



Environment House 125 King William St, Bayswater, Western Australia, 6053.
shop@envirohouse.org.au Tel 08 9271 4488 www.envirohouse.org.au

ANNUAL REPORT October 2015-October 2016

Environment House was started by local volunteers in 2001. Our goal is to promote sustainable living and to protect our natural resources. We provide a place where people can come to ask questions, buy appropriate eco-hardware/products for their homes and take advantage of the expertise of our volunteers, drawn from many different occupational backgrounds and supported by years of practical knowledge in sustainable living.

The organisation is incorporated, has tax-deductibility status and the committee of management over the year consisted of Rachael Roberts, Jo Bower, Rochelle Petrovic, Warren Haley, Alan Benn, Rosemary Lynch, Prue Robertson, Glenys Davies and Giorgia Johnson.

After 14 years of involvement, Brenda Conochie and Rob Gulley moved to Denmark and while no longer on the committee of management, continued to be involved in most of our \$WWAP (Saving Water, Waste and Power) projects.

OUR PEOPLE

Part-time staff and volunteers

Environment House had **five part-time employees** in 2015-16, who also contributed many voluntary hours. Rochelle Petrovic as our Shop Manager, Katie Norris as our Gardener, Warren Haley overseeing shop accounts, Gavan Wood as our Accountant/Bookkeeper and our wonderful Cleaner Almas Tulema. Joanna Moore has taken on the cleaning while Almas is away on leave. Volunteer Tessa Hopkins coordinated the Environment House Garden Club until July 2016 when she became tied up with other work commitments.

Alan Benn, as our in-house energy and water auditor, also contributed many paid and unpaid hours to our programs. Alan coordinates our eco-hardware stock, used for a variety of purposes across the organisation, and provides much needed maintenance support.

Environment House's well respected **\$WWAP Program** employs a number of sustainability auditors as consultants, with most projects coordinated by Brenda Conochie. This program provides energy, water and waste sustainability education and audits across Perth, delivered by our highly skilled and experienced auditing team.

Volunteers continue to do a substantial amount of the work to run Environment House, including staffing the shop, coordinating all aspects of the centre and managing the many activities, programs and workshops. We ran a very successful Volunteer Recruitment Day in January 2016 and plan to do this again in 2017.

OUR PROJECTS

Nature Play for children from the Great Beginnings Childcare Centre

From February to July, a group of 12-16 three year olds with child care staff walked down to Environment House once a fortnight from their centre in King William St, Bayswater.

The children enjoyed the set activities and exploring our garden, learning about frogs and tadpoles; searching for, picking and eating fresh broad beans; climbing our orange tree; locating different fruits and vegetables around our garden; smelling different herbs; and having a go at catching cabbage moths with our butterfly nets.



Rachael Roberts with children from the Great Beginnings Centre

§WWAP (Saving Water Waste and Power) – sustainability services in the community

Sustainability Workshops and Audits over the year July 2015-Sept 2016

Environment House has continued to deliver home sustainability audits, community centre audits and workshops across Perth. Projects were delivered across many different Council areas, including regional centres. **See Appendix 1** for full details.



Rob Gulley presenting a compost workshop to an Earth Carers group in our organic garden on 11th November 2015.

Wetland Action

We didn't expect to find ourselves saving a wetland this year. On 12 July 2016 bulldozers arrived on the site opposite the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary in Bayswater and removed about 60 trees in and around the wetland known locally as Carter's swamp.

Our campaign to save the privately owned wetland and have the state government purchase the land has continued ever since. We've invited people to join the action by liking our Facebook page

www.facebook.com/groups/nohousesinwetlands/

We've been working closely with the City of Bayswater, Councillors and local MP's to find a solution to save this local wetland. About 3,300 people have signed a petition to protect the wetland, and over 200 people attended a rally outside Parliament House on 11 October. This issue has galvanised the local community and a wider group of people concerned about wetlands right across the Swan coastal plain.

This campaign has highlighted for many people how outdated are the protections for the few remaining wetlands in Perth. These last few wetlands in our urban areas provide homes for most of our remaining fauna - such as oblong tortoises.



The wee turtles being released by Deborah Bowie and kids Jane and Alex on 9th October 2016. Photo by Brett Klucznik

Deborah Bowie has worked enthusiastically with the No Houses in Wetlands group and also raised seven baby turtles found when they were only hours old in a pond near the Carter wetlands.

