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ANNUAL REPORT October 2016-October 2017

Environment House was begun by local community members in 2001 on Eighth Avenue in Maylands, with funding for the infrastructure of the organisation coming from community contributions for many years. Now located at 125 King William St in Bayswater, our goal now and then is the same - to promote sustainable living and to protect our limited natural resources. It is important to us that we are inclusive and provide a place where anyone or any organisation can come and seek advice, assistance, support or just have an opportunity for a conversation about what they are doing and what they would like to achieve.



Bayswater Primary School children visiting Environment House, Photo Jessica Shaver 2017

Our local Federal MP, Tim Hammond, recently wrote about us:

“The fabulous team at Environment House in Bayswater understand that it takes a collaborative effort from the community to tackle modern environmental challenges. These dedicated conservationists are doing tremendous work and provide an invaluable service to our community” (6/9/2017)

Our organisation is incorporated, has tax-deductibility status and the Committee of Management over the year consisted of Warren Haley (Convenor), Jo Bower (Deputy

Convenor), Alan Benn (Treasurer), Rachael Roberts (Co-ordinator), Rosemary Lynch, Prue Robertson and Georgia Johnson (Secretary). Our Committee of Management are all hands on volunteers in the organisation. We are proud of the constructive and positive way we work together to get things done.

OUR PEOPLE

Part-time staff and volunteers



Regular volunteers Fay Menhennett, Bo Wright, Liz Wright and John Yaxley our Gardener: Photo Lee Bickford 2017.

Environment House had **five part-time employees** in 2016-17, who also contributed many voluntary hours. Maxine Petty as our Shop Manager, John Yaxley as our Gardener and Workshop Presenter, Warren Haley overseeing shop accounts, Gavan Wood as our Accountant/Bookkeeper and our wonderful Cleaner Almas Tulema.

A few long term volunteers moved on to employment or to live in a new place over the year. We thank Joanna Moore, Katie Norris, Regina Wayner and Rochelle Petrovic in particular for the many hours they contributed in a paid or voluntary capacity. Every volunteer and volunteer hour makes a difference, and everyone brings different skills to an organisation like ours. Without these four people, our organisation would not have achieved what we achieved this year. We also welcomed back Glenys Davies, a long time Committee Member and founder, after a difficult illness. We are extremely grateful to have Glenys back on board volunteering and also maintaining our contact with ANAWA.

Our Committee Members contributed many volunteer hours over the twelve months providing a wide range of skills to the organisation. Rosemary Lynch providing invaluable communication and IT support; Jo Bower supporting projects and ensuring our administrative functions and volunteer co-ordination run smoothly; Alan Benn, as our in-house energy and water auditor, also providing organisational wide support for all projects and initiatives; Georgia Johnson for her finance skills and organisational support; Prue Robertson for providing substantial support in our EcoShop; Warren Haley for fulfilling the role of Convenor with a forensic eye to ensure all of our compliance obligations are met; and Rachael Roberts as our Co-ordinator overseeing funding, projects, collaborative relationships and identifying the opportunities that arise in our community to develop local responses to improve

environmental sustainability.

OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Native Plants to Residents Program 2017

Environment House was invited to manage the inaugural City of Bayswater “Native Plants to Residents Program” in 2016. The success of the program with residents and ratepayers has contributed to the Program being run again in 2017 and 2018. The aim is to encourage City of Bayswater residents to grow more native plants to improve biodiversity and support water efficient gardening.



Environment House provides the volunteer hours to select local native species that are appropriate, we order the plants, transport the plants for distribution, advertise the program and staff our centre and stalls to distribute plants in the community. Our volunteers assist local residents to choose the plants type that suits their garden. Thank you to Alan Benn for ensuring this Project runs smoothly and professionally, meeting the expectations of Council and residents.

City of Bayswater Councillor Catherine Ehrhardt at Environment House supporting the native plants program. June 2017: Photo -Rachael Roberts

Each year, residents have taken and planted approximately 6,500 native plants including ground covers, kangaroo paws, small and medium shrubs and trees each year. Feedback on the program was overwhelmingly positive.

Wetland Action

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. The clearing was stopped due to community outrage and our support for the No Houses in Wetlands campaign to save the privately owned wetland has continued ever since. Two community events supported by our volunteers were a highly successful Wetland

Rally at Parliament House in 11th October 2016 and a joyful celebration of our local wetlands with an inaugural Wetland Breakfast on 26th March 2017.

The extent of community support for the campaign was unexpected and wide reaching. In March 2017, the new state government contributed funds to enable the City of Bayswater to purchase Carter's Wetland. This purchase was announced on 18th October 2017, securing the future of this wetland for future generations to benefit from.

