



Annual Report 2019/20

Environment House Inc

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ANNUAL REPORT

2019/2020

ENVIRONMENT HOUSE INC

At Environment House, we value collaboration to achieve an environmentally sustainable future. When individuals, groups, councils, schools, businesses, and government work together, we improve well-being and achieve better decision making for present and future generations.

- 24-hour waste recycling drop off station introduced
- City of Bayswater Home Composting Program
- City of Bayswater Native Plants to Residents Program
- Ascot Park Multiple Dwelling Waste Project
- East Metro Sustainable Schools Network
- Transition Town Bayswater
- Share and Repair – 75 items repaired and 225kilo saved from landfill
- Wetland Conservation Projects
- 33 events with over 800 participants in 19/20
- EcoShop Click and Collect Service
- Support of local eco businesses through our EcoShop



Environment House Inc Annual Report 19/20

Environment House is incorporated, has tax-deductibility status and the Committee of Management over the year consisted of Rosemary Lynch (Convenor), Jo Bower (Deputy Convenor/Secretary), Giorgia Johnson (Treasurer), Rachael Roberts (Co-ordinator), Warren Haley, Alan Benn, Eleanor Reuvers 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.

VOLUNTEERS

At the core of everything we do at Environment House is our amazing group of volunteers. We have over 40 volunteers working on different projects across the organisation. We are very proud of our culture of inclusion and our ethos of welcoming everyone, without judgement, and appreciating whatever skill set they bring. In what has been a particularly challenging year, we would like to thank all of our volunteers for their commitment, flexibility and incredible contribution to the Environment House community.



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITES

COVID-19 presented us with not only a number of challenges but also some new opportunities and ways of working. Environment House closed for lockdown in late March 2020. All planned workshops and events were cancelled and our EcoShop remained closed to the public from March until late May. This impacted on both our service delivery to our community and our income. However, this time also provided an opportunity to redevelop and update our online shop and offer a click and collect service available from late April. A significant amount of volunteer hours and energy went into this process. Thank you to Pamela Bell, Rosemary Lynch and Bronwen Eybers for all your work on the online shop and to all our volunteers who provided the click and collect and take away EcoShop service during this time.

Another challenge which presented itself during the COVID-19 lockdown period was the delivery of the annual City of Bayswater Native Plants to Residents program. At the height of restrictions, we were required to rapidly redesign the program in a COVID safe way. This resulted in online sales of carefully curated plant packs which were available for community collection on specific days only with some delivery to vulnerable or self-isolating individuals. Despite the challenges to the program this year 6300 plants were distributed to 630 households throughout Bayswater which was more than in previous years. The online plant sales and collection was far more successful than anticipated and the feedback from the community was overwhelmingly positive. Following this success, we plan to deliver the program similarly in 2021. The ability to respond quickly and adapt this program was only possible due to the tremendous effort of our volunteers who packed, organised and staffed the collection sessions. In particular we would

like to thank Eleanor Reuvers for contributing her time and expertise in curating the plant packs and calmly overseeing the plant packing days. Thank you also to Alan Benn for once again overseeing the plants from propagation to delivery and ensuring the plants met the expectations of residents and the Council.

SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS AND MILESTONES

The Capacity Building Project, funded by a \$69,000 **Sidney Myer Fund & The Myer Foundation**, concluded in December 2019. Over 2018 and 2019 this funding was instrumental in allowing us to plan and assess the projects we manage. It has also allowed us to purchase a trailer for outreach education; provide additional governance training for our management committee; redesign our logo; produce promotional material and signage; and develop a new strategic plan (page 13) This grant has allowed us to grow and support our expanding role in our community and the work of our volunteers.

Environment House continues to support **local wetland groups in Maylands and Bayswater**, working with the City of Bayswater to achieve significant conservation outcomes. This includes Friends of Eric Singleton Wetlands, Baigup Wetland Interest Group and Friends of Maylands Samphires. In the 2020 planting season the City of Bayswater with volunteers planted 30,000 new native plants into wetland and bushland areas.

