



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2017



**Environment  
House**

*Supporting Sustainable Living in WA*

Environment House

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Environment House 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, Georgia Johnson (Secretary) and Kerry Wilson. 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.

Environment House is the only urban environmental sustainability centre in the eastern suburbs of Perth. Our projects focus on community engagement and education across all sustainability areas; conservation of our biodiversity; and climate change action.

## SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS AND MILESTONES

Successful application to the **Sidney Myer Fund & The Myer Foundation** for a grant of \$69,000 to be used on capacity building. This could not have come at a better time as our projects have been expanding and there has been very little time to assess their impact and what we need as an organisation to support our volunteers and work represented in Diagram 1.

A **renovation of our Council owned building** in 2017/18 was made possible with grants from Federal Government Stronger Communities, Local Projects Local Jobs, the City of Bayswater and funds contributed from Environment House. Disability access to our building has been improved, a disabled toilet installed and we have a new outdoor deck space for workshops and meetings. Local builder Wandoo Design and Construction worked closely with us to achieve a great result. Features include locally sourced timber and a disability ramp made from recycled Australian waste plastic. Local Morley business Metro Curtains supplied our new pelmets and blinds.

Former local Federal MP, Tim Hammond, recommended us for the Federal Government Stronger Communities grant based on his experience of our organisation:



*"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)

*Photographer: Jessica Shaver*

The announcement that **Carter's Wetland** would be purchased with funds from the City of Bayswater and State Government in October 2017, after an extensive fifteen month community campaign, was a huge relief for many people. This outcome was the result of a lot of hard work and strategic campaigning. The Environment House team of volunteers provided crucial support to the group, No Houses in Wetlands,

which formed as a response to the planning approval to destroy this local wetland for a housing subdivision. A new Riverside Gardens Friends group has since been formed to educate people about our wetlands and river in this area. A range of activities to remove weeds and improve the condition of native vegetation has commenced in collaboration with City of Bayswater.

Our expanded **workshop calendar and events** were highly valued this year, providing access to a wide range of topics. All were fully subscribed. Environment House volunteers organised 25 workshops/events catering to over 600 participants on a wide range of topics. Our first Chicken Walk Workshop visiting three Bayswater homes with backyard chickens and ducks was sold out in 12 hours. The Fabric of Mud Family Wetlands Walk incorporated local history, stories told through art, sharing of indigenous knowledge of country and roasting marshmallows on a fire pit on site. This event was planned by local artist Vanessa Bradley, WA Anthropologist Dr Sandy Toussaint, City of Bayswater Manager of Environment Jeremy Maher and Environment House volunteers Rachael Roberts and Nadine Wright Toussaint. This level of planning and collaboration has resulted in diverse and interesting events for the community.



Environment House Bayswater in Transition group organised a range of events including a verge walk, free movies, Plastic Free July Long Table Lunch, Share Your Spare on the first Saturday of each month and established an Environment House Seed Library. We used a variety of venues this year for different purposes. Feedback from our workshops and events is consistently good and includes an insight into how valuable these workshops are for people to learn sustainability skills in a practical, social and fun setting. Participants report use of the skills they have learnt in their homes, workplaces, schools and community groups and often go on to share their knowledge at work and in the community.



*In 2017 and 2018, we organised for Dr Darryl Hardie, known on ABC radio as Dr Bugalugs, to present a free workshop at City of Bayswater about pest control in gardens. In 2018, this workshop was advertised in the Eastern Reporter with this photo and over 100 people attended on the day. Dr Hardie is an expert on insects in agriculture from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.*



**Collaboration** has become a key platform for project development at Environment House this year, delivering outstanding results. Our relationship with the City of Bayswater is now one of active partnership and co-operation. This enables us to identify projects where our input can make a difference, work with the community to find solutions and have the support of the City when we need it. An example has been forming the Ascot Park Waste Management Committee in January 2018, with the Council of Owners and community group Future Bayswater. The 207 units in the Ascot Park apartments in Bayswater had no access to recycling, with 18 tonnes of waste going to landfill each week. Working with the City of Bayswater and the residents over 2018, a range of recycling initiatives are being introduced along with education, to be reported on in 2019.