City of Bayswater Projects

Native Plants to Residents Program 2016

This was a new initiative from the City of Bayswater and conducted through Environment House, in conjunction with Jeremy Maher, Environmental Coordinator at the City of Bayswater. It was a grassroots initiative to encourage City of Bayswater residents to grow more native plants and take measures to reduce water use.

CoB residents could visit EH to collect up to 10 native plants per household for their home gardens. They were invited to make a donation to EH, suggested at \$4 for 10 plants or \$2 for 5 plants to cover our costs in selecting and collecting plants, advertising and administering the program.

Residents have taken and planted approximately 7,500 native plants including ground covers, kangaroo paws, small and medium shrubs and trees. Feedback on the program was overwhelmingly positive with many people asking whether it would be run each year.

Many thanks to Alan Benn for all his work in sourcing plants from the Men of the Trees Nursery and coordinating this program for EH, and to Nadine Wright Toussaint for designing the stunning flyer and to our volunteers who took it to community noticeboards and 1500 household letterboxes.

Environment House Activities and Workshops for 2015-16

The City of Bayswater continues to provide us with an operating grant to cover insurance and running costs. We are also very grateful to them for our premises and for the interior repainting in April. These funds assist us to provide workshops for residents, local schools, seniors groups and childcare centres. This year we ran a variety of workshops, see **Workshop calendar**.

www.envirohouse.org.au/sites/default/files/2016-workshop-calendar-A4-size_0.pdf

Special Events

We participated in the nationwide **Garage Sale Trail** In October 2015, supporting the notion of reusing rather than throwing things out or buying new things. We marked **Fair Trade** fortnight with a morning tea, thanks to Glenys Davies, and promoted **Plastic Free July** with a workshop on reducing waste, through our newsletter, Facebook page and promotion of alternatives in our EcoShop.

We joined the **Sustainable House** Day program with a workshop: Making your home more sustainable and reducing your power bills, run by Tyson Menck, one of our experienced energy auditors.

Schools and Childcare Centres

Alan Benn finalised three free energy and water audits for the three childcare centres that fall under the umbrella of the City of Bayswater Child Care Centre Association - Silverwood, Noranda and Salisbury. Environment House used the Bayswater and Noranda Community Bank funding to pay for the audits. The Centre Manager immediately began implementing the recommendations.

Alan has continued working with Maylands Peninsula PS to improve their energy and water efficiency.

Noranda Primary School garden

Environment House was able to assist Noranda Primary School to bring back to life their food growing patch and native plant nursery. Classes are now being held in this outdoor classroom with plenty of valuable skills being learnt by everyone, thanks to Justin Mills.

Transition Town Network

Environment House has joined the Transition Town Network as Bayswater Environment House in Transition. This is an international movement to encourage local communities to promote and discuss how we can engage in more sustainable practices.

We attended the WA Transition Town Conference in February 2016 and some TT Hub networking dinners to strengthen our connection to this network of groups engaging in local actions on environmental issues across Perth and the South-West.

Divestment from Fossil Fuels - a major environmental initiative

Environment House has been working with 350.org to encourage the City of Bayswater to divest more of their investment portfolio from the Big Four Banks. In September we met with the Mayor and Chief Financial Officer (now Acting CEO) to discuss the issue. We are hopeful that our Council will be the 10th in Western Australia to act for our climate in this way.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our EcoShop

Our formal shop opening hours were extended in December 2015 with Council approval, adding Mon-Thurs 9-1 to the usual 10-4 Saturdays. The extended hours on weekdays have given us the opportunity to interact with more people. Our two rooms of eco-products look bright and attractive and represent terrific value for money. A great deal of thought has gone into selecting products, and we are proud to say that our home cleaning range and personal care products are now entirely palm oil free, about 90% West Australian, and most are made locally in Bayswater.

We've re-introduced bulk refills for some of the EnviroClean range and this is proving popular with customers, a great way to save money and reduce resource use!

In September, Rochelle Petrovic resigned and we are now looking for a new EcoShop Coordinator, with Alain Twynham helping in the EcoShop on Thursdays, and new volunteer Regina Wayner covering Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

Our Saturday morning stalls @ CITY FARM MARKETS

For many years, we've had a regular Saturday morning stall at the City Farm markets, thanks to the commitment from Glenys Davies and her team of volunteers. That stall concluded in June 2016 but we are available for occasional stalls at City Farm.

