

Achievements in Biodiversity Conservation

Progress Report - Year 3 (2022-23) and Year 4 (2023-24)



**MORNINGTON
PENINSULA**
Shire

Achievements in Biodiversity Conservation

Progress Report for Year 3 (2022-23) and Year 4 (2023-24)

Mornington Peninsula is a uniquely biodiverse region, with species and areas of regional, state, national and international significance.

Natural Systems are working with our community to ensure our natural environment is healthy, valued and protected through implementing the Shire's [Biodiversity Conservation Plan](#). This plan establishes strategies and actions to protect and restore the resilience of the Peninsula's unique biodiversity.

Actions outlined in the Plan are focused on six key areas:

1. Engaging with the community and building stewardship.
2. Facilitating biodiversity conservation on private land.
3. Protecting biodiversity through planning and policy.
4. Building a strong knowledge base.
5. Demonstrating and leading best-practice land management.
6. Building ecosystem resilience in a changing climate.

This report highlights what we have achieved implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Plan in Implementation Year 3 (2022-23) and Implementation Year 4 (2023-24). Achievements are presented in a table against each action as described in the Plan.

No.	Action Description	Year 3 (2022-2023)	Year 4 (2023-2024)
1.1	<p>Promote the unique natural environments of the Mornington Peninsula, focusing on local reserves, their value to the community, and the health benefits of spending time in nature.</p>	<p>Guided Walks 2022: During Biodiversity Month in September 2022, we hosted four 2-hour guided walks in local bushland reserves for the community to observe and learn about local wildflowers and our unique biodiversity. A total of 73 community members attended these walks. Feedback was very positive including:</p> <p><i>‘As new residents we are delighted to find that the Mornington Peninsula Shire has such a strong focus on the environment.’</i></p> <p><i>‘We were very impressed with the enthusiasm and knowledge of the two young ladies who conducted the walk and talk, it was excellent.’</i></p>	<p>Guided Walks 2023: The Shire’s Bushland Management Team hosted a series of guided walks through some of our significant bushland reserves throughout September. Eight walks in four reserves were well attended by around 90 community members who learned about site history, biodiversity values, management objectives, techniques and challenges. We received great feedback including:</p> <p><i>‘This event was so much more than I expected.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Didn’t know it was such a local jewel.’</i></p> <p><i>‘It was very informative; staff were able to answer any questions that were asked.’</i></p> <p><i>‘The guides were very knowledgeable and engaging.’</i></p>
1.2	<p>Encourage the community to interact with the natural environments of the Mornington Peninsula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify local reserves where passive recreational uses can be sensitively accommodated; b) Ensure they have the required infrastructure and signage that identifies appropriate uses; and c) Produce information guides for identified reserves, outlining their values, and promoting visitation and volunteer opportunities. 	<p>Reserve Profiles: Online profiles for 12 bushland reserves have been added to the reserve directory on the Shire’s website. Each profile highlights reserve features, values, visitation and volunteer opportunities.</p> <p>Bushland Reserve Sign Style Guide: Natural Systems worked with the Shire’s graphic designers to produce a Bushland Reserves Sign Style Guide. Using this guide, we have refreshed entrance, regulatory and directional signage in popular bushland reserves including Balcombe Estuary Reserves, Moorooduc Quarry Flora and Fauna Reserve and Warringine Park. Minor improvements to tracks and fences have also been undertaken to improve the visitor experience and to better protect environmental assets within key bushland areas.</p> <p>All Abilities Access: MLAK lock systems have been installed on two main entrance gates to Warringine Park to improve access to the reserve</p>	<p>Infrastructure Improvements: entrance and regulatory signage has been refreshed at Mt Eliza Foreshore Reserve, Jacks Beach Foreshore Reserve, Clifford Bushland Reserve, Lorna’s Triangle Bushland Reserve, Childrens Bushland Reserve, Tootgarook Wetland, Mt Martha Public Park and Bill Carroll Bushland Reserve. Tracks and fences have also been improved at Tootgarook Wetland and Olivers Creek Bushland Reserve.</p> <p>Interpretive Signage: Natural Systems worked collaboratively with local environmental groups to develop interpretive sign projects for Hopetoun and Norfolk Flora and Fauna Reserve (Mt Martha), Olivers Creek Bushland Reserve (Tyabb), McCrae Foreshore Reserve (McCrae) and Williams Road Beach (Mt. Eliza).</p>