We have been able to auspice local wetland groups to secure state and federal government grants and roll out conservation projects along the Swan River. Projects such as bringing together Bayswater and Noranda Community Bank branches and Boomerang Bags, led to hundreds of boomerang bags and bamboo straws being handed out at the Maylands Street Festival in May 2018. This was a plastic free merchandise initiative for the bank. Environment House also launched this year's Native Plants to Residents Program at this event, handing out hundreds of native plants at the Festival.





*Eastern Reporter newspaper story May 2018 with Rachael Roberts, Leh Miin Tan and Sally Bagley.*

We have been able to let go of projects we started such as Facebook page Buy Nothing Bayswater/Embleton, which no longer requires our support.

Our **EcoShop** changed considerably over the 2017/18 period and the energy and organisation of Shop Co-ordinator Maxine Petty is widely appreciated. Volunteers kept the shop open to the public six days a week over the year, with visitation rates of between 5-30 per day from people seeking products, advice or simply a conversation about living sustainably. Our EcoShop provides an informal point of contact for people from many different backgrounds seeking support and advice on sustainability issues. Volunteers and the public regularly report their appreciation for the non-judgemental and relaxed culture at Environment House.



Through our Myer Foundation Grant we employed a consultant to interview volunteers who work in our EcoShop and she reported the following from these confidential interviews:

*"My interviews with the volunteers at Environment House showed me that a wonderful culture is being experienced by the people who visit and donate their time. In my opinion, this culture is one of the most precious aspects of Environment House. It engages with people in a way that informs and empowers them. It does this in a safe way. People get to experience friendly connection and non-judgemental support. This is only possible through un-rushed considered conversations and positive experiences."*

## Bayswater: Environment House urges community to take action during Plastic Free July

July 9th, 2018, 10:30AM | Written by Kristie Lim | Eastern Reporter NEWS



Tess Tholstrup & Rachael Roberts Picture: Bruce Hunt www.communitypix.com.au d484489



ONE action is better than nothing, according to Environment House co-ordinator Rachael Roberts.



The non-profit organisation in Bayswater is holding several workshops and recycling initiatives, starting with a plastic-free long table lunch on July 1, throughout Plastic Free July.



It has been providing services including recycling dental goods, cosmetics and stationary, collecting and recycling 90kg of coffee grounds from the Bayswater town centre each week, composting and planting, for more than 15 years. Ms Roberts said there was an "explosion" of interest from people about reducing plastic waste.

"The purpose of Environment House is just conversations rather than sales," she said.

"We normally say to them, if they are going to buy one thing, a good place to start is with the produce bags. A big focus for us is not making life more difficult for people but in fact making it more convenient and cheaper."

Ms Roberts urged businesses to reduce plastic use, such as not immediately giving out plastic straws to customers.

"If you use something once and it lasts in the environment for thousands of years, that is actually not very smart. We can be smarter about the way we produce packaging," she said.

### TIPS FOR REDUCING PLASTIC

- Swap plastic toothbrushes and hairbrushes for bamboo ones.
- Bring plastic dental goods, cosmetics and stationary to the house for recycling.
- Borrow and return Boomerang Bags.
- Use washable produce bags.
- Swap cling wrap, foil and baking paper for Agreena wrap (re-useable and recyclable eco wrap).
- Bring your own bamboo straw instead of using plastic straws.
- Use your own jars and containers to refill cleaning products.
- Use menstrual cups and leak proof underwear.

For information, visit <http://www.envirohouse.org.au/>.

The operational costs for Environment House in 2017/18 were \$65,000 and were contributed from three key sources:

City of Bayswater; Bayswater and Noranda Community Bank branches; and the customers of our EcoShop. With these funds we have been able to operate our EcoShop as an education centre and support forty volunteers on the ground delivering projects in our community – it is difficult to calculate the in-kind contribution of these activities given the breadth of skills and amount of time given freely by so many people, but we estimate the figure to be between \$300,000 - \$400,000 a year. Our projects in 2017/18 are outlined in Diagram 1.



