



OUR CLEAN, GREEN CITY

Key findings:

Trends and issues affecting young people in Brisbane

Council wants all young people to experience Brisbane as a city where they contribute to sustainable water and energy use, zero waste, clean air, green and bio-diverse ecosystems, local food production and a healthy river and bay. In 2014-2019 our strategic priorities for achieving this will respond to two key findings.

01

The environment is extremely important to Brisbane's young people.

It is also intrinsically linked to the health and wellbeing of all residents and visitors, including young people. Almost all young people in Brisbane say they support efforts to live more sustainably. But they have varying levels of commitment to making change in their own lives, and

globally young people are becoming increasingly disconnected from the natural world. Many are early and enthusiastic adopters of active and public transport, have modified their water use during the drought, choose goods with less packaging, are aware of where their food comes from, and are leading the way with innovative recycling. Many are

also car-dependent, brand-focused, and have careless consumer lifestyles that do not reflect their ideals. A young person recently gave Council this feedback on how to make Brisbane a better place:

"Become a greener city. More bike paths, more edible vegetation, more plants, more trees throughout the city and covering the concrete landscape we have created. More support for sustainable and innovative small business in the form of grants, etc."

02 Schools are nurturing sustainability and many have excellent environment programs. Young people from schools across Brisbane form significant youth subcultures who understand

environmental issues, share a generational awareness of their impact on the planet, and assume that they need to lead the way in living more sustainably.

41% OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN QUEENSLAND LIST THE ENVIRONMENT AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA.



How young people are contributing to a clean and green Brisbane

Young people have a lot to contribute towards a clean and green future for Brisbane.

- Young people are taking pride in Brisbane as a clean and green city, leading Council environmental initiatives in their communities, volunteering for clean-up days and making clean and green travel choices.
- Young sustainability advocates are sharing an awareness of their impact on the planet, making concerted efforts to decrease their environmental footprint and pioneering new waste-reducing technologies and campaigns in partnership with Council programs like Green Heart Schools.
- Passionate young people are speaking out about environmental sustainability at Council forums and initiating global networks for change.

Ongoing Council programs and initiatives

Council has many existing services, initiatives and programs helping to make Brisbane a clean and green city for young people. These will continue under the *Youth Strategy 2014-2019*.

- **Rethink Your Rubbish education program in schools.** Our waste educators provide a range of fun and interactive learning experiences for students from kindergarten to upper primary school, and tailored workshops on waste minimisation and resource management for secondary and tertiary students.
- **Tip Shop Art Competition.** The Tip Shop Art Competition gives young emerging artists the opportunity to develop a major artwork for their portfolio, be part of a group exhibition and gain a profile for their arts practice.
- **Environmental and cultural learning programs.** Council's environment centres provide programs for students to learn about biodiversity, ecosystems, waterway health and Aboriginal culture and history.
- **Community gardens and city farms.** Brisbane hosts more than 30 community gardens and city farms, including many in Council parks and schools. Community gardens and city farms not only grow fresh, nutritious food, they also cultivate a sense of community, and contribute to gardeners' health and the vitality of local neighbourhoods. Community gardens provide a chance for young people to meet their neighbours, cooperate and share resources, get fresh air and exercise, and beautify their neighbourhood. Many city farms and community gardens also play important environmental education roles.
- **Green events and workshops.** From composting workshops through to Green Heart Fairs, we deliver a number of opportunities for young people to learn about sustainability and environmental health through interactive workshops and events.

- **Creek Catchments Program.** Council's Creek Catchments Program has officers based across Brisbane who work with community catchment groups to protect and restore waterways. The program plays an important role in improving the health of Brisbane's waterways through improved habitat and biodiversity and greater awareness of catchment issues in the wider community.

Where we want to be

There are two outcomes we want young people to experience.

- Young people are actively reducing their impact on the environment and learning about sustainability in the classroom, schoolyard, at home and in their community.
- Young people and Council working together to create a clean and green future for Brisbane.

How we are going to get there

Strategy 6.1

Deliver and support a range of initiatives to help young people reconnect with our environment and take action on sustainability issues. Provide opportunities for young people to get outdoors and interact with our natural areas, waterways and native plants and animals. Encourage children and young people to develop a sophisticated understanding of the environmental challenges we face and work together to develop innovative solutions to sustainability.

Strategy 6.2

Work with schools to deliver quality education programs. Support schools to provide quality environmental programs that educate and inspire young people, and teach them how to protect and repair fragile ecosystems and keep Brisbane clean and green.