Environment House Transition Town Bayswater have organised a range of events this year including an event for Clean Up Australia Day, free community movie nights and some very popular bee, verge garden and chicken walks.

Transition Town Bayswater launched **Share and Repair** on 07/09/19 at the Inaugural Bayswater Grower's Market and have held it monthly ever since at Enviro House (except January due to holidays, and Apr-June due to COVID). The monthly event combines the Seed Library, Produce Share, and Repair aspects in one. The Share and Repair team is a crew of 9, with a great mix of genders and skills.

In the first year they have fixed or upcycled 74 items and helped prevent 225kg of items going to landfill. Some of the quirkier items fixed include a vintage trike, a record player, a rocket, and a chandelier.

Our **workshop calendar and events** were very well received again this year, providing access to a wide range of topics. Environment House and Transition Town Bayswater volunteers organised 33 workshops/events catering to over 800 participants on a wide range of topics for all age groups. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 a number of our scheduled workshops and events were cancelled or ran at COVID safe capacity which limited our workshops delivery.





Photo: Plastic Free July Kids Holiday Workshop 2019

With the impacts of the pandemic and increased awareness around climate change, we have seen an increased yearning from the community to learn new skills to become more self-sufficient, resilient and sustainable while at the same time connecting to their community locally with sessions on growing food being particularly popular. To support this Environment House will continue to provide opportunities for individuals to learn new skills through workshops, presentations, and community engagement.

Collaboration has become a key platform for project development at Environment House, delivering outstanding results. Our relationship with the **City of Bayswater** is 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. This has been strengthened with our Switch Your Thinking partnership enabling us to use this valuable resource and link in with Switch Your Thinking Councils across Perth.

The Ascot Park Multiple Dwelling Waste Project began in 2018 with the Council of Owners and community group Future Bayswater. The 209 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, a range of recycling initiatives were introduced along with education. Due to the extensive consultation and engagement with stakeholders, recycling skip bins, green waste skip bins and furniture skip bins have been successfully introduced and with ongoing monitoring by local resident Erin Swindley, have been a big success. The City of Bayswater have commended this project for

its success in particular noting the extremely low levels of contamination in the recycling bins in comparison to other multi dwelling complexes throughout the City. **This project was a finalist in the 2020 Waste Authority Infinity Awards.**

Following the success of the 2018 trial of The City of Bayswater Home Composting Program, Environment House has partnered with the City to deliver this initiative for a second year. The program supports householders to compost in their own home, providing participating households with a free composting education workshop and a free composting system of their choice.

321 households participated in the program, with 186 households and 230 participants attending workshops in person and 135 households participating online during COVID-19. There was a high success of engagement with households who were not already composting at home with 62% (n191) of households reporting sending all food waste to landfill prior to the program. After four weeks 196 of the participating households recorded a collective total of 2.4 tonnes of food waste diverted from landfill and a prevention of 3.9 tonnes of CO² equivalent greenhouse gas emissions. Households also reported other benefits and positive outcomes of the program with 86% reporting increased awareness of, and efforts to, reduce all household waste. 15% reported benefits to their garden and for many an increased engagement with and enjoyment of their garden and, 8% indicated an increased sense of wellbeing or community connection as a result of the program.

The feedback from participants has again been overwhelmingly positive and the Program is being rolled out again in the 20/21 financial year. We commend the **City of Bayswater** for their commitment to this program and are pleased to be involved in an upcoming Food Organics and Composting Education Program for schools in the City of Bayswater.

“This has been a fantastic experience. It made me aware of how much food scraps my household produced that were going in the general bin.”

– City of Bayswater Home Composting Program participant at 8 weeks

“I enjoyed the composting workshop- It was enjoyable, informative and inspired me to continue composting and reducing my organic waste. I have highly recommended this system to friends and family. Prior to attending, I did not really give a lot of thought to my organic waste. Thank you for running the program.”