# ENVIRONMENT HOUSE COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS 2017/2018

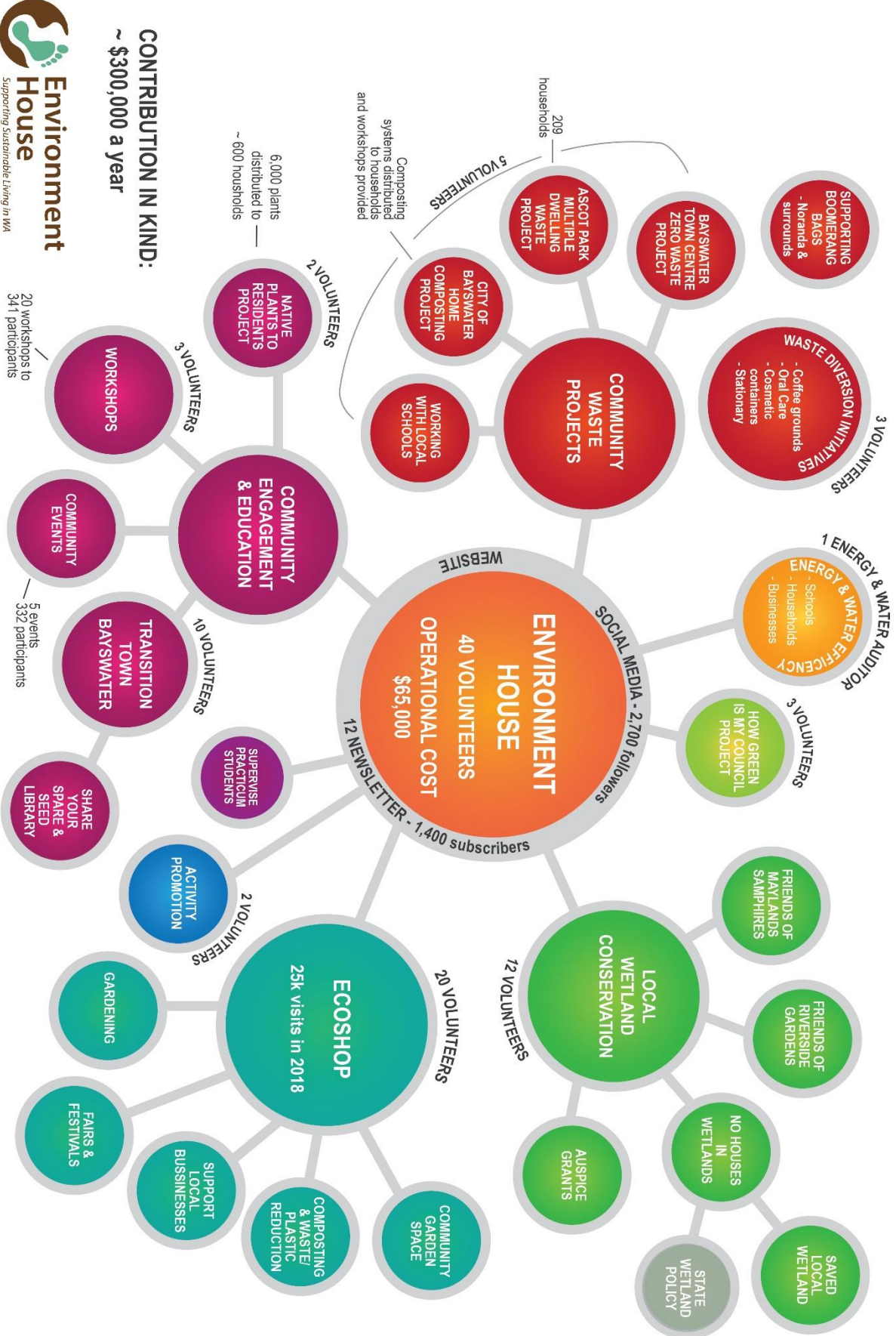


Diagram 1

## OUR PEOPLE

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### PART-TIME STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