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		<p>for people of all ages and abilities. The Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK) system is designed to give people with disabilities access to a network of public facilities across Australia.</p> <p>Interpretive Signage: Natural Systems also collaborated with Friends and Landcare Groups to develop and install engaging interpretive signage in local reserves including Sunshine Bushland Reserve (Mt Martha) St Johns Wood Roadside Reserve (Blairgowrie).</p>	
1.3	<p>Update the Shire’s website to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Links to biodiversity-related content that are more prominently located and easier to navigate; and - An expanded range of information on the natural values of the Mornington Peninsula, such as biodiversity values, management issues and practical guidance notes for landholders. 	<p>The Our Natural Environment and Biodiversity topic page on the Shire’s website brings together biodiversity information across the website, enabling our community to learn about the Peninsula’s natural environment, what we’re doing to protect it (projects, events, initiatives, achievements), and how they can help.</p> <p>In 2022 we launched the new online Local Native Plants Guide tool on the Shire’s website. Mornington Peninsula residents can use the guide to find and download a local native plant list for their property. The plant lists are based on the native vegetation type that occurs in the local area. The tool is extremely popular, with nearly 12,000 people visiting the site over the past year.</p>	<p>Local Native Plants Guide: this easy-to-use online tool continues to be popular. Over the last 12 months 13,000 people have used the tool to download a local native plant list for their property and learn about their local environment. We’ve received some great feedback from the community on this tool including:</p> <p><i>‘I’m a landscaper and former nursery person. This is excellent! I’m impressed!’</i></p> <p><i>‘This is fantastic!’</i></p> <p><i>‘It’s great to have a list. The way it is set up is great.’</i></p>
1.4	<p>Integrate biodiversity information layers into the Shire’s public GIS interface, to enable the community to access vegetation mapping and flora and fauna records for the Mornington Peninsula and update the information regularly.</p>	<p>Biodiversity Maps Online: was launched on the Shire’s website in 2022. Our community can use the maps to view information on native vegetation types (EVCs), fauna records, bushland reserves and local conservation groups. Since the launch, Biodiversity Maps Online has been accessed over 5000 times, that’s around 100 sessions a week.</p>	<p>Biodiversity Maps Online: this publicly accessible GIS tool continues to be popular amongst our community. Over the past 12 months the tool was accessed over 5,000 times, that’s around 100 sessions each week. Incredible! We’ve received some great feedback about the tool too:</p> <p><i>‘It’s excellent. A great tool.’</i></p>

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			<p><i>'This is fantastic... the fact that people can download the EVC profile/plant list just by clicking on it there and then is going to save so much time.'</i></p> <p><i>'Well done all involved and THANK YOU!'</i></p>
1.5	Partner with conservation and research organisations, such as BirdLife Australia, to develop and promote local biodiversity-related citizen science projects	<p>Bioblitz 2022: during Biodiversity Month in September, the Shire partnered with 9 local councils to take part in the Greater Melbourne Bioblitz 2022. During the month long BioBlitz, the community were encouraged to record observations of their nature finds on the citizen science app iNaturalist. On the Mornington Peninsula, the community recorded an incredible 3,777 observations of 1,191 species! Our citizen scientists also discovered an amazing 107 new species for the Peninsula.</p> <p>Birds in Schools: we have partnered with Birdlife Australia to deliver the Birds in Schools program to local primary schools. This environmental education program, designed and delivered by Birdlife Australia, engages students in the scientific process through investigation and monitoring the birds and habitat of their school grounds. Students use their own observational skills and ideas to develop and implement a Bird Action Plan for their school to help their local bird life. Over 1,700 students from 21 schools have been involved in the program so far.</p> <p>Fungi Guide: Natural Systems collaborated with environmental photographer Alison Pouliot to produce a Fungi of the Mornington Peninsula Guide, which includes photos and information for over 90 types of fungi that occur on the Peninsula. The Fungi Guide was released at the start of the fungi season in April, with an impressive response</p>	<p>Bioblitz 2023: In celebration of Biodiversity Month in September, the Shire once again participated in the Greater Melbourne Biodiversity Blitz. Ten councils took part in a friendly competition to engage the community to record the most species on iNaturalist. On the Peninsula, 278 community members contributed 6,011 records of 1484 species of flora, fauna and fungi. Mornington Peninsula finishing top of the leader board, closely followed by the Yarra Ranges. The total number of participants and species recorded were the highest since this event started 4 years ago.</p> <p>Birds in Schools: a further 11 schools participated in this year's Birds in Schools Program. Through the Program, students have planted a total of 1200 local native plants (supplied by the Shire), a great start in implementing the Bird Action Plans they developed for their school.</p> <p>Fungi Workshops: following the interest generated from last year's release of the Fungi of the Mornington Peninsula Guide, Natural Systems hosted two community workshops with ecologist Alison Pouliot. See notes under Action 1.7 for more detail.</p>

