (C) actions provide support for community groups, individuals, businesses and schools to find the sustainability information they are seeking and guidance on how the participants can contribute to Nillumbik’s sustainable future.

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Priority** | **Timeframe** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **C1**  Increase the scope and variety of sustainability workshops delivered as part of the Environment Events Program and include a ‘how to do it’ focus, e.g. green cleaning, double glazing and retrofitting. | EP | H | 2012 |
| **C2** Continue providing land management educational information where it relates to areas of Council’s responsibility. | EW/EP | H | Ongoing |
| **C3** Develop and strengthen environmental education partnerships with Friends, Landcare and community environmental groups. | EW/EP | H | Ongoing |
| **C4**  Provide opportunities for relevant Council staff to share their environmental and educational knowledge with other Council staff and contractors. | All | M | Ongoing |
| **C5**  Ensure environmental education information on Council’s website and other communication channels is kept up-to-date and regularly reviewed. | All | M | Ongoing |
| **C6**  Continue to support sustainable gardening practices within Nillumbik through Sustainable Gardening Australia and the North Eastern Ranges Permaculture Group. | EP | M | 2013 |
| **C7** Develop a new landowner information package on sustainable living targeted at small property owners (2.5ha plus) | EP/Comms | M | 2014 |

### On-ground

The On-ground (OG) actions are those relating to Council’s direct activities, events, programs and resources that assist hands-on action at the grassroots level.

Adaptive management requires that Council learns and improves management techniques by reviewing and monitoring the outcome of actions then adapting them. Changing environmental factors and new knowledge in the field of sustainability means that any ongoing programs and resources must be reviewed to ensure they are not only effective but represent the best possible approach.

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Priority** | **Timeframe** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **OG1**  Continue organising and hosting Council’s annual Practically Green Festival. The festival theme and delivery of educational information is to align with this Strategy. | EP | H | Annually |
| **OG2**  Annually review Council’s Practically Green Festival including participation numbers, successful activities and participant satisfaction. | EP | H | Annually |
| **OG3**  Continue to develop Edendale’s sustainability incursion sessions for schools to encourage them to participate in an environmental education program at Edendale. | E | H | 2012 |
| **OG4**  Implement Edendale’s Sustainable Backyard project. | E | H | 2012 |
| **OG5**  Continue coordinating the Teacher Education Network (TEN). | E | H | Ongoing |
| **OG6**  Continue Council’s Environmental Events Program. | EP | H | Ongoing |
| **OG7**  Increase the number of local schools participating in Council’s school program and return visits. | E | H | Ongoing |
| **OG8**  Continue to develop Edendale as a hub for environmental and community groups to meet, share information and provide an identity within the community. | E | H | Ongoing |
| **OG9**  Deliver Council’s land management educational program throughout the Shire with practical sessions offered at relevant onsite locations. | EP/EW | H | Ongoing |
| **OG10**  Continue Council’s *Fringe Focus* newsletter and distribution of environmental education information through the Nillumbik Environment Network. | EP | H | Ongoing |
| **OG11**  Deliver ‘good neighbour’ land management education to landholders adjoining Council’s bushland reserves. | EW | H | Ongoing |
| **OG12**  Provide support to environmental community groups involved in environmental education. | All | H | Ongoing |
| **OG13**  Provide support to environmental community groups through the provision of Edendale’s meeting facilities. | E | H | Ongoing |
| **OG14**  Continue to broaden Council’s school environmental program to also allow participation by other interested community groups including Scouts, Guides, long day care, birthday parties and school holiday programs. | E | M | Ongoing |
| **OG15**  Update the Active Community Map and ‘Near to Me’ function on Council’s website to include all bushland reserves, recreation trails and outdoor areas that provide the opportunity for environmental education. | Comms/EW | M | 2013 |
| **OG16**  Incorporate environmental education into existing Council supported activities including Clean Up Australia Day, Arbor Week school grants, National Tree Day and natural resource management field days. | WM/E/EW | M | 2013 |
| **OG17**  Continue to develop and deliver the schools environmental arts program. | E | M | Ongoing |
| **OG18**  Develop Edendale’s discovery trails with interpretative signage as per the *Edendale Masterplan*. | E | M | 2013-2014 |
| **OG19**  Ensure that Council’s festival tent includes Council’s  environmental education programs and publications and is waste-wise and water-wise. | CPLC | M | Ongoing |
| **OG20**  Develop environmental education information including signage and display meters on energy and water saving within Council buildings. | EP | M | Ongoing |
| **OG21**  Align Council’s retrofitting programs with Council’s *Ecological Sustainable Development policy* and include an environmental education component which includes information about the retrofit and the required user behaviour. | EP | M | Ongoing |

### Funding priorities

The level of service Council can provide to undertake environmental education depends on the amount of funding available from Council and from external sources.