– City of Bayswater Home Composting Program participant at 8 weeks

Environment House delivered the **City of Bayswater Native Plants to Residents Program** for the fifth consecutive year in 2020. The aim is to encourage local residents to grow more native plants to improve biodiversity and support water efficient gardening. Over this time, this program has distributed over 30,000 native plants into private gardens, verge gardens and common areas in multi-dwelling housing.

This year, 6300 plants were distributed to 630 households, with 21 deliveries made by City of Bayswater staff to vulnerable people or those self-isolating during COVID-19 restrictions. This year’s Plants to Residents Program exceeded our expectations under the circumstances and was extremely well received by the community.



Photo: Volunteers packing plant packs for the City of Bayswater Plants to Residents Program.

Feedback from Plants to Residents Program 2020:

“This program was well organised and despite the current circumstance the collection process was well planned and streamlined. We appreciate all the hard work put in by the Council and Enviro House”

“I was impressed by the efficient way the collection was organised; the process was fast, efficient and friendly. I think it is a great programme promoting native vegetation and making plants available at a great price. I have not yet been to your shop, but I have viewed the products online and hope to visit you again soon. This is definitely a programme that makes good sense.”

“Booking online was fabulous. And having the pre prepared plant packs. We’ve attended before to collect plants, and everything has been picked over with just a selection of roo paws and stragglers left over. The variety this year was delightful! We’re very grateful. Thank you.”

We are pleased to be continuing the Plants to Residents program in 2021 for the City of Bayswater. We have also been asked to run the program for the Town of Bassendean in 2021 which is an exciting opportunity for us and a testament to the high quality Plants to Residents program Environment House has delivered over the past five years.

Our **EcoShop** has continued to provide 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. Volunteers kept the shop open to the public five to six days a week over the year (excluding COVID-19 closure from March to June), with visitation rates of between 5-30 per day from people seeking products, advice or simply a conversation about living sustainably. Utilising our online shop, a click and collect service was also rolled in order to continue to serve our customers during COVID-19. This initiative was made possible due to the coordination of Bronwen Eybers as acting Shop Manager and countless volunteer hours by Pamela Bell and Rosemary Lynch.

Our EcoShop has changed considerably over the last three years due to the energy and organisation of Shop Manager Maxine Petty who worked with a great deal of passion over this time to implement new ideas and seek new opportunities to benefit Environment House. In August 2020 we farewelled Maxine from the paid position of Shop Manager, but she has stayed on board as a regular volunteer. Thank you, Maxine, for all your hard work transforming our EcoShop and for all that you bring to the Environment House community.

OUR PEOPLE

Part-time staff and volunteers

Environment House relies on its fabulous volunteer team and part time staff to deliver projects and keep the doors open. In 2019-20 **43 volunteers** contributed their time, energy and passion to our EcoShop and projects.

There have been **9 part-time staff over 2019-20**. Maxine Petty continued as our Shop Manager taking maternity leave from November 2019 – May 2020. Bronwen Eybers provided Administration Support then stepped in to take on the Shop Manager position from November 2019 – May 2020. Nadine Wright Toussaint continued as Project Co-ordinator,



Miho Armstrong as Garden Co-ordinator, Robyn Brown as Workshop Co-ordinator, Gavan Wood as our Accountant/Bookkeeper until June 2020, Warren Haley overseeing shop accounts and administration, and Almas Tulema as our wonderful cleaner. Su Chew joined the team in October 2019, providing Administration and Bookkeeper Support initially and then took on the role of Bookkeeper in June 2020.

After five years as the Environment House Accountant/Bookkeeper Gavan Wood stepped down from the position June 2020. We would like to thank Gavan for his tremendous contribution to Environment House.

We welcome Su Chew to the position of Bookkeeper and Kayleigh Bodycote as our Shop Manager.

Our Committee Members contributed many volunteer hours over the twelve months providing a wide range of skills to the organisation. Rosemary Lynch in the role of Convenor in 2019/20 and provides 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; Warren Haley for overseeing shop administration and providing support to volunteers; Kerry Wilson providing waste expertise, Eleanor Reuvers providing specialist landscape architect skills and active engagement with Transition Town Bayswater 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

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. During COVID-19 restrictions a very dedicated team of volunteers continued to tend to and care for the garden. The garden continues to provide a space for connection and participation for our volunteers and our community from children and families to seniors. Providing further opportunities for the community to engage in the garden space will continue to be a priority in the coming year.