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		<p>from the community - 2,300 people visited the website, and the guide was downloaded an incredible 1,200 times! The community also answered our call to action to record their fungi sightings on citizen science app iNaturalist. Following the release of the guide in Autumn, 230 people recording over 1800 observations of 230 species of fungi on the Peninsula. A significant increase from the same period last year where 140 people recorded 700 observations of 150 species.</p>	
1.6	<p>Work with local community groups involved in biodiversity conservation, such as Friends Groups, to identify strategies for recruiting new members, and provide assistance that is tailored to the interests and needs of each group.</p>	<p>New features on the Friends Groups of Bushland and Foreshore Reserves page on the Shire's website are making it easier for people to connect with their local Friends Group. A simple and easy to use Friends Group Enquiry Form was added to the page in 2022, and we now receive around 2 enquires a week from people wanting to join a Friends Group.</p> <p>We've also added a Find a Friends Group Near You interactive map to the website, which has had over 1748 views in the past year (about 30 views per week).</p> <p>New pop-up signs have been installed in reserves to raise awareness of the work of Friends Groups. The temporary signs have a QR code which can be easily scanned and takes people to the Friends Group enquiry form on the website. These signs are rotated through various reserves.</p> <p>A short video has been produced highlighting the work of Friends Group volunteers is also now available on the website.</p>	<p>The Find a Friends Group Near You interactive map continues to be a popular option for the community to connect with their local group. This self-serve option has had 1,500 views in the past year.</p> <p>The simple and easy to use Friends Group Enquiry Form is also well-used by the community. Over the past 12 months, we've connected over 100 people with their local group through this form.</p>

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1.7	<p>Continue to provide support and training to volunteers involved in environmental improvement works by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Providing on-ground assistance and practical training at working bees in Shire-managed reserves b) Holding educational workshops to build capacity; c) Establishing a mentoring program to share the knowledge of experienced volunteers and Shire staff; d) Preparing a volunteer's manual to complement practical training; and e) Holding events to recognise and celebrate the work of local environment groups. 	<p>Working Bee Support Program: During 2022-23, the Shire supported environmental volunteers from over 60 Friends Groups at 460 working bees, where volunteers contributed an incredible 5,700 hours to protect and enhance biodiversity values in their local bushland and foreshore reserves.</p> <p>Cultural Heritage Workshops: Natural Systems organised three cultural heritage awareness workshops, presented by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation for Friends Group volunteers. At the sessions Bunurong Elders shared information on local artifacts, the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, and what to do if there is Aboriginal or historical heritage found in an area.</p> <p>Volunteers Manual: The volunteer's manual has been completed and available on the Shire's website.</p>	<p>Working Bee Support Program: During 2023-24, the Shire supported environmental volunteers from 62 Friends Groups at 452 working bees. Volunteers contributed 5,470 hours to protect and enhance biodiversity values in their local bushland and foreshore reserves, including planting 9,500 local native species.</p> <p>Fungi Workshops: following the interest generated from last year's release of the Fungi of the Mornington Peninsula Guide, Natural Systems hosted two community workshops with ecologist Alison Pouliot exploring the diverse world of fungi on the Mornington Peninsula. Friends and Landcare volunteers who participated learnt about fungi interactions local plants and animals and how fungi can be considered in conservation projects. Feedback from attendees included:</p> <p><i>'Thank you to the MPS team for creating fungi resources and making the wonderful Alison Pouliot available to us in-person.'</i></p> <p><i>'This has deepened our understanding, inspired us & continued to build our conservation and restoration community.'</i></p> <p>20th Annual Friends Group Network Event: In September, Natural Systems hosted 70 volunteers at the 20th Annual Friends Group Networking Event at Seawinds Gardens. This event recognises and celebrate the achievements and efforts of our many environmental volunteers and provides an opportunity for networking amongst volunteers. The event started with a moving smoking ceremony from a Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation Elder. This was followed by a mini habitat hunt facilitated by naturalist and educator Brian Bainbridge.</p>

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1.8	Develop a biodiversity protection and management partnership with local Traditional Owners.	<p>Wareen Beek Ranger Program: Natural Systems continued its support of the Wareen Beek Ranger training program in 2022-2023. This program is designed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to gain skills to work on country in the greater Melbourne area, whilst gaining accreditation in conservation and land management. This program was delivered through the Bunurong Land Council, Trust for Nature and Holmesglen Institute. During this year's program, the Shire supported Wareen Beek Rangers to work on country at Tootgarook Wetland and Peninsula Gardens Bushland Reserve. The Rangers were also supported to undertake seed collection and plant propagation at the Shire Nursery at The Briars.</p> <p>Healing Country in Hastings: during National Reconciliation Week in June, Natural Systems partnered with Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association and the Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation to hold a Healing Country community planting event in Hastings. The planting will improve local habitat values and strengthen the wildlife corridor along Warringine Creek.</p>	<p>Cultural Land Management: Natural Systems commenced discussions with representatives from Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation's Strong Country Team about cultural land management opportunities at sites of interest within Shire reserves.</p>
1.9	Support the engagement of children and adults with nature through biodiversity-based art programs, linked to the Shire's Arts and Culture Strategy.	In 2022 we supported the Sunshine Reserve Junior Ranger program to design and installed a nature inspired ceramic totem.	Community engagement with nature through art-based programs continued this year through the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery's school holiday workshops and the re-establishment of the Artist in Residence (AiR) Program at Police Point.
1.10	Adopt the 'Gardens for Wildlife Victoria' model to engage residents in urban and semi-urban areas	Since its launch in 2021, the Shire's Gardens for Wildlife Program has received a huge response from our local community. Our group of passionate Volunteer Garden Guides have put in a massive effort to deliver 100 garden visits so far! During the	The Gardens for Wildlife Program continues to be huge demand with our local community and registrations for garden visits are flowing in from Mornington Peninsula residents.