The lack of protection for our urban wetlands has been highlighted by this Bayswater issue and Environment House will continue to work to improve planning laws to better protect our wetlands from urban infill.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Environment House is the only all-encompassing urban environmental sustainability project in the eastern suburbs of Perth. Without funding support from the City of Bayswater and Bendigo Bank Foundation the level of community engagement we have achieved would not have been possible. We are now open to the public six days a week and our education and support includes but is not limited to: re-using our limited resources; increasing recycling rates; diverting waste from landfill; composting organic waste; reducing single use plastic; introducing energy and water efficiency measures; increasing and protecting our natural habitat; growing organic food; supporting local eco-businesses; and creating supportive networks between community groups.

Our Annual Workshop Calendar

In February 2017 Environment House released our second annual workshop calendar. On a shoestring budget, we provide workshops each month on a wide range of topics. The workshops coincide with days or months designated to raise public awareness of issues. This year we had a particular focus on Compost May, Plastic Free July and Sustainable House Day. We also held a Plastic Free Long Table Lunch at Halliday House in July. The majority of our

workshops are sold out within days and this has led to developing future plans to improve the public accessibility on our site.



Inaugural Wetland Breakfast with City of Bayswater Councillor Dan Bull and his family, 26th March 2017.

Our EcoShop

Our EcoShop is not well located for a commercial shop but provides a unique service for people looking for eco products that are not readily available elsewhere. Our products are specifically chosen to educate the public, support local eco-businesses, showcase new ideas and innovations and provide the

opportunity for conversation and an exchange of ideas.



We are well positioned to respond quickly to media stories and public interest in particular topics. This was demonstrated this year with the rapid increase in public awareness about waste issues from the “War on Waste” program on the ABC. Environment House was quickly able to meet the public’s demand for information and education through our shop, facebook page, newsletter and workshops.

Photo: Zero Waste Products from our EcoShop

Community Garden

We welcomed a new Gardener this year. John Yaxley has stepped into the role with grace and enthusiasm. He has embraced the new skill of running workshops for the public and this enabled us to provide a comprehensive and well received Annual Workshop Calendar this year. John has also been happy to provide workshops for community groups and the Council over the year. Every Saturday morning John provides guidance and education to anyone who would like to join him as a volunteer. The produce from the garden is shared amongst volunteers.

Website and Facebook

www.envirohouse.org.au

We were delighted that our grant application to Lotterywest to develop a new website was approved in August 2017 and we had a new website up and running by the New Year. Our website has greatly improved our ability to communicate with the public. A new aspect to our website is an online catalogue and click and collect shop. We have been trialling this over the year and although the online shop has not been used widely, it does allow people to check out everything that we have available.

Our Facebook page complements our website and provides immediate contact with people via social media to share information and projects. We currently have 1500 people connected to this page.

Newsletter

A great deal of work goes into producing our monthly newsletter to provide information about local events and a wide range of sustainability topics. Our newsletter now goes out to over 1200 subscribers and people can sign up directly from our new website.

Share Your Spare and Coffee Ground to Ground Project

Every Saturday we now run a Share Your Spare space at Environment House. The public can bring in any excess produce from their garden to share with others. Anyone can take the excess produce that they require. This is as much about building community as eliminating waste from big garden crops.

Our new Coffee Ground to Ground Project was initiated by local people who wanted to approach local café's, collect their coffee grounds before they went to landfill and distribute them to home gardeners. Coffee grounds are an excellent ingredient for compost systems. Environment House was able to offer a place on our front verandah as a collection point and every bag of coffee grounds left there disappears to a new home. We thank Mary van Wees, Aileen O'Rourke, Robyn Walsh and Julia Percy-Bower for doing the heavy lifting.



*Sally Bagley
from
Boomerang
Bags Noranda
and Surrounds.
August 2017.
Photo Rachael
Roberts*



*Old Perth
Road
Sustainable
Living
Markets,
Bassendean
July 2017:
Photo Carol
Seidel*

BuyNothing Bayswater/Embleton

Bayswater in Transition

Boomerang Bags Noranda and Surrounds

Our approach at Environment House is connect with as many people and groups as we can, providing our volunteers with opportunities to initiate, support and participate in different ideas and projects. Our volunteer Joseph Waters was keen to set up the new Buy Nothing Bayswater/Embleton group and recently our Friday volunteer Miho Armstrong has taken over from Joseph as Administrator. This Facebook page is well used by the local community as a gift economy and community building opportunity.

Environment House Bayswater in Transition was another community project we launched this year. The new members of Bayswater in Transition join a growing network of Transition Towns across Perth and Western Australia. Environment House is involved in the Transition Town Hub meetings that take place quarterly. It has been very valuable to have other community groups in Perth to network with, in the urban sustainability space. Environment House Bayswater in Transition volunteers organised the Plastic Free Long Table Lunch in July and a very successful free movie screening of "Tomorrow" on 15th September 2017. Over sixty people attended each event.

Sally Bagley recently started a Boomerang Bag Noranda and Surrounds Group. We are excited to be collaborating with this new group and together we hosted a new workshop on 14th October 2017 for Sally to teach local people how to sew Boomerang Bags. Another waste free advocate, Kerry Thiess, taught people how to make their own Bees Wax Wraps. It is essential for us to maintain flexibility to respond to new initiatives such as this one. This workshop was sold out in 24 hours and was a big success. We will run this workshop again in the near future.