Website and Facebook

Our online presence has continued to expand with our website providing information on our activities and we now have over 5,000 people following our Facebook page. Subscription to our monthly email newsletter has also grown to 1,600 subscribers with between 30-40% of people opening the newsletter and accessing information. 11 newsletters were distributed this year.

Website: www.envirohouse.org.au **Facebook:** *Environment House / Perth Ecoshop & Sustainability Services*





Waste Station

In August 2019 we launched a 24hour recycling drop off station which has been extremely well received and well utilised by the community. Miho Armstrong, Bronwen Eybers and Nadine Wright Toussaint have overseen this initiative. Volunteers assist daily with sorting and monitoring the waste station. Items collected include plastic bottle caps and lids, metal caps and lids, bread tags, plant labels, coffee pods, pens and markers, oral care including electric toothbrushes and chargers. Plastic waste was distributed to Precious Plastic and Green Batch, metal to Simms Metal, Bread tags to Bread tags for Wheelchairs, oral care items, pens and markers and coffee pods to Terracycle.

During the first three months of operation over 2 cubic meters of plastic waste was diverted from landfill. As a result of the waste station we have seen many new faces visiting us to drop off items for recycling. It's been great to have so many conversations about further ways to reduce waste and even find alternatives.

While we support recycling we also recognise it as being not that far above landfill in the waste hierarchy. We encourage people to use the opportunity of connecting with Enviro House to find out if there is a more sustainable way. For example, we have had customers go from buying milk in plastic to collecting it in their own glass bottles from the Grumpy Farmer in Malaga. We've also had people, now aware of their plastic meat tray use, start taking their own containers to the local butcher. Not only have they reduced their waste they are now also supporting local businesses.

Coffee Grounds

Volunteers Mary Van Wees and Aileen O'Rourke are now into their fifth year of diverting over 90kg of coffee grounds each week as part of the Coffee Ground to Ground Project. Coffee grounds are left outside Environment House for the community to collect and use in their composting systems and gardens. Local resident Jeremy Hamilton also volunteered his time to this initiative this year.

A Meeting Place

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

Stalls, festivals and presentations

We have continued to receive invitations to provide stalls at community events. This level of demand for practical information on sustainable living is encouraging. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 a number of presentation opportunities and festivals which we were booked in to attend were cancelled. We anticipate further opportunities in the future.

We have had a regular stall at the Bayswater Growers Market this year coordinated by Erin Swindley and Bronwen Eybers. The Bayswater Growers Markets offers a great opportunity for us to connect to and engage with our local Bayswater Community.

Chisholm College's Christian Service with Environment House

We continued with our work experience/Christian Service partnership for Chisholm students in Year 10 until March 20 when it was put on hold due to COVID-19.

Friends of Maylands Samphires

Environment House has had a special focus on the Maylands Samphires at Clarkson Reserve since 2012. This year we received another SALP grant to work with Apace to assist with weed control and to propagate samphires from seed and cuttings collected on site. A grant from CEP focused on a section where natural regeneration of plants is being threatened by weeds. The City of Bayswater funded a 10 year management plan for Clarkson Reserve for this threatened ecological community.

We held two community planting sessions and regular weeding sessions in our focus sites, with special thanks to Kate Cornes and the Tuesday morning group for their commitment. We attended the Wetlands Conference and a weed identification workshop.



OUR FINANCES

Environment House was audited by Avant Edge Consulting and received a management letter outlining completion of the audit of the 2019-20 financial statements for the Environment House Inc. with an unqualified Audit Opinion for the financial year ended 30 June 2020.

Environment House recorded a net surplus. The Committee of Management has determined that the financial scrutiny provided by the audit at a cost of \$3,500.00 is important for our ongoing governance and provides community confidence in our administration of the organisation.