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		<p>garden visit, residents learn how to encourage local wildlife with wildlife friendly garden practices. Each resident receives a personalised garden report and a voucher for local native plants.</p>	<p>In October 2023 we held our first annual Gardens for Wildlife Participant Celebration Day which included a walk and talk at a Landcare property and a meet and greet lunch. The day was a huge success.</p> <p>Our Volunteer Garden Guides have been kept busy delivering Garden Visits and spreading their expert wildlife gardening knowledge with residents. We are receiving constant positive feedback from residents who have participated in the program, with lots of lovely success stories and new wildlife sightings in their garden.</p> <p>We recently welcomed 5 new Volunteer Garden Guides to the program who have just completed their induction and training and are now ready to head out and help support residents in their wildlife gardening journey. The program has a current waiting list of around 3 months for a Garden Visit so our extra Volunteer Garden Guides will be a great help in reducing the waiting list time.</p> <p>At the end of June 2024 our Volunteer Garden Guides had delivered a grand total of 156 Garden Visits since the program launched in 2021. A fantastic effort!</p>
2.1	<p>Evaluate the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of biodiversity incentives in achieving conservation outcomes on private land on the Mornington Peninsula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review the Shire's Land Sustainability Rebate program, about the eligibility criteria and guidelines, uptake rates and on-ground outcomes; b) Investigate the potential benefits and costs of alternative incentive models 	<p>Following the review of 153 properties receiving the Conservation Land Rate (formerly Land Sustainability Rebate), Natural Systems have implemented process improvements to the program to ensure on-going success.</p> <p>A key improvement identified in the review was to support landholders in developing a Conservation Action Plan for their property. Officers have developed a Conservation Action Plan Template which will be trialled with applicants.</p>	<p>This year, Officers have continued to implement the findings from the program review, including trialling the new Property Conservation Action Plan Template with applicants, and investigating the best way to integrate the plan into the application process.</p> <p>During 2023-24, Shire Officers undertook 20 property visits with applicants for the Conservation Land Rate Incentive Program. At the visits, landholders received advice and property specific information on</p>

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	(e.g. mixed financial and non-financial incentives); and c) Identify opportunities to improve the value and outcomes of a local incentives scheme.		biodiversity values and conservation works on their land.
2.2	Introduce an annual rate rebate for properties registered under a Trust for Nature covenant, including rural properties in the Green Wedge Zone, based on the area (i.e. dollars per hectare) of covenanted land that meets the Trust for Nature covenanting criteria. Work with Trust for Nature to determine administrative and funding arrangements.	Trust for Nature Rate Incentive Program: In 2021, the Shire introduced the Trust for Nature Rate Incentive Program . Under this program, landholders who have placed a Trust for Nature conservation covenant on their property receive a discount of 65% off their rates (known as a differential rate) on the area of land protected. This rate acknowledges the long-term commitment of these landholders to protecting biodiversity on their land.	New Land Tax Exemption for Conservation: following strong advocacy from Trust for Nature, covenantors and Mornington Peninsula Shire, the Victorian Government introduced a new land tax exemption for conservation covenants. As of 1 January 2024, all landholders with a Trust for Nature covenant will be eligible for a land tax exemption over the proportion of their land under covenant. This exemption is a huge win for landholders and Victoria's wildlife. It recognises the amazing contribution landholders with conservation covenants are making to the future of our environment. This exemption is likely to encourage even more landholders to take the vital step to protecting habitat on their land forever.
2.3	Prepare a 'Welcome Pack' for distribution to new landholders in target areas of the Mornington Peninsula, to educate landholders on the biodiversity of their local area and to help them understand their duty-of-care in protecting the natural environment.	Following a review and benchmarking of information provided by other local government areas, preparation of a landholder information pack is underway. Target landholders and engagement objectives have been identified. Key topics for inclusion have been researched and selected and a project brief is being developed.	Development of a landholder information pack has progressed in 2023-24 under the guidance of the project working group. A working document including layout, format and draft content has been developed and is currently being reviewed by the working group prior to engaging graphic designers for next stage project.
2.4	Develop practical guidance notes for landholders on key biodiversity conservation topics including environmental weeds, pest animals, biodiversity, and fire risk, understanding vegetation types and habitat values and the benefits of planting	Key topics for landholder guidance notes have been identified to align with the information provided in the Landholder Information Pack (see Action 2.3). These topics include those identified as key areas that landholders would like information	See notes for Action 2.3 (above).