A Meeting Place

Environment House provides our building and facilities to community groups to use for meetings and events free of charge. Baigup Wetland Group and Transition Towns have been regular users of our centre this year.

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. We provide at least one stall a month for different events around Perth. Most recently we were able to support the Urban Food Street event at the Rise in Maylands on 31st August 2017.

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: Friends of Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary, Maylands Samphires, Bardon Park and Baigup Wetland Interest Group and Claughton Reserve Group. Our support is offered as required from promotion of events to administering grant applications.



Photo: Brett Kluzniak

Friends of Maylands Samphires

Environment House has a special focus on the Maylands Samphires and we held three working bees with Conservation Volunteers Australia this year, thanks to Amy Warner at CoB for arranging this. We also had several other informal weeding sessions concentrating on our focus sites, with special thanks to Mary van Wees and Kate Cornes for their commitment. We've consulted with staff from SERCUL, attended a seed collecting workshop and we're looking into propagating samphires from cuttings to supplement natural regeneration in this threatened ecological community.

Wetlands Through the Ages Art Project

It was a pleasure for us to work with local artist Vanessa Bradley and fifty seven St Colomba Primary School students to develop a new Wetlands Through the Ages Art Project from January to May 2017. This was a successful project and we hope that it can be developed into a form where other local schools can use the format to explore our wetlands.



St Colomba PS students and volunteers in Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary, May 2017.

Local Community Groups

Environment House is now entering a new phase of engagement with the local community to achieve environmental outcomes. We joined with the Bayswater Urban Tree Network, Baysie Rollers and Council to beautify the town centre with new gardens. We are now pleased to be collaborating with the One World Centre and the City of Bayswater to establish a community consultation process to establish how the public would like to make use of public open space in the Bayswater town site.

Energy and Water Efficiency Projects

Our experienced, qualified and well respected Sustainability Auditor, Alan Benn, has continued to deliver Energy and Water audits to homes, schools and child care centres in 2016-17. Locally, Alan has again worked with Maylands Peninsula Primary School to educate another year group of students to conduct water auditing and analyse their results. Alan is available to any interested local school to assist them to improve and maintain their energy and water efficiency.

In conjunction with the City of Joondalup, 12 primary and secondary schools in the Joondalup area have been audited and are now working towards reducing their utility costs and environmental footprint. Schools audited are:

- Greenwood College
- Bambara PS,
- Poynter PS,
- Halidon PS
- St Thomas PS,
- Craigie Heights PS,
- Davallia PS,
- Joondalup PS,
- Davallia PS,

Beldon PS,
South Padbury PS,
Springfield PS,
Eddystone PS.

Child Care centres in the Southern suburbs have been audited as part of the Little Green Steps program - Riverdale CCC and Mt Nasura CCC. Several small business audits were also provided to businesses in the Cockburn area. Over 30 home audits have been completed.

Presentations on Water efficiency and Energy saving have been made to several community organisations and to residents through local governments.

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 provided an income of \$3027 in 2016/17. For the last five years we have had the financial burden of being left with \$70,000 worth of product after the axing mid contract by the previous state government of a successful project to assist householders struggling with utility bills. After a great deal of hard work this financial liability has finally been cleared in the 16/17 financial year. Much of the stock had to be discounted for sale.

Grants

We received \$48,593.00 in grants in the 2016/17 year, enabling us to be open to the public six days a week and provide environmental advice and support to an average of 50 visitors a week; partner with local organisations, schools and businesses to provide environmental education; offer a comprehensive workshop calendar; support bushland and wetland projects in our area; distribute 6,000 native plants to residents; provide community based solutions for household and Council waste management; run events for Plastic Free July, World Compost Month, Sustainable House Day and Earth Day; and provide stalls at fairs and festivals. As active participants in our local community, there are many other environmental initiatives our volunteers are involved in over the year.

City of Bayswater

We are most grateful to have received an Annual Grant from the City of Bayswater. This enables us to run projects and be involved in supporting Council to achieve their sustainability objectives. It also allows us purchase our suite of expensive but necessary insurance premiums.

Bayswater and Noranda Community Bank

Environment House is very grateful for our 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 the opportunity to greatly improve our local urban amenity, natural amenity and local environmental sustainability. Without the funding from the Bendigo Bank Foundation, Environment House would have been unable to deliver on improved environmental outcomes in our community.

Donations –

Environment House received \$3834.06 in tax deductible donations in 2016-17 and we would like to thank all our supporters for their generosity.

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, Warren Haley, Alan Benn, Jo Bower, Rosemary Lynch, Prue Robertson and Georgia Johnson.

1st October 2017



Environment House Bayswater in Transition team with Costa Giorgiadis at the Urban Food Street event organised by City of Bayswater Councillor Chris Cornish and photo by Chris Cornish, 31/8/2017