The Environment House Management Committee

Rachael Roberts, Warren Haley, Alan Benn, Jo Bower, Rosemary Lynch, Giorgia Johnson and Eleanor Reuvers.

Presented at our Annual General Meeting on 16th November 2020

OPERATIONAL COSTS

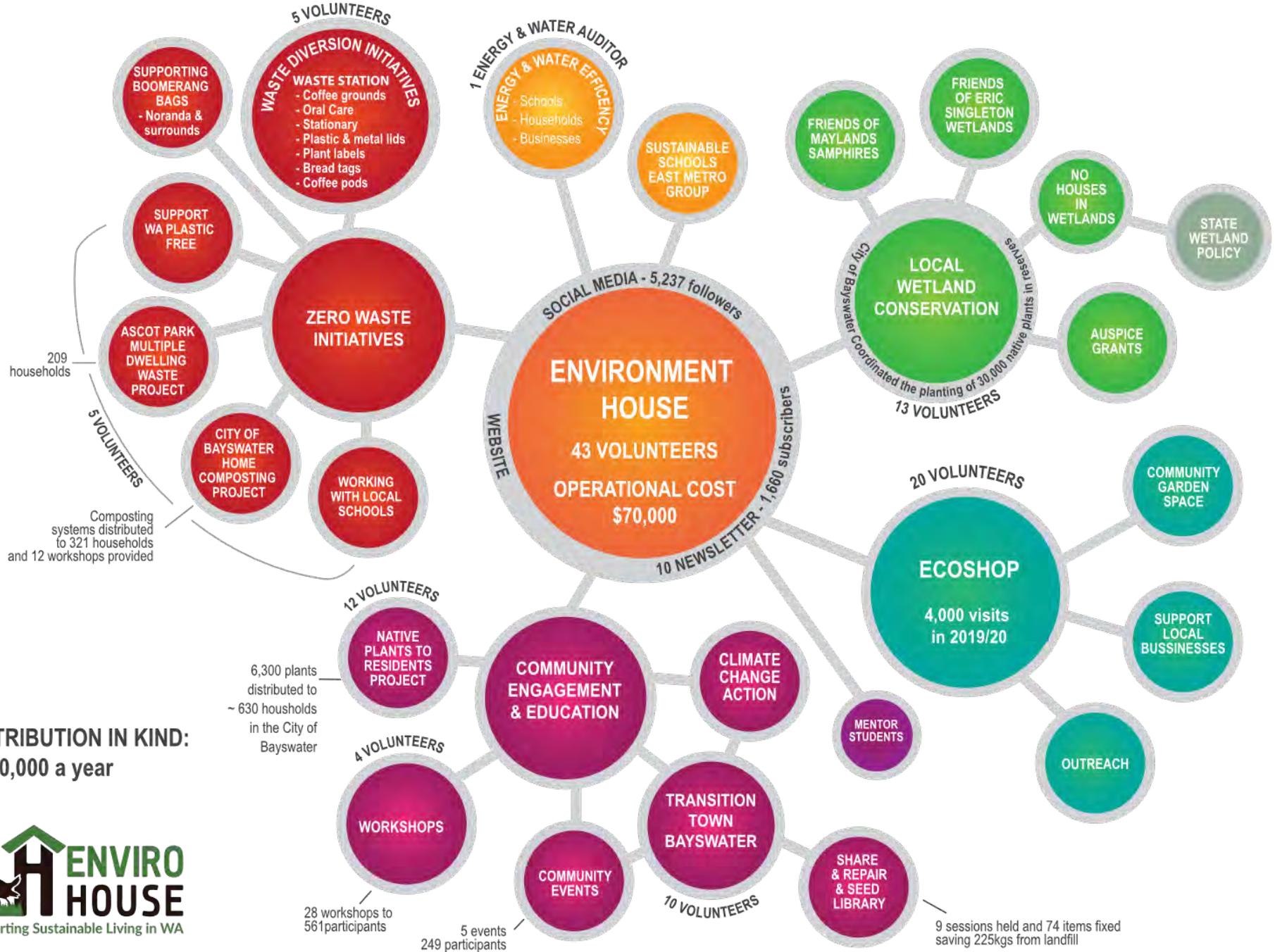
The core operational costs for Environment House in 2019/20 were \$70,000 and were contributed from three key sources: City of Bayswater; Bendigo Bank Bayswater and Noranda Community Bank branches; and the customers of our EcoShop. With these funds we have been able to operate our EcoShop as an education 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 2019/20 are outlined in Diagram 1 (page 12).



