



State of the Environment

Summary Newsletter November 2007/08

 City of Ryde



City of Ryde is committed to engaging with residents, businesses and stakeholders as it plans services, policies and facilities. Council is intent on delivering sustainability outcomes to meet the community's needs and has been developing an improved approach to how it consults and engages. This is being achieved through extensive research on best practice approaches to community engagement through its community engagement strategy.

Sustainability highlights occurring in Ryde in 2007/08 are detailed below. These are just some of the numerous exciting and innovative initiatives to complement and implement the City Of Ryde Environment Strategy. For sustainability data collected in 2007/08 see the State of the Environment 2007/08 report.

For more information on any of these programs or other projects occurring please contact Customer Service (02) 9952 8222 or see www.ryde.nsw.gov.au for more details.

Sustainability in Ryde – Teaching Today's Children For Tomorrow's Future

A DVD produced by City Of Ryde canvases sustainability topics such as waste, water, energy conservation and biodiversity and is aimed at school students. In 2008 the DVD was made available to all schools within the Ryde community through the Council run Ryde Environmental Education Network (REEN) and has proven to be a valuable resource. It is also available in the five libraries located in Ryde.

Council also runs continuous sustainability education workshops for the community and attendee's local community and school fetes and expos promoting sustainability in Ryde. These education events have been well attended and the Ryde Community is actively involved in sustainability initiatives including reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A Sustainability Home Audit Program conducted in 30 homes throughout Ryde in 2008, resulted in the reduction of the total electricity consumption of participating residents by 10,196 kWh equivalent to 10.93 Greenhouse Gas tonnes (GHGt) per year. Each resident saved an average of 340 kWh off their electricity bill.

Practicing What We Preach

In 2007 the City of Ryde formally adopted a Sustainable Procurement Policy and dedicated policy team. The Sustainable Procurement Team meets monthly and each month a representative from a different Council area is invited to discuss procurement in their area. This enables the team to collect information from different areas of council and explore ways to implement sustainable procurement in all areas. The meetings also help build momentum, keep the team focused, and provide a forum to help engage new staff. To date Ryde's policy implementation includes gathering baseline procurement data from different areas of Council, switching from virgin to recycled copy paper, securing a recycled content stationary products database, implementing staff workshops on sustainable procurement and identifying key staff champions, investigating improved water and energy efficiency in Council buildings and changing office consumables to more socially and environmentally sustainable options.

Rate payers always wonder about councils environmental credentials and how their rates are being spent – and suspect a certain amount of window dressing – but I think everyone in the group came away feeling very happy with what Ryde council is doing, and plans to do, given the huge constraints under which it operates'

Sarah Neal, Energy Campaign Assistant Greenpeace, 2008

Understanding and Increasing Biodiversity

The City of Ryde is completing comprehensive baseline flora and fauna surveys of most of its significant local bushland reserves, to complement surveys completed in 2006 of the Field of Mars Wildlife Refuge, Darvall Park and Brush Farm Park including the adjacent Lambert Park (all totalling about 72 hectares of total area), and in 2007 of public bushland in the Terrys Creek, Kittys Creek, and upper Buffalo Creek catchments, and of Memorial Park (53 hectares of total area). All species catalogued will contribute to an interactive database

The surveys are being used to inform the Council Local Environment Plan (LEP) planning process and Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) Sydney Metropolitan Regional biodiversity mapping initiative and are helping to determine areas requiring conservation or improvement, in particular relating to threatened species and communities. Opportunities to link to or create new vegetation and wildlife corridors using the findings from the surveys are also being identified and presently consideration is being given to the designing and implementing of key 'bio-corridors' to re-connect natural areas of the Lane Cove and Parramatta River systems

Catchment Management

Council has recently completed the construction of an offline gross pollutant trap along one of the trunk drainage systems that discharges through Meadowbank Park into the Parramatta River. As well as significantly reducing the amount of gross pollutants entering the river, the device is planned to be coupled with additional secondary treatment and storage infrastructure as part of the Meadowbank Park stormwater harvesting and reuse system.