Strategy 6.3

Foster environmental stewardship by supporting and showcasing young leaders. Support young people to develop new sustainability initiatives and projects in their local communities. Connect these emerging leaders with experienced leaders and community organisations to share understanding and learning. Provide opportunities to showcase the contributions and talents of our young leaders.

CHILDREN IN AUSTRALIA HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A 'NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER' WITH ONLY ONE CHILD IN FOUR REGULARLY PLAYING OUTSIDE.

SPENDING TIME IN NATURE HAS IMPORTANT BENEFITS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, INCLUDING BETTER MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH, ENHANCED LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT, REDUCED STRESS AND IMPROVED SELF-PERCEPTION.

Extensions to Council programs

Council will explore extensions to our successful ongoing programs.

- **Green Heart Schools.** Council provides leadership opportunities, environmental learning and showcase opportunities, events and competitions for young people across Brisbane.

Extensions

- » We will explore opportunities to provide more youth-focused activities at Council's environment centres.
- » We will explore the potential for a dedicated online sustainability hub to provide opportunities for young people to share their ideas across topics like natural environment, biodiversity, energy, water, waste and active transport.

82% OF CHILDREN GLOBALLY EXPRESS FEAR, SADNESS AND ANGER WHEN DISCUSSING THEIR FEELINGS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS.

- » We will explore the establishment of a Youth Zone as part of Council's Green Heart Fairs, with age-appropriate eco workshops, activities and showcases of how young people are advocating for and creating a greener Brisbane.

- **Community conservation partnerships.** Young people can make a difference in their local communities by joining with others and participating in activities run through Council's Habitat Brisbane and Creek Catchment programs.

Extension

- » We will investigate opportunities to get more young people involved in on-the-ground environmental initiatives to help build the capacity of these groups and their sustainability into the future.
- **Street and Park Trees.** Council plants street trees to ensure Brisbane residents receive all the benefits trees bring to our city and suburbs. We will continue to provide opportunities for school students and young people to be involved in our Neighbourhood Shade Ways and Suburban Tree Trails programs.

Extension

- » We will provide opportunities for school students to be involved in our Neighbourhood Shadeways and Suburban Tree Trails programs.
- **Lessons in the gardens.** We provide learning programs for school students through Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mount Coot-tha.

Extension

- » We will further develop the learning programs and facilities offered through this centre.
- **Towards Zero Waste Education Centre.** Our waste education centre provides an interactive learning experience for Brisbane schools and community groups to find out how they can help Brisbane move towards zero waste.

Extension

- » During the life of this strategy we will engage young people in projects and initiatives about waste minimisation, resource recovery (e.g. recycling) and litter prevention.

Featured program: Green Heart Schools

Council's Green Heart Schools program integrates all areas of sustainability (energy, water, biodiversity, transport, waste, and local food) to engage Brisbane schools with environmental learning and leadership.

The program engages teachers and students through sustainability events, competitions, resources and regular schools e-newsletters. It actively promotes the full range of Council programs delivered to schools including environmental learning, active travel, arts and youth development.

There are many examples of the innovative ways Green Heart engages young people.

- **Sustainability Showcase Awards** celebrate schools and their communities for taking action on sustainability in areas of water, waste, transport, energy and greening in their school grounds.

- **YOUth LEADing the World Congress** is a three-day youth event hosted simultaneously in locations around the world, in partnership with Oz Green.
- **Green Eyed View photography competition** challenges high school students to capture a unique perspective of a natural wonder in Brisbane.
- **Student Environment Leadership Network** provides an opportunity for young people to become skilled in leading environmental sustainability projects in their own schools and local communities.
- **Green Heart Schools Travel Initiative** provides sponsored bus travel to Council environmental learning centres for schools that are actively committed to sustainability actions.



Profile: Sheamus O'Connor – Mount Gravatt Environment Group

Sheamus is a passionate advocate for environmental sustainability, recycling and utilising solar energy. On National Tree Day in 2011 and 2012, he was responsible for organising a band of fellow students at Mount Gravatt State High School, science teachers, bush care leaders and students from Griffith University to rehabilitate the entry of Mount Gravatt Summit Track.

The area was quickly transformed from a barren wasteland into the makings of a wildlife habitat.

In 2012 Sheamus and others created a pollinator link project between the bottom and top ovals of the school as part of the environment group's birds, bees and butterflies pollinator link.

Sheamus won the Young Citizen award at the Lord Mayor's Australia Day Awards in 2012, and went on to win a Young Star Award from Quest Community News.

For more information visit www.pollinatorlink.wordpress.com



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