*Regular volunteers Sandra Iris, Glenys Davies, Julia Sutton, Alan Benn, Miho Armstrong and Photographer Lee Bickford who sadly passed away in 2018. A beautiful person who cared deeply about the environment and human rights and was a talented amateur photographer who donated her time to keep a photo record of our volunteers. We are very lucky to have known her for many years.*

Environment House is only able to stay open and deliver projects to the public through the work of our fabulous **40 volunteers** and **five part-time employees** in 2017-18. Maxine Petty continued as our Shop Co-ordinator, 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.

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; Giorgia 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; Kerry Wilson providing waste expertise 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

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### NATIVE PLANTS TO RESIDENTS PROGRAM 2018

Environment House ran the City of Bayswater “Native Plants to Residents Program” for the third time this year. 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. This year Nadine Toussaint designed a planting guide to add to the flyer advertising the program.

*City of Bayswater Mayor Dan Bull and Rachael Roberts publicising the program: Photo: City of Bayswater*

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 has been overwhelmingly positive. Thank you to Alan Benn for ensuring this Project runs smoothly and professionally, meeting the expectations of Council and residents.

### COMMUNITY GARDEN

Volunteers have taken on more responsibility in our garden looking after our compost systems, worm farms and planting food growing plants for visitors to enjoy.

### WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

[www.envirohouse.org.au](http://www.envirohouse.org.au)

Our online presence has continued to expand with our new website providing information on our activities and we now have 2,600 people following our Facebook page in the past 12 months. Subscription to our monthly email newsletter has also grown to 1,500 subscribers with 40% of people opening the newsletter and accessing information.



*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*

Volunteers Mary Van Wees, Aileen O'Rourke and Miho Armstrong have diverted 90kg of coffee grounds each week as part of the Coffee Ground to Ground Project. They are left outside our building and we can't

keep up with demand from home gardeners. Miho Armstrong, Prue Robertson and Liz Wright have also overseen our waste diversion program collecting oral care and cosmetics products from the community for recycling with Terracycle.

### **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.

### **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.

### **UNIVERSITY STUDENT PLACEMENTS**

Environment House has provided student placement opportunities for four students over the 2017/18 year. This has been a valuable experience for us an organisation and students have reported to Supervisors that it has been a useful experience of working in a grassroots community organisation.

### **WETLAND AND BUSHLAND GROUPS**

Environment House volunteers continue to be involved in a range of projects involving these groups in our area: Riverside Gardens and Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary; Maylands Samphires; Bardon Park Friends Group; and Baigup Wetland Interest Group. Support is provided as required from promotion of events to administering grant applications.



*Photo: Brett Kluzniak*

### **FRIENDS OF MAYLANDS SAMPHIRES**

Environment House has had a special focus on the Maylands Samphires at Clarkson Reserve since 2012. This year we received a SALP grant to work with Apace Nursery, to propagate samphires from seed and cuttings and plant them on site. The aim is to supplement the natural regeneration in this threatened ecological community. CoB has arranged for a hydrological study of the site, to assist in planning.

We held two community planting sessions and three working bees with Conservation Volunteers Australia. We also had many informal weeding sessions concentrating on our focus sites, with special thanks to Mary van Wees and Kate Cornes for their commitment.



## AWARDS

Environment House rarely nominates ourselves for awards for our work. We are simply too busy. So it was a lovely surprise to be awarded the City of Bayswater Active Citizenship of the Year Award in January 2018.

## OUR FINANCES

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Environment House was audited by Avant Edge Consulting and received a management letter outlining completion of the audit of the 2017-18 financial statements for the Environment House Inc. with an unqualified Audit Opinion for the financial year ended 30 June 2018.

Environment House recorded a net surplus. The Committee of Management has determined that the financial scrutiny provided by the audit at a cost of \$3175 is important for our ongoing governance and provides community confidence in our administration of the organisation.

## THE ENVIRONMENT HOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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

Presented at our Annual General Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018.



*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*

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