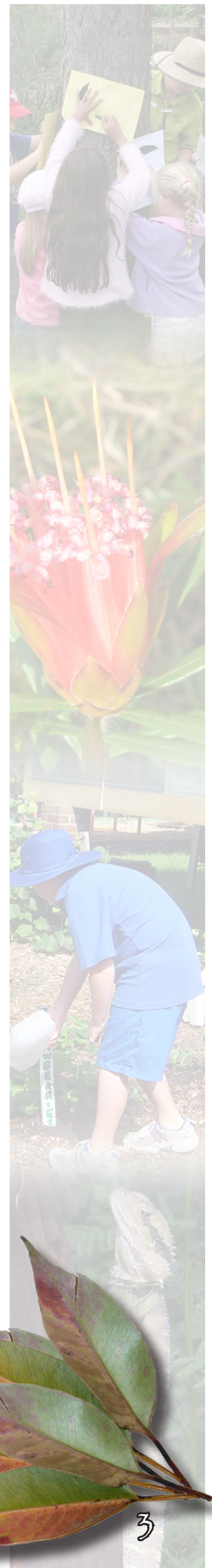
In addition to the Meadowbank Park initiatives Council has recently completed the rehabilitation of Archer Creek at Lambert Park, where a highly degraded tributary of Archer Creek that drained through the park has been restored, improving the local environment and providing public access for passive recreation and bushcare activities. The


"The Catchment Connections Mural Launch was very well run. I observed my students who were very engaged and likely to go home and spread the good word to their parents about sustainability and catchment protection"

*Steve Rowland,
Teacher - Epping
Boys High, 2008.*

main environmental outcomes are the reduction in sediment loads discharging to the Parramatta River, the improvement to water quality, and the re-establishment of a creek riparian zone with native species. The removal of the heavy weed infestation and revegetation will greatly assist in the re-establishment of native species to improve the amenity of the area and provide a significant foundation for subsequent staged bushcare activities.

The City Of Ryde also has numerous catchment education programs being implemented through a project called Catchment Connections. This year was the second of a three year grant-funded project that covers the Terrys, Mars, Shrimptons and Buffalo Creek catchments – all tributaries of the Lane Cove River. The partnership project is jointly funded by the NSW Environmental Trust's Urban Sustainability Grants Program and three local councils: Ryde, Hornsby and Hunters Hill with City of Ryde as the lead council.





The primary objective of the project is to reconnect the community with its local catchments. Through the project activities it is envisaged that a community commitment on the part of project participants will be fostered to restore and maintain catchment environmental health through individual behaviour. The project will enable the partner councils to develop partnerships between local government areas and their communities, as well as to build on past and current environmental initiatives and further engage their local communities via previously established partnerships and educational programs.

Project activities include the scoping of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) options for Macquarie Park and Eastwood Town Centre, bush regeneration and restoration activities, the training of volunteers and the forming of new volunteer bushcare groups in the targeted catchments, undertaking bush neighbour visits and catchment workshops for the local community and preparing Education for Sustainability (EfS) resources.

In addition, as part of the Catchment Connections project in 2008, an educational artwork mural was painted by students from four local schools (Epping Heights; Riverside Girls High; Ermington Public and Ryde Public) and installed along the fence at Eastwood Canal near the top of the Terrys Creek catchment. The mural depicts the creek flowing through the urban environment of Eastwood showing types of stormwater pollution, such as littering and their solutions and then flowing through a healthy natural environment with native plants and animals.

Transport and the Top Ryder

Working in partnership with the developer of the Top Ryde City Shopping Centre, the City of Ryde has provided a free community bus service for its community. The new 'Top Ryder' bus service runs from Gladesville to West Ryde via Top Ryde and provides access for Ryde residents to shopping and medical services. Two x 25 seat buses have been specially adapted for access by the elderly and those with impaired mobility.

"What a wonderful service for the Ryde Community, particularly for the elderly and the mobility impaired, its free, convenient and the buses look good too".

There are 10 designated bus stops for the 23 km route one way and buses run in opposite direction to each other from Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 3.00pm daily.

Hazel Myers, Resident at the Top Ryder launch, July 2008

The buses are colour coded in orange and blue to indicate which direction they are travelling in and each bus completes a circuit in one hour. Each bus completes 5 circuits each day. Passengers can catch the service from the designated stops and any STA bus stops on route.

This service is a practical example of Ryde City's Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy in action. In addition to providing a service for many thousands of high need users annually, it delivers significant environmental benefits by:

- discouraging car travel
- promoting sustainable transport
- reducing traffic congestion
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- improving local air quality

The Ryde Climate

The City Of Ryde's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Action Plan (GGRAP) details a suite of actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions within both the Council and Community sectors. The Plan identifies a reduction goal of 30% for corporate or Council emissions and 20% reduction goal for community emissions.