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	indigenous species to increase the cover of native vegetation.	following the review of the Conservation Land Rate (refer Action 2.1).	
2.5	Partner with organisations, such as the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network, to develop and promote a program of educational events for private landholders (e.g. workshops, field days, site tours, open days) with an emphasis on peer-to-peer learning.	<p>Nature Stewards 2023: Natural Systems ran the Peninsula's first ever Nature Stewards Program in Autumn 2023. The program promotes environmental literacy and stewardship of nature through discovery, action, and ongoing learning. Run over ten sessions, 25 participants learnt together about the Mornington Peninsula's unique local environment through topics including fungi, plants, animals, conservation land management, volunteering and citizen science.</p> <p>Landcare Workshops: the Shire's Landcare Facilitator assisted Landcare groups to deliver multiple group-led events and workshops including an Integrated Pest Management Workshop, Beetles with Benefits Workshop, National Tree Day planting event and multiple Koala Tree planting days.</p>	<p>Nature Stewards Program 2024: the 2024 Nature Stewards Program was extremely popular, with 63 applications for 25 positions! The participants selected for the course ranged in age from 16-79, with various background and experience, all keen to give up their time over 10 Saturdays to learn about their local environment. Guest presenters for the course included three officers from the Natural Systems team. Participants rated the Program as highly satisfying, and said the best thing about it included:</p> <p><i>'Meeting like-minded people. The resources. The field trips.'</i></p> <p><i>'Combo of theory and field trips. Course leaders and presenters. Group participant variety.'</i></p> <p><i>'Having the mix of ages - a couple of seniors and several students and a good range in the middle.'</i></p> <p>Mapping for Environmental Volunteers: Natural Systems delivered the 'Mapping for Environmental Volunteers' workshop, which provided participants with the skills to use various mapping tools when planning environmental projects.</p> <p>Landcare Workshops: the Shire's Landcare Facilitator assisted Landcare groups to deliver multiple group-led events and workshops including the Mornington Peninsula Intrepid Landcare's Next Generation workshop series targeted towards young people looking to gain skills in environmental weed identification; Multiple community and National Tree Day planting events; and Property tours of biolink demonstration sites.</p>

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2.6	Continue to support the work of the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network, by providing in-kind and financial support, and by collaborating to achieve on-ground outcomes.	<p>The Shire continues to support Landcare on the Mornington Peninsula through the delivery of the 2021-2024 Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program, a Victorian Government Grant through which we employ a Landcare Facilitator to support the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network and its 12 member groups.</p> <p>In 2023-23, this role supported the formation of a new Intrepid Landcare Group for people aged 20-30 years, strengthened partnerships between Landcare and Traditional Owner groups, corporates, local TAFES, schools, Scout and Youth groups, promoted Landcare at regional shows and festival, secured \$180k in grant funding for groups, and assisted Landcare groups to deliver multiple group-led events.</p> <p>Further support from the Shire included delivering ground works programs at several key Landcare biolink and roadside weeding projects and providing 5000 local native plants to support Landcare Group biolinks projects.</p>	<p>During 2023-24 the Shire's Landcare Facilitator helped secure \$107,000 in grant funding for local Landcare group projects, supported two new groups to join the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network promoted Landcare at regional shows and festivals, and assisted Landcare groups to deliver multiple group-led projects and events.</p> <p>The Shire's Biolink Support Grant Program also provided opportunities to support Landcare in on ground outcomes, refer to Action 5.2 for further details.</p>
2.7	Investigate funding mechanisms and avenues for providing one-to-one advice to landholders seeking to undertake biodiversity conservation works on their land.	One-to-one advice to landholders is primarily delivered through the Shire's Conservation Land Rate Incentive Program. Applicants receive a property visit from a Natural Systems Officer and are provided with advice and property-specific information on biodiversity conservation works on their land. One-to-one advice was provided to landholders at 15 property visits under this program in 2022-23.	During 2023-24, Shire Officers undertook 20 property visits with applicants for the Conservation Land Rate Incentive Program. At the visits, landholders received one-to-one advice and property specific information on biodiversity values and conservation works on their land.

No.	Action Description	Year 3 (2022-2023)	Year 4 (2023-2024)
2.8	Partner with organisations, such as the Country Fire Authority and Parks Victoria to build community understanding and capacity to manage fire risk in the context of best practice biodiversity management.	Shire officers have presented to local CFA groups on the Shire's Bushfire Management Program, to build capacity and community understanding of fire risk in local context. Further presentations and engagement sessions are planned in 2024. Managing fire risk is also a guidance note topic for the landholder information pack (see Actions 2.3 and 2.4).	Natural Systems Officers presented to DEECA, CFA and Forest Fire Management Victoria representatives on the Shire's Fuel Reduction Works Program at the state government's Community of Practice for Bushfire Management. The Municipal Fire Management Work Group continued in 2024. This working groups contains representatives from the Shire, Parks Victoria, CFA, DEECA and Forest Fire Management Victoria to discuss, consider and coordinate fire management across the Peninsula. The development of a guidance note for landholders about managing fire risk and biodiversity is being prepared as part of the landholder information pack (refer Action 2.3 and 2.4).
3.1	Progressively review and update the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme to better reflect the current status and distribution of biodiversity values, and improve their protection: a) Update the Local Planning Policy Framework to refer to and support the Biodiversity Conservation Plan; and a) Review current planning provisions to identify gaps, limitations, and opportunities for improvement, and ensure that areas of important vegetation, habitat, waterways, wetlands and coastal areas are adequately protected.	To commence in 2025.	To commence in 2025.
3.2	Encourage compliance with environmental planning controls in the Planning Scheme, by:	Research and benchmarking into processes and information provided by other local government areas has begun.	The development of educational and guidance materials for landholders are progressing – refer to notes under Action 2.3.