Our community food garden

We have been delighted with our community organic food garden, with our gardener Katie Norris and volunteer Tessa Hopkins and the Garden Club demonstrating how to produce fresh food. Katie has now moved away from Perth and we are looking for a new permaculture gardener.

Website

www.envirohouse.org.au

We are delighted that our grant application to Lotterywest to develop a new website was approved in August. Work is under way to create a new website.

www.facebook.com/EnviroHouseEcoShop

Our EcoShop Coordinator Rochelle Petrovic and volunteers have been keeping up our Facebook page to publicise workshops, stalls and new ecoproducts.

Newsletter

Our newsletter goes out via email monthly to over 1000 subscribers. The new format allows more photos and flyers to be included, and is much more reader friendly for different devices. To subscribe to the newsletter please email shop@envirohouse.org.au

A Meeting Place

Environment House has been approached by a range of local environment groups to use our building for meetings, and we are pleased to welcome and accommodate them.

Stalls and presentations

We have continued to receive invitations to provide guest speakers and to set up stalls at community events. This level of demand for practical information on sustainable living is encouraging.

Alan Benn gave a presentation on *Energy Efficiency in the Home in Summer*, to residents at Mertome Village in February 2016. We held stalls at the Bayswater Autumn River Festival, Psaros Eco Fair at City Farm, Hyde Park Fair, the Earth Carers course at West Leederville Community Garden, Permaculture Fest and CCWA Eco Fair.

Our outreach program this year has been fairly typical of our activities over the past 15 years. We are most appreciative of all our volunteers who help on stalls and other events.

Chisholm College's Christian Service with Environment House

We have continued with our work experience/Christian Service partnership for Chisholm students in Years 11 and 12.

Wetland and Bushland Groups

Environment House continues to be involved in a range of projects involving these groups in our area, including Friends of Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary, Maylands Samphires, Friends of Claughton Reserve, Friends of Gobba Lake, Baigup Wetland Interest Group, Swan Lake and Lightning Swamp Bushland.

Friends of Maylands Samphires

Environment House has a special focus on the Maylands Samphires and we've held three working bees this year. We also had several other informal weeding sessions concentrating on our focus sites, with special thanks to Mary van Wees for her commitment.

The Maylands Samphires was chosen as the site for the Coastal Saltmarsh Workshop run by DPaW in April 2016. The focus was on learning more about the plants in this threatened ecological community.

We've strengthened our connection with other bushland and wetland groups within the City of Bayswater. In March we attended an Environmental Community Group Forum for new Councillors, facilitated by Jeremy Maher. Also a Weeds Workshop arranged by CoB for local Friends groups in June. Environment House is working closely with wetland groups across Perth on the Wetlands campaign.

OUR FINANCES

Environment House is pleased to announce that after the substantial sudden cuts to state and federal funding for climate change, energy efficiency projects and environmentally sustainable initiatives, we have successfully achieved financial security.

EcoShop

The focus of our shop is to provide education and sustainability advice to our customers and alert people to products that will assist them to live more sustainably. The shop provides an income of \$20,000 a year, which is directed towards covering the cost of running this sustainability initiative.

City of Bayswater

We are most grateful to have received \$10,000 again, making it an Annual Grant. This enables us to continue operating, including funding our suite of expensive but necessary insurance premiums.

In April 2016, the City of Bayswater provided Environment House with \$10,000 to purchase native plants from Men of the Trees and to run the highly successful Native Plants to Residents program from April-September. We organised publicity and held stalls to distribute plants at the Autumn River Festival, Maylands Street Festival, Noranda Shopping Centre and the Volunteers' Afternoon Tea at the City's offices. Our volunteers contributed their knowledge and experience in gardening with native plants to assist residents with plant selection.

Donations

Environment House received \$1,520.60 in tax deductible donations in 2015-16 and we would like to thank all our supporters for their generosity.

Bayswater and Noranda Community Bank

Environment House is very grateful for three year funding partnership with our local community bank which commenced on 1st July 2015. There is no doubt that this has provided Environment House with a major boost and long term viability.

The Directors of our local community bank live locally and from our track record recognised that we had the drive and initiative to continue as a strong voice for environmental sustainability in our local community.



Photo: Bayswater and Noranda Community Bank Director David Kelly visits the Environment House garage sale as part of the Garage Sale Trail nationwide event on 24th October 2015.

It's been another busy year for our group, playing our part in the global effort to live more sustainably and protect our precious environment.