To achieve these goals Council have put in place a number of programs including developing an Energy Savings Action Plan (ESAP) to assist Council in achieving this ambitious goal. The ESAP targets Council's top 12 energy consuming sites and during the reporting period the City of Ryde has saved 70,612 kilo watt hours (kWh) of energy equivalent to 186 Greenhouse Gas (GHGt) tonnes at these 12 sites. Over all Council owned buildings, beyond those covered by the ESAP (excluding streetlighting and community reductions) Council has achieved a reduction of 245 GHG tonnes.

Saving Water

During 2007/08 the City Of Ryde has maintained its commitment to reducing water consumption, and has worked hard to implement 91% of the actions in the Water Savings Action Plan (WSAP). Council has achieved an impressive 42% saving in total water consumption since 2003/2004. The City Of Ryde has sustained this commitment to reducing water consumption by delivering a further saving of 13,753 kilolitres (kL) of water during the reporting period, this is equivalent to a 16% reduction since previous year.

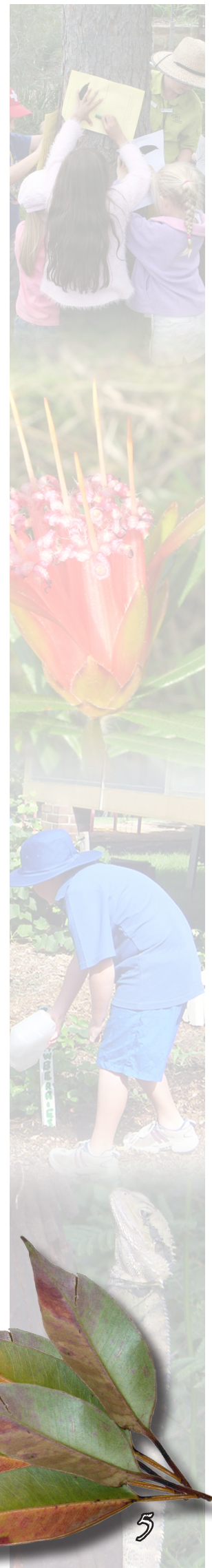
Council has recently completed the construction of a rainwater harvesting system at the North Ryde Library and Community Centre. The proposal involved the redirection of roof runoff to an above ground storage tank, and the installation of pumps, water meters and copper services to all toilets in the building. It is estimated the system will reduce potable water consumption by over 100 kL per annum.

The City Of Ryde, has undertaken an irrigation audit to identify the gaps in the spray patterns of the irrigation system. The new automated access system for floodlighting has an added application and will also assist in monitoring irrigation in Council's fields. This will assist in reducing overlapping of the spray irrigation, making the system more water efficient.

In addition to these policy documents the City Of Ryde has established an internal multi-disciplinary team of staff known as the City Of Ryde Water and Energy Strategy Team (CORWEST) to implement these and other environment and sustainability initiatives. For 06/07 measures implemented have resulted in a saving of over 781 tonnes of CO₂. The City Of Ryde are well on the way towards achieving their impressive reduction goal of 30% total greenhouse gas emissions based on 2003/04 levels by 2012/13.

Ryde has demonstrated 'that water management is integrated into its everyday business systems'

*Sydney Water
One-2-Five Water
Management Report
10 June 2008*





Reducing Waste

The City of Ryde has numerous waste reduction programs in place. These include:

SecondHand Saturday

SecondHand Saturday is a Garage Sale that encourages residents' to reuse and save on resources whilst diverting important space from landfill. These garage sales are held on the Saturday before a scheduled cleanup collection. Council advertises the event for free of charge in a local paper and sends out an information pack. For left-over materials residents can contact the Bower Reuse and Referral Service which has a comprehensive database of over 1,000 organisations to which it can refer callers in order to divert the unsold materials from landfill. To date, over 66 cubic metres of materials have been diverted from landfill through City of Ryde being a member of the Bower Refuse and Referral Service.

Clean Up Australia Day

Clean Up Australia Day is Australia's largest community based environmental event. Growing from strength to strength each year, City of Ryde's community had over 30 groups participating and 3.24 tonnes of litter were collected in a fantastic effort.

Chipping and Mulching Service

Due to the popularity of the free chipping and mulching service Council has funded the program again for another financial year. Residents can book the service and have their garden waste turned into mulch to reuse on their gardens. Mulch returns valuable nutrients back to the soil, keeps weeds down and retains much needed water in the soil.

Subsidised Compost Bins and Worm Farms

Around 50% of household waste is made up of organic material which can be composted to produce an all-natural fertiliser for your garden. City of Ryde offers all residents heavily subsidised compost and worm farm bins. The City of Ryde Waste Management Service provides residents information on how to recycle organic waste and also offers home visits by a Waste Education Officer.