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	<p>a) Producing educational and guidance materials to make landowners aware of requirements and help them understand their obligations; and</p> <p>b) Engaging with land holders through pre-planning meetings, information sessions and the Shire's website.</p>		
3.3	Develop and maintain a database of planning applications and permits that involve native vegetation removal and/or require protection or management of biodiversity and use a risk-based approach to monitor compliance and respond to non-compliance with enforcement where necessary.	Ongoing. Native vegetation removal permits are tracked through the Shire's planning database and reported to DEECA annually.	Ongoing. Native vegetation removal permits continue to be tracked in the Shire's planning database and reported to DEECA annually. A proactive monitoring program is planned for development in 2025.
3.4	Investigate options to increase opportunities for native vegetation offsets to be located within the Mornington Peninsula Shire, including consideration of an over-the-counter offset scheme and future interactions with water and carbon markets.	To commence in 2024.	Initial investigations by Shire Officers into developing an over-the-counter offset scheme have indicated that this option would not be financially viable for the Shire and may potentially present a financial burden.
3.5	Review and identify areas of significant biodiversity value within the Green Wedge Zone that may benefit from the development of a Land Management Plan as part of applications for new developments, to support and align with the policies set out in the Mornington Peninsula Shire Green Wedge Management Plan, to ensure biodiversity conservation values in these areas are appropriately managed.	A preliminary review of Shire Biodiversity Significance mapping and Green Wedge property types has highlighted opportunities for engagement. Either a Land Management Plan detailing land conservation actions or a Farm Plan is currently required for new developments in the Green Wedge.	A standardised Land Management Plan (Conservation) template has been prepared and is being trialled with Conservation Land Rate Incentive Program applicants (refer Action 2.1) before considering its wider use in planning applications in the Green Wedge.
3.6	Investigate the potential biodiversity impacts of native vegetation removal being	Following advocacy from several Councils including Mornington Peninsula Shire, the State Planning	Completed.

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	undertaken to achieve bushfire risk reduction through planning scheme exemptions (for example under Clause 52.12) to establish an advocacy position for Council to adopt in discussions with State government on biodiversity and fire risk.	Minister approved Amendment VC176 which amends Clause 52.12 (Bushfire Protection: Exemptions) to align the 10/30 and fence line vegetation exemptions with the Bushfire Prone Area map across all Victorian councils.	
4.1	Identify and prioritise research and survey programs to address gaps in local biodiversity knowledge.	<p>Understanding Koala Populations: Natural Systems has partnered with researchers from Deakin University and volunteers from Mornington Peninsula Koala Conservation Group to research koala populations on the Peninsula. This ambitious project aims to improve our knowledge of our koala population and will provide important data for effective conservation of koalas on the Peninsula. The 3-year project will be completed in 2024.</p> <p>Tootgarook Wetland: We've also completed a study into the vegetation and fauna habitat values of Tootgarook Wetland. The study has updated mapping of native vegetation types (referred to as Ecological Vegetation Classes) across the entire wetland, measured wetland condition, and mapped fauna habitat value for significant species. Information gathered from the study has informed our Biodiversity Works Program for shire-managed reserves within the Tootgarook Wetland complex.</p> <p>Calcareous Swale Grasslands: the research report on calcareous swale grasslands on the Nepean Peninsula has been completed and is a useful reference to guide bushland management works in reserves on the southern peninsula.</p>	<p>Powerful Owls: Powerful Owls are a threatened species in Victoria, and the Peninsula provides important habitat for this species. We're supporting the Powerful Owl Research Team from Deakin University to find out more about this important species on the Mornington Peninsula. The research team use GPS tracking to identify important movement corridors, habitat patches and home ranges. This information will be used to estimate population numbers, identify critical habitat for protection, and spatially assess land use impacts. Deakin Uni have also been commissioned to prepare a Guidelines to Working in Powerful Owl Habitat on the Mornington Peninsula. Refer to notes under Action 5.4 for more details.</p>
4.2	Continue to update information on the status of biodiversity across the Mornington Peninsula with a monitoring program for local conservation reserves that uses	Natural Systems works closely with local volunteers, the Australasian Native Orchid Society (ANOS), Committees of Management and DELWP to conduct monitoring of threatened flora species.	Threatened species monitoring programs continued under the guidance of the Natural Systems team this year, and information has been provided to DEECA