Environment House
Management Committee

Left to right: Rosemary Lynch, Nadine Wright Toussaint, Jo Bower, Warren Hayley, Rachael Roberts, Alan Benn, Giorgia Johnson, Eleanor Reuvers.

ENVIRONMENT HOUSE COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS 2019/2020



CONTRIBUTION IN KIND:
~ \$300,000 a year



Enviro House Strategic Plan 2019-2024

VISION

Thriving WA communities living sustainably in a healthy natural environment

MISSION

To inspire and equip for sustainable living, advocate for the protection and restoration of the natural environment and strengthen our WA community resilience through education, engagement and positive collective action.

OUR PRIORITIES

1.

INSPIRE

Inspire Western Australians towards sustainable living.

- 1.1 Encourage and support people and organisations' to make changes to achieve a more sustainable way of living, enjoy the benefits, and share their experiences with others.
- 1.2 Provide a one stop sustainability centre for community engagement and education that acts as hub for promoting sustainable living skills and connecting people and organisations throughout WA.
- 1.3 Undertake outreach activities such as stall at fairs, festivals and markets to increase our reach and engage with new individuals and organisations.
- 1.4 Support, promote and form partnerships with local WA businesses and innovative organisations to increase awareness of initiatives support and enable sustainable living.

2.

EMPOWER AND EQUIP

Empower and equip Western Australians to live sustainably, take climate change action and build resilience

- 2.1 Provide educational activities, information, training and support required for living sustainably.
- 2.2 Run an EcoShop to provide ready access to products and a place to engage in conversations to build knowledge and skills.
- 2.3 Maintain a demonstration organic food garden and waterwise native garden.
- 2.4 Work with businesses and community groups to improve their knowledge, skills and policies for sustainability.
- 2.5 Undertake projects that contribute to community engagement and education across all sustainability areas
- 2.6 Provide opportunities which support community and individual wellbeing through positive engagement with the environment.

3.

SAFEGAURD THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Protect and restore the natural environment of Western Australia through community education, engagement and advocacy

- 3.1 Bring community members together to learn, celebrate and act to protect, conserve and revegetate bush lands, wetlands, natural areas, urban areas and our biodiversity.
- 3.2 Partner with local volunteer run environmental groups to provide support where possible including but not limited to administrative support, meeting and workspace access, and promotion.
- 3.3 Engage in dialogue and community consultation and prepare submissions to achieve environmental and sustainability outcomes.
- 3.4 Advocate for a State Wetland Policy.

4.

CONTRIBUTE TO POSITIVE CHANGE

Be a respected and reliable voice advocating for and contributing towards positive change and action

- 4.1 Enhance local networks to gain exposure to advocate for change, share our vision, and work cooperatively toward our aims.
- 4.2 Develop a network of specialists to provide evidence and assist with developing robust policy positions.
- 4.3 Raise our public profile.
- 4.4 Advocate for evidence-based policies that enhance the sustainability and wellbeing of communities, lead to climate change action and advocate against policies that undermine these outcomes.
- 4.5 Collaborate with all levels of government to support and implement sustainable living in WA communities.

5.

ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

Be a robust and financially resilient organization

- 5.1 Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan
- 5.2 Ensure appropriate staff and volunteer policy, procedures and training are in place.
- 5.3 Diversify income for longer-term stability.
- 5.4 Continue seeking grant and tender opportunities that fit with our strategic plan.
- 5.5 Investigate novel income streams.
- 5.6 Ensure financially sound policies and procedures are in place