Theme 5

Sustainable living and environmental engagement

Background

We are dedicated to creating a future where sustainable living is embedded in the everyday lives of our community. Sustainable living means making choices that have a minimal impact on the environment - using water wisely, minimising waste, reducing emissions, and choosing sustainable, locally produced food.

We will work to empower residents, businesses, and visitors to adopt environmentally responsible practices, fostering a deep connection between people and nature.

By encouraging sustainable choices, we aim to reduce our collective impact on the natural world while enhancing the liveability of our city.

Sustainable living and environmental engagement

Through targeted programs, educational initiatives, and collaborative partnerships, we aim to build a community that actively participates in the protection and enhancement of our local environment. Together, we will create a city that leads by example, where environmental engagement is at the core of our actions.

In the 2025 community satisfaction survey, only 45% of respondents were satisfied with opportunities to learn about the natural environment. The high proportion of neutral (35%) and "don't know" (11%) responses suggest limited awareness of existing opportunities, highlighting a chance for council to improve communication and promote local environmental engagement initiatives.

The health of our environment and the wellbeing of our community are deeply interconnected. Strengthening connection to nature plays a vital role in promoting physical and mental health by encouraging active lifestyles, reducing stress, and improving mental health outcomes. Access to nature and local green spaces supports improved health outcomes, stronger social connections and helps build a sense of local identity and belonging. Creating opportunities for people to engage with nature in their everyday lives contributes to more resilient, inclusive, and liveable communities.

Our role

We have built strong ongoing relationships with diverse partners to engage our community on environmental matters and encourage sustainable living practices. We aim to empower individuals in our community to make informed choices that reduce their environmental impact while fostering a deep connection to nature within the local area. We will raise awareness of key environmental issues, build local knowledge, and enhance community capacity to contribute to sustainability efforts.

We aim to provide accessible information about sustainable living and create opportunities for individuals and groups to get involved in a range of environmental initiatives. We will keep the community updated on the progress of our environmental actions as an organisation, ensuring transparency and collaboration.



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Sustainable living and environmental engagement

Strategic alignment and targets

This theme aligns with the following priorities in our Strategic Plan:

S2.2 S2.3 S2.4 S3.2 L4.1

Targets for council operations

These targets will measure our progress with engaging our community on environmental matters.

1. Maintain a Green Thymes newsletter click-rate average of **10%**

2. Reach at least **1000** households each year through direct mailouts with opportunities to get involved in environmental programs

3. Increase community awareness of council environmental programs in the **community satisfaction survey**

Community and environmental indicators and goals

- Attitudes towards the environment and nature.[39]
- Increase participation in citizen science platforms.[40]
- Increase use of public transport.[41]
- Accessibility of community gardens across the council area.
- Positive attendance at sustainability themed council events.[42]
- Positive engagement with sustainability themed digital media content.[43]
- Number of community-led environmental projects per year.[44]

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Sustainable living and environmental engagement

Current activities



✓ Environmental events and workshops
We host events focused on sustainability actions at home and in the local area, with a focus on topics like saving energy, food gardening, reducing waste, sustainable food and wildlife-friendly gardening.

✓ Green Thymes e-newsletter
Providing a regular e-newsletter that keeps the community informed about local environmental initiatives and opportunities to engage with nature.

✓ Community garden support
Ongoing support, promotion, and capacity building for both established and new community gardens on council-owned land.

✓ Common Thread sustainability workshops
Running series of sustainability workshops designed to inspire action, encourage community connection and educate about key sustainable living topics.

✓ Digital environmental communications
Keeping our community informed and connected to local environmental efforts through use of social media, our website, and e-newsletters such at Green Thymes.

✓ Citizen science initiatives
Promoting and facilitating local involvement in citizen science programs such as CoastSnap, Aussie Backyard Bird Count, Frog Watch, and Reef Watch.

✓ Environment Report Card
Providing an annual overview highlighting our environmental achievements, progress, and partnerships.

✓ Promoting council environmental initiatives
Through various publications and digital channels, we actively promote council-led environmental programs focusing on climate, waste management, water conservation, and greening efforts.

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Sustainable living and environmental engagement

✓ Create engaging nature experiences
Developing events and activities that offer opportunities for the community to connect with nature and learn about the local environment.