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	standardised and repeatable monitoring methods.	<p>Monitoring usually involves counting each species, followed by recording how many plants are producing flowers and have set seed.</p> <p>Natural Systems monitors the citizen science app iNaturalist to identify new records of threatened species and newly emerging high threat weeds.</p> <p>A baseline vegetation condition assessment for Tootgarook Wetland has been completed as part of the Tootgarook Wetland Vegetation and Fauna Habitat Study (see Action 4.1).</p>	<p>and other authorities to inform decision making and management guidance.</p> <p>Orange-bellied Parrot Monitoring: Orange-bellied Parrot is a nationally endangered species. Natural Systems Officers connected with members of the National Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team to take part in a monitoring survey, to learn the monitoring techniques to begin our own monitoring program in key Orange-bellied Parrot habitat on Shire-managed land. Officers are now developing a monitoring program to undertake monthly targeted monitoring surveys for during peak survey periods. Surveys are scheduled to commence in 2024-25 with data to be submitted to the National Recovery Team.</p>
4.3	Undertake a GIS-based tree canopy cover assessment, using a repeatable methodology, to monitor changes in tree canopy cover every five years.	<p>The initial tree ledger assessment is complete with data for the whole Shire. This has involved AI analysis of existing aerial photography data sets from 2005 to 2022. All individual (separated) trees are picked up by this analysis. Groups of trees (i.e. bushland) were not able to be resolved into individual trees, however canopy cover has still been measured. The consultant also developed a browser for easier analysis of the data. Very easy visual assessments are possible using this browser. The data will be renewed every two years. There seems to be a general pattern of canopy cover loss during the drought, and canopy cover gain since.</p>	The next assessment is planned for 2027.
4.4	Improve internal systems for storing and accessing shire-commissioned biodiversity reports, to facilitate greater communication and sharing of data within the Shire and wider community.	Project specific biodiversity information is now displayed on the Shire's internal GIS program Intra Maps and, where appropriate, is displayed on the publicly accessible GIS. This greatly facilitates communication and sharing of biodiversity data.	As per Year 3.

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4.5	Continue to improve upon and expand the use of Bushland Manager, the Shire's key tool for spatially recording biodiversity management works in bushland, foreshore and roadside reserves.	Bushland Manager is updated daily with works reports showing precisely where work occurred. The tool is being reviewed and updated to cater for the future maintenance services long-term contracts commencing in 2024.	Bushland Manager is being fully reviewed and updated in preparation for the commencement of the future maintenance contracts in 2024.
5.1	Continue to develop, review and update operational plans for local bushland, foreshore and roadside reserves that establish clear, measurable and achievable targets for biodiversity management works. Regularly review the outcomes achieved through these programs to inform and improve management decisions.	Detailed reports generated annually from Bushland Manager are reviewed to measure success toward established bushland management goals. Activity Specifications and works planning processes for bushland works have been reviewed and updated in preparation for future maintenance services contracts.	Operational plans for over 50 significant bushland reserves have been prepared in preparation for the commencement of the future maintenance contracts in 2024.
5.2	<p>Review and update environmental weed and pest animal control strategies to demonstrate the Shire's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and implementation of best-practice across Shire-managed land:</p> <p>a) Review and update the prioritisation framework for invasive species management, using a risk-based approach, which aligns with the principles of Integrated Pest Management;</p> <p>b) Review and implement best-practice control techniques to incorporate recent advances in technologies, and changes in pest control legislation and regulations; and</p>	<p>Prioritisation Framework for Bushland Management: in preparation for the Shire's upcoming future maintenance services contracts, the prioritisation and planning framework that guides the delivery of on ground bushland and fuel management works has been reviewed and updated. As part of this process, the biodiversity significance of the Shire's bushland areas has been re-assessed by Natural Systems officers using updated assessment criteria. Natural Systems have also reviewed and updated best practice standards and methods for inclusion in the future maintenance services contracts. Pest animal control programs continue to be reviewed annually to ensure best practice.</p> <p>Early Invader Weed Program: Natural System's Early Invader Weed program continued in 2022-23. Works under this best practice program include recording and monitoring of early invader weeds, working with Shire contractors to ensure that risk mitigation procedures for early invader weeds are</p>	<p>Early Invader Weed Program: this innovative, best practice program developed in-house by Natural Systems strongly continued this year. A highlight of this year's program was that Natural Systems Team officers were invited to present at the Weed Society of Victoria biennial Australasian Weed Conference. The presentation covered the Shire's Early Invader Weed program, the approach to management and our focus on contractor and community capacity building. On ground program works included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Shire contractors to develop hygiene procedures to ensure that best-practice is applied to all sites of known early invader weeds to minimise their spread. • Updating control techniques for key species under the program to ensure treatment works are targeted and achieve desired outcomes. • Addition of a new species, Petite Liquorice, to the program, which was only previously known from one site in Victoria. The aim is to contain and