To facilitate community education and action, Council should have a role in community education and in supporting individuals and the community to live in balance with the environment. To achieve optimum outcomes in Nillumbik, coordinated environmental education is required.

1. Update and align existing environmental education programs and resources to align with Education for Sustainability principles.
2. Implement environmental education actions as listed in Council plans and strategies.
3. Prioritise and develop innovative and targeted environmental education programs and resources.
4. Build and maintain partnerships and strong networks between all organisations and community groups involved in environmental education.
5. Recruit and train staff to provide education and expert advice to Council staff, individuals and community groups.

### Monitoring and reporting

#### Environmental Education Strategy Progress Report

Council will utilise Council’s Business Planning process to generate an annual Environmental Education Strategy Progress Report. The report will detail how Council is progressing on the implementation of Environmental Education Strategy actions.

#### Reporting to the community

Information generated for the Environmental Education Strategy Progress Report will be made available at the Nillumbik Shire Council [website](http://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/)..

#### Review of Environmental Education Strategy

The Environmental Education Strategy will be reviewed every five years to revise the vision and objectives, accommodate new actions and revise existing actions. The community will be invited to have input into the review.

### Appendix 1 - Literature Review

The following are documents, plans and strategies researched as part of the Literature Review.

* Australian Government (2005) *Educating for a Sustainable Future a National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools*
* Australian Government *Living Sustainably The Australian Government’s National Action Plan for Education for Sustainability*
* Australian Government (2010) *Sustainability Curriculum Framework a guide for curriculum developers and policy makers*
* Commissioner Environmental Sustainability (VIC) [2010 & 2011] *Victorian Strategic Audit*
* Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (VIC) [2010] *Administrative Guidelines for Education for a Sustainable Environment*
* Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (VIC) [2010] *Education for a Sustainable Future: A guide for implementing sustainability in school*
* Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (VIC) [2009] *Looking Ahead: DEECD’s Environmental Sustainability Strategy*
* Department of Sustainability and Environment (VIC) [2010] *Biodiversity is Everybody’s Business Victoria’s Biodiversity Strategy 2010-2015* (consultant draft)
* Department of Sustainability and Environment (VIC) [2006] *Our Environment Our Future Sustainability Action Statement*
* Department of Sustainability and Environment (VIC) [1997] *Victoria’s Biodiversity Strategy*
* Department of Sustainability and Environment (VIC) [2002] *Victoria’s Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (n.d.) *Biodiversity Strategy 2012*
* Nillumbik Shire Council [2010] *Climate Change Action Plan 2010-2015*
* Nillumbik Shire Council [2010] *Edendale Strategic Business Plan*
* Nillumbik Shire Council [2008] *Edendale Master Plan* and relevant supporting documents
* Nillumbik Shire Council (n.d.) *Education for sustainability at Edendale* brochure
* Nillumbik Shire Council [2010] *Green Wedge Management Plan 2010-2025*
* Nillumbik Shire Council [2010] *Living & Learning Nillumbik Strategic Plan 2010-2013*
* Nillumbik Shire Council [2011] *Memorandum of Understanding ‘Healthy Waterways Waterwatch Melbourne*’
* Nillumbik Shire Council [Draft 2011] *Nillumbik Cultural Plan*
* Nillumbik Shire Council [2009] *Nillumbik Council Plan 2009–2013*
* Nillumbik Shire Council [2011] *Economic Development Strategy 2011–2016*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (bi-annually) *Nillumbik Environmental Events Program*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (2001) *Nillumbik Environment Strategy – Actions for a Sustainable Future*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (2011 draft) *Land Management Incentive Program*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (2010) *Practically Green Festival 2010 Report*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (2009) *Rabbit Action Plan*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (draft 2011) *Recreation Trails Strategy*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (1997 & March 2011 draft) *Roadside Management Plan*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (n.d.) *Sustainable Water Management Plan and reviewed actions*
* Nillumbik Shire Council (2008) *Weed Action Plan*
* Nillumbik Shire Council existing educational booklets, brochures, flyers and pamphlets
* Department of Sustainability and Environment (VIC) [2009] *Securing Our Natural Future: A White Paper for Land and Biodiversity at a time of Climate Change*
* Department of Sustainability and Environment (VIC) [2005] *Victorian Local Sustainability Accord*
* 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission [2009] *Final report*
* Victorian Local Governance Association [2010] *Liveable & Just Toolkit: for local government to address the social and equity impacts of climate change*

### Appendix 2 - Abbreviations

**Council:**

CPLC Community Participation, Learning and Culture

Comms Communication

ED Economic Development

E Edendale

EP Environmental Planning

ET EcoTeam

EW Environmental Works

GV Governance

L&LN Living & Learning Nillumbik

WM Waste Management

**Other Organisations:**

AAEE Australian Association of Environmental Educators

CERES Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies

DSE Department of Sustainability and Environment

DPI Department of Primary Industry

NECMA North East Catchment Management Authority

PPWCMA Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority

SV Sustainability Victoria

TAFE Technical and Further Education

UNESCO United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

VAEE Victorian Association of Environmental Educators

WWF World Wildlife Fund

**Other**

AuSSI Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative

EfS Education for Sustainability

IMBY/MBYR ‘IMBY’ In My Back Yard Wodonga and ‘MBYR’ My Back Yard Rules

SEED School Environment Education Directory

TEN Teacher Environment Network

VCAC Victorian Climate Action Calendar

### Appendix 3 - Background Paper

See Nillumbik Environmental Education Strategy Background Paper.