✓ Green Adelaide Education Program
Supporting nature stewardship and environmental leadership in schools through collaboration with Green Adelaide.

✓ Nature play in open spaces
Integrating nature-based play principles into the design of playgrounds, reserves, and open spaces to encourage young people to connect with nature.

✓ Encourage community gardening participation
Promoting existing community gardens and inspiring residents to get involved in local gardening initiatives for a stronger, more sustainable community.

✓ Foster food gardening skills
Delivering educational workshops and resources to empower residents with the knowledge and skills to grow their own food sustainably.

✓ Encourage community engagement with environmental groups
Promoting local environmental organisations to inspire wider community participation in sustainability efforts.

✓ Celebrate environmental leadership
Sharing stories of local environmental champions through case studies and events to highlight and inspire sustainable practices within the community.



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Priority E1

Foster sustainable communities

Objectives

- **E1a** Deliver education and engagement programs that increase awareness of sustainable living in our community.
- **E1b** Remove barriers and provide incentives to encourage positive behaviour change towards sustainable living practices.
- **E1c** Enhance partnerships and networks with community to support collective action.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

E1.1 Foster inclusive sustainable living education: Find new opportunities to partner with community service organisations to deliver sustainable living education and programs that support people on low incomes.

E1.2 Engage in regional sustainability initiatives: Participate in regional behaviour change programs in partnership with organisations across the Adelaide region to promote sustainable living practices on a broader scale.

E1.3 Promote sustainable home design: Work with local partners to raise awareness and encourage environmentally sustainable practices in home and renovation design, contributing to greener communities.

E1.4 Partner with conservation leaders to encourage native gardening: Work with leaders from local Friends groups to support native home gardening through tailored advice.

E1.5 Collaborate with libraries and community centres to deliver sustainable living education: Find new opportunities to work together to provide accessible community projects and programs that foster sustainable living, raise awareness of key environmental issues, build local knowledge, and promote environmental services.

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Priority E2

Connect our community with nature



Objectives

- **E2a** Enhance community engagement with nature.
- **E2b** Promote community understanding of our unique natural environment, local biodiversity and its cultural significance.
- **E2c** Provide children and young people with meaningful opportunities for nature connection, fostering lifelong environmental stewardship.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

E2.1 Foster a deeper connection with nature: Promote citizen science platforms like iNaturalist to enhance community engagement and understanding of local plants and animals.

E2.2 Incorporate nature into public art: Incorporate public art and placemaking initiatives to serve as platforms for environmental education, ecological literacy, community engagement, and stewardship.

E2.3 Encourage creative nature initiatives: Introduce innovative programs that go beyond traditional nature activities, bringing people together and fostering a shared appreciation for the environment.

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Priority E3

Support community gardening and sustainable food systems



Objectives

- **E3a** Support existing community garden groups and foster the development of new community gardens.
- **E3b** Support local food gardening and sharing of local produce to build a sustainable local food system.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

E3.1 Support local food-sharing initiatives: Find new ways to foster and facilitate community-based produce swaps and seed libraries to encourage the exchange of homegrown food.

E3.2 Locally sourced and sustainable food in council operations: Support sustainable food systems by offering locally sourced and environmentally sustainable food options at council events and services.

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Priority E4

Support and promote community leadership in sustainability



Objectives

- **E4a** Support the development of diverse and inclusive environmental groups and local champions.
- **E4b** Build community capacity to deliver and innovate on local environmental projects and initiatives.
- **E4c** Amplify community impact through sharing and showcasing achievements and local stories.
- **E4d** Create pathways for youth leadership through collaboration with schools and youth-led initiatives.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

E4.1 Foster local sustainability initiatives: Support the formation of new neighbourhood groups to collaborate on local sustainability projects, such as the 'In Our Street' initiative, to drive positive environmental change.

E4.2 Empower environmental leaders: Find new opportunities to build the capacity of environmental champions through leadership programs like Living Smart and the City of Marion Community Leadership Program to nurture local sustainability advocates.

E4.3 Support community-driven environmental projects: Proactively engage with the community to encourage innovative environmental project proposals to be put forward for funding through our Community Grants opportunities.

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