In addition, City of Ryde recognises the importance in reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill and hence is setting up and holding workshops for any school that requests the service. Each school in the City of Ryde is offered a free compost bin or worm farm.

Extra Recycling and Greenwaste Bins now available

For the small cost of \$35 per annum (included in rates) Council now offers extra recycling and greenwaste bins, a cheap alternative to your growing garbage bin. It is a fantastic way to help reduce the amount of garbage going to landfill while also saving on green house gases by recycling and reusing current materials.

Household Chemical Clean Out

In May 2008 City of Ryde hosted a Household Chemical Cleanout where by residents' had the opportunity to drop off hazardous materials for Free and with over 800 cars visiting the site and over 25 tonnes collected. Due to the success of the collection another clean out has been scheduled for early 2009.

Return Unwanted Medicines and Medical Waste Programs

More than 200 tonnes of out of date and unwanted medicines are inappropriately disposed of (in household garbage and down toilets and sinks) across Australia each year. City of Ryde offers residents the opportunity to dispose of their medicines, syringes and dialysis materials for Free at 12 pharmacies throughout the City of Ryde.

E-waste Collection

City of Ryde collects residents' computers to be properly recycled for Free.

Sustainability in Macquarie Park

Often described as Australia's "Silicon Valley", Macquarie Park is home to some of Australia's top 100 companies, particularly in IT&T, pharmaceuticals, medical research and media. It is also the location for Macquarie University and the Macquarie Shopping Centre. Macquarie Park is called a Specialised Centre in the State Government's Metropolitan Strategy because it "performs a vital economic and employment role" in Australia.

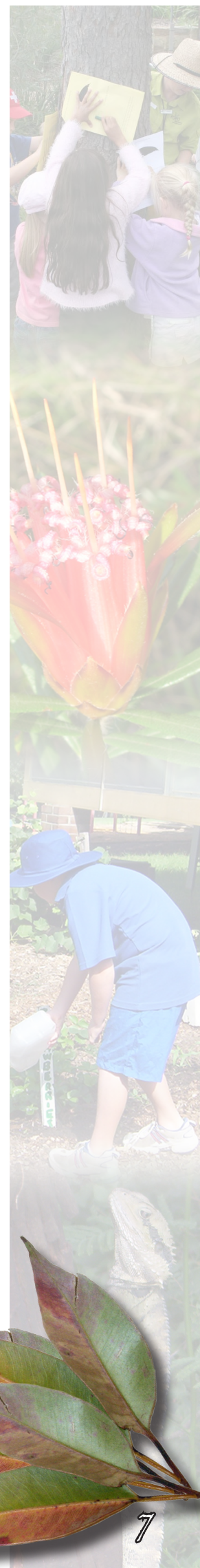
The number of office workers and students within Macquarie Park is expected to more than double in the next 25 years. This presents some big challenges, particularly in relation to transport because most people commute to Macquarie Park by car and the roads can be highly congested at peak hour.

To fulfil its growth potential Macquarie Park needs to change from a car dependent, homogenous industrial park into a pedestrian and public transport orientated, vibrant and sustainable mixed business centre. The State Government has invested \$2.4 billion in the construction of the Epping to Chatswood Rail Link, which includes three new stations within Macquarie Park, due to open in 2009. Additional priority bus lanes are also being implemented in Macquarie Park along Lane Cove Road and sections of Epping Road.

To compliment the State Government's investment in Macquarie Park, the City of Ryde is implementing a major planning, public domain and community infrastructure program over the next 20 years. Much of the infrastructure will be funded by the development sector through the progressive redevelopment of Macquarie Park. Works will include an integrated pedestrian and cycle network, new plazas and parks, and the implementation of best practise urban design, particularly around the three new stations, to make the area attractive, vibrant and safe for pedestrians.

Council is also reviewing its planning controls to ensure that commercial development in Macquarie Park achieves best practise in sustainable building and water sensitive urban design. Council is planning an incentive scheme which will encourage developers to achieve the Green Building Council's 5 star rating, or higher.

As a result of this coordinated public and private sector activity, Macquarie Park is set to become a vibrant, efficient, sustainable and nationally significant business centre.



Feedback

The City of Ryde is interested in receiving comments or suggestions from its local community on the way it has been reporting on the State of the Environment and on the way it can be improved in future years. Particular comments on this year's Regional State of the Environment Report and this Newsletter will be most welcome.

A suggestion/comments box has been added to the City of Ryde's website (www.ryde.nsw.gov.au) and follow the links to the State of the Environment Report.