The Environment House Management Committee

Rachael Roberts, Rochelle Petrovic, Warren Haley, Alan Benn, Jo Bower, Rosemary Lynch, Prue Robertson and Giorgia Johnson.

17 October 2016

See Appendix below

APPENDIX

\$WWaP (Saving Water, Waste and Power)

July 2015-Sept 2016 *Brenda Conochie*

Compost-only services by Environment House

Consistent with past years, Rob Gulley provided 8 x compost and wormfarming workshops from July 2015 - Sept 2016; these were for Mindarie Regional Council's Earthcarers program x 2, Rivers Regional Council at Mandurah, Pinjarra and Mardella, the Cities of Belmont and Cockburn and for East Metro Regional Council at Environment House.

Compost for migrants project: Foodscraps to Fertiliser Workshops & My Waste My Place My Way home visits Feb 2015-Nov 2016

As well as these one-off workshops, we engaged Rob to do compost workshops and home setups under a Waste Authority grant. Although our grant was the largest to community groups in that round, it was a very 'demanding' grant, in that voluntary work equivalent to the amount of the grant was required, and that proved to be the reality, with a great deal of communications and admin work needed.

We had envisaged 8 workshops resulting in 80 home visits; in the end the numbers were 10 presentations and only 46 home visits. Except for one hosted by EH these the migrants support agencies hosted the workshops, recruited participants and interpreters and put on refreshments (though with a \$60 subsidy through us from the grant). Participating agencies were:

- ASeTTS Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors
- William Langford Community House (Langford)
- Centrecare (Cannington)
- ISHAR Multicultural Women's Health Centre x 2 (Mirrabooka & Bentley)
- Communicare (Cannington)
- Save the Children ITV It Takes a Village program, Camillo Primary School
- MercyCare (Mirrabooka)
- Karen Welfare Association (Langford)
- Katanning Migrant Resource Centre

Only 46 home compost setups were booked, the uptake from community workshops severely limited by the large number of tenants who although keen to make fertiliser to grow their own food, had been told explicitly by landlords or agents 'Don't touch anything in the garden!' They were keen, however, to learn the technique for their hoped-for futures in their own homes. Those who had grown food in their home countries (most) had noticed how Perth sand would not easily grow food and also now in metro Perth they knew they wouldn't have free access to animal manure. So they appreciated that backyard composting would be very useful for them. Rob also provided tips on managing fruitfly, many of them renting homes with older fruit trees.

With the remaining project funds, the Waste Authority agreed with our suggestion that translations be made of Rob and Brenda's Twin Bin Composting pamphlet, to be uploaded on the Waste Authority's website, along with the [English version](#). Discussion with the Waste Authority and migrant support agencies resulted in these community languages being chosen: Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Croatian, Dari, Farsi, Italian, Karen, Spanish, Swahili, and Vietnamese.

[Our final report](#) (edited by the Waste Authority) was also uploaded to that website. A highlight was the high level of successful composting observed by Rob in his voluntary followup visits.

\$WWaP Home sustainability auditing projects 2015-16

Auditors: Alan Benn, Ross Porter, Tyson Menck and Rob Gulley. *First names used hereafter.*

Town of Bassendean

Contract for 50 home visits + \$25 hardware each. Recruitment very slow in this small LGA, very frustrating for Enviro Officer. Only 26 households could be recruited Oct 2015 – April 2016. Auditors: Alan, Rob, Ross, Tyson. Followup report was submitted in June.

Compost option: The fact that 6/26 Bassendean residents paid \$75 to EH for the pair of bins (although at Bunnings these would have cost \$106, a good discount!) shows that they were glad to have someone arrive, with the right kind of bins and set them up in the right way at their place, obviously overcoming barriers they had felt previously to starting composting on their own. 1 extra bin provided to a further household which was struggling with a single bin.

School audits With the remaining project funds ToB agreed to our suggestion that we audit Bassendean's four primary schools. Tyson carried these out, and wrote comprehensive reports, with mentoring from Alan. Tyson's followup of schools is continuing.

Town of Cambridge

Contract for 50 home audits +\$50 hardware each.

Alan audited all the 46 homes + the Wembley Community Centre **May-Aug 2015**. Followup coaching survey and report to Council May-June 2016.