### Appendix 4 – Potential Resources and Support

| **Program/Resource** | **Managed by** | **Support Available** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gould League** | n/a | The Gould League provides a range of environment programs for teachers and students with a focus on biodiversity, marine, waste and water. |
| Landlearn | Department of Primary Industries | LandLearn provides natural resource management and agricultural curriculum-based training for teachers and environmental educators. LandLearn also has a wide variety of environmental education resources online. |
| Living Greener Program | Australian Government | A program to assist individuals to live greener with a focus on energy, waste, water and travel. |
| Paint the Town Green | Carbon Down (Partnership between  Sustainability Victoria and VECCI) | Support for businesses to reduce emissions and plan for change. |
| **Regional Catchment**  **Investment Plan** | Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment  Management Authority | Funding through PPWCMA from the Australian and Victorian Governments for large (approx $100,000) partnership projects. |
| **ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic** | Sustainability Victoria | The ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic framework assists schools to implement the Australia-wide school sustainability program aligned with biodiversity, energy, general sustainability, waste and water. The framework follows the Education for Sustainability principles including certification and celebration.  ResourceSmart also provides information and support to businesses and households on sustainable practices. |
| **School Environment**  **Education Directory (SEED)** | North East Catchment Management  Authority | The SEED website (www.necma.vic.gov.au/seed )  provides over 400 environmental education curriculum related resources for students and teachers aligned with the sustainability areas of biodiversity, energy, general sustainability, waste and water. |
| **School environment**  **education programs** | Numerous local governments | City of Melville WA, City of Greater Dandenong VIC, Hornsby Shire Council NSW, Moreton Bay Regional Council Qld, Melbourne City Council VIC, Baw Baw Shire Council VIC, Banyule City Council VIC, Boroondara City Council VIC, City of Casey VIC, Darebin Council VIC, Frankston City Council VIC, City of Greater Geelong VIC, Hobsons Bay Council VIC, Knox City Council VIC, Macedon Ranges Shire Council VIC and Manningham City Council VIC. |
| **Riverkeepers** | Yarra Riverkeepers Association | The aim of the Yarra Riverkeeper Association is to protect and restore the Yarra River and its tributaries, from source to mouth, for current and future generations.  They tell the river’s “story” highlighting its wonders and challenges. They monitor river health and run educational events, river tours and presentations to schools. |
| **Threatened Species**  **Network** | World Wide Fund | Funding for on-ground conservation projects to conserve threatened species and ecological communities. |
| **Transition Towns** | Transition Towns Australia | The Transition Towns Network helps communities deal with climate change and shrinking supplies of cheap energy (peak oil). |
| **Victorian Association of**  **Environmental Educators**  **(VAEE)** | n/a | VAEE provides training, support and environmental education support to teachers and environmental educators. |
| **Zoos Victoria** |  | Zoos Victoria offers students, teachers and visitors fun and interactive environmental learning opportunities.  Zoos Victoria has also developed detailed social and environmental behaviour monitoring programs. |

### Appendix 5 – Record of people consulted for the preparation of the Environment Education Strategy

| **Unit** | **Organisation** |
| --- | --- |
| Edendale | Nillumbik Shire Council |
| Community Development | Nillumbik Shire Council |
| Environmental Planning | Nillumbik Shire Council |
| Environmental Works | Nillumbik Shire Council |
| Operational Services | Nillumbik Shire Council |
| Community Participation, Learning and Culture | Nillumbik Shire Council |
| Not applicable | Eltham College |
| Not applicable | Australian Plant Society |
| Not applicable | Green Wedge Protection Group |
| Not applicable | Arthurs Creek District Landcare |
| Not applicable | Catholic Ladies College |
| Not applicable | Indigenous Design |
| Not applicable | Environment Advisory Committee |
| Not applicable | Victorian Association of Environmental Educators (VAEE) |
| Not applicable | Nillumbik Transition Towns |
| Not applicable | Friends Group Hurstbridge |
| Not applicable | BICA/Edendale/Edendale Advisory Committee |
| Not applicable | Bend of Islands Environment Advisory Committee |
| Not applicable | CERES/Edendale/Teachers |
| Not applicable | Eltham North Primary School |
| Not applicable | St John of God Accord |
| Not applicable | North East Ranges Permaculture |
| Not applicable | Teachers’ Environment Network |