Town of Canning

Contract for 20 home audits, May-June 2016, no hardware allowance but compost option offered. 2 opted for twin bin setup (paying EH \$100). 5 other households were happy with their existing composting practices and equipment. Auditor: Ross.

Followup will be carried out by Brenda (under auspices of EH still) in October 2016, when participants winter bills should all be in, to compare with their previous winter's bills.

City of Cockburn

EH's 4th project for Cockburn! 40 audits, \$50 ecohardware each, but effectively \$100 for those setting up two of our compost bins as the City also provides a \$50 rebate for all residents. Audits completed **April-June 2016** by Ross who lives in Cockburn, so a nice small project footprint! *No request in original contract for followup. Followup will be in October 2016 by Brenda through Green Services. Sept 2016: Green Services just starting a further project of 40 audits for Cockburn, with Ross.*

City of Joondalup

Our 3rd project for Joondalup. 40 audits August – December 2016. Auditor: Alan. Followup survey and report, March 2016.

Sept 2016: Green Services awarded a new contract for 40 audits; Alan to do these, Brenda doing admin, 'business as usual' for us both!

City of Melville

Contract for 50 audits + \$50 hardware each. Sept 2015 – June 2016. Auditors: Ross with Alan doing the audit for the Bahai Learning Centre in Myaree. Tricky project with very slow recruitment and 3 project officers in a row!

We offered the Twin Bin compost setup as an addition to the energy and water audit, with both bins free (same deal as for Cockburn participants - one from our project's hardware allowance, the other from the City-wide rebate bucket). 21/49 took up the offer of a setup from scratch, for a further 6 Ross sorted out their poorly performing single bins, adding a second bin. Ross is to be commended

for the extra work, transporting of bins and managing the dirt factor involved in these visits! The followup survey and report were completed in June 2016.

City of Stirling

After running of 3 x 3 workshops for migrants on saving water and electricity (each participant booked in for a series of 3 short workshops) in June 2015, Stirling contracted us to do home eco-audits for 22 of the workshop participants. (Auditor: Rob, August 2016).

Translations of Saving Electricity, Gas and Water booklet

There were leftover funds from this project which we suggested be used for translations of Rob and Brenda's little booklet *Saving Electricity, Gas and Water*. Languages chosen for these first three were Farsi, Swahili and Vietnamese. Stirling then contracted us to broker more translations: Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Italian, Karen. Stirling had thousands of these booklets printed and distributed to the multiple support agencies throughout Stirling. The English version and all 8 translations are on the Stirling website:

<http://www.stirling.wa.gov.au/community/Action-for-sustainability/Pages/In-your-home.aspx>

Energy Saving Workshops Dec 2015 – Feb 2016

Although EH missed out on a contract for more home audits, we successfully bid for more (10) energy and water saving workshops. Presenters: Rob (8) and Alan (2)

Hosted by

1 x Living in Retirement (a Jewish seniors' group) (Yokine)

2 x Mercycare migrant support agency x 2 (Mirrabooka)

4 x City of Stirling's Day Centre for seniors, Nollamara (different groups)

1 x St Barts Sunflower Villas (Stirling)

1 x Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre (MMRC)

1 x The Smith Family Child and Parent Centre (Nollamara)

Migrant participants were given copies of our Saving Electricity, Gas and Water booklet in English or one of the translations.

City of Swan

After submitting a very lengthy and demanding tender response we won (whew!) Swan's contract for 100 home eco-audits with a \$30 ecohardware allowance. Auditors: Alan, Ross, Tyson, Rob. Alan audited Brockman House community centre.

Recruitment dried up after 81 homes and one community organisation were audited (Jan-April 2016) and Swan had to call a halt in April.

The Twin Bin compost setup was offered. Participants had to pay EH \$20 for one bin (if they already one) or \$70 for two. 30/81 opted for the compost setup or 'sort out', buying 38 bins between them. Most 'sort outs' were for people trying unsuccessfully to use a single bin.

We don't make public our followup survey reports for each Council but were delighted when auditor Tyson Menck spotted this report on the City of Swan's website.

<https://www.swan.wa.gov.au/News-Media/2016/Focus-stories/Household-waste-consumption-and-bills-reduced-by-eco-audit>

City of Swan Mayor Mick Wainwright said the program had produced impressive results.

"On average, the households that took part reduced their water consumption by up to 20 per cent, electricity by 13 per cent and gas by 3 per cent, which is a fantastic effort," he said.

It was a very busy year!

Brenda Conochie

27 September 2016