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	c) Revise and update Standard Operating Procedures for staff and contractors.	in place, and local community group ID sessions to build capacity for groups working near to known infestations.	<p>eradicate Petite Liquorice populations to prevent them from establishing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong focus on community engagement. An information session was held with neighbours at Warringine Bushland Reserve to inform them of Chilean Needle Grass discovered at this location, and the Shire's approach to manage the population. The result was encouraging with neighbours supporting the programs' objective.
5.3	Ensure best-practice environmental protocols are followed when other organisations, not engaged by the Shire, carry out works on Shire-managed land, by improving Shire processes and developing collaborative working relationships.	Natural Systems are working collaboratively with Asset Protection to provide guidance on best-practice requirements to other organisations that carry out work on Shire-managed land where biodiversity assets may be impacted.	As per Year 3.
5.4	Continue to develop specific operational guidelines to improve biodiversity outcomes for maintenance activities in ecologically sensitive sites, such as fauna and habitat protection guidelines for fuel reduction and vegetation management works.	<p>Fauna Habitat Awareness Training: Natural Systems facilitated fauna habitat training sessions for on-ground contractors designed to raise awareness of local fauna habitat, understand the potential impacts of their day to day works and how this can be minimised. 125 Shire contractors from multiple organisations that work in a range of environments including bushland, parkland, and open-space reserves attended the sessions.</p> <p>'Think Like a Skink' Workshops: Swamp Skinks are a nationally endangered species, and wetland habitat on the Mornington Peninsula is a stronghold for this medium-sized skink. We engaged an expert reptile scientist to deliver Swamp Skink workshops to our bushland crews who work in Tootgarook Wetland. The crews learnt about Swamp Skink ecology and habitat needs and were taught to 'think like a skink' when undertaking vegetation management on the site. This training provided our</p>	<p>Powerful Owl Habitat Guidelines: Researchers from Deakin University's Power Owl Team have been commissioned by the Shire to prepare the Guidelines to Management Activities in Powerful Owl habitat on the Mornington Peninsula document. This document aims to improve protection of Powerful Owl habitat by providing guidelines for land management activities and minimising disturbance or habitat modification where impacts are proposed. These guidelines will be made available in 2025.</p>

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		bushland crews with tools and knowledge to take a more adaptive and holistic approach to land management, particularly when it comes to protecting local fauna and their habitat.	
5.5	Develop an urban street tree protection and renewal program, in consultation with residents, which incorporates measures to: - maintain or improve tree canopy cover, particularly in areas affected by die-back; - increase the cover of indigenous vegetation; and - increase species and structural diversity in plantings, to improve urban biodiversity.	<p>Natural Systems continued our tree protection program in 2022, which focused on the protection of significant eucalypt street trees in the Mt Martha area that were at risk from over browsing by possums. Tree bands have been installed on selected trees and are already showing signs of recovery with fresh, new growth.</p> <p>In 2023, tree band maintenance works were undertaken on 107 tree bands in Earimil Creek Bushland Reserve (Mt Eliza) and Hopetoun-Norfolk Flora & Fauna Reserve (Mt Martha), which included protection of the critically endangered Mt Martha Bundy.</p>	<p>Natural Systems officers created a tree band database to map each tree historically banded under the Tree Protection Program. These works involved assigning a unique identification tag to each tree and recording individual tree data (e.g., species, canopy health, band condition).</p> <p>Along with providing individual information on each banded tree, this data will be used for future maintenance works programs. This project determined that a total of 336 trees have been historically banded, with 287 requiring maintenance works. Maintenance on remaining trees is scheduled for 2025.</p>
5.6	<p>Promote an aware and collaborative culture within the Shire to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biodiversity is considered and assessed early in the planning and implementation of Shire projects (e.g., new infrastructure projects); and - Shire officers required to make decisions that may affect biodiversity (e.g., statutory planners, infrastructure project managers) are supported with good processes and access to the relevant information and datasets. 	<p>Natural Systems contributed to the development of the Shire's ESD policy for capital works projects and the multi-benefit projects guidelines, which both include guidelines for best practice biodiversity protection. We are also supporting the implementation of these policies through workshops and presentations, and provide direct support, input and technical advice for significant projects as a subject matter expert for biodiversity.</p>	<p>Natural Systems collaborated with Planning Services to arrange a representative from the Peninsula's Koala Conservation Group to present to statutory planners on Koala Conservation on the Mornington Peninsula.</p> <p>Shire Officers from Natural Systems and Planning Services attended the Biodiversity Planning in Victoria Workshop, a professional development opportunity to help develop knowledge and skills for statutory planning for improved biodiversity outcomes in Victoria.</p>
5.7	Increase collaboration with public land managers, such as Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water, and private land managers during planning and	The Shire and Melbourne Water continued their strong collaboration to undertake complementary works programs along important creek corridors. In 2022-23, Natural Systems delivered on ground	The Shire and Parks Victoria collaborated on a deer control program in Tuerong with the objective of using a landscape scale approach to their management while this pest species is at an early stage of invasion

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	<p>implementation of the Shire's biodiversity management programs, to improve co-ordination across the landscape.</p>	<p>works to protect and restore habitat along important creek corridors within 22 bushland reserves, covering a total 602 hectares.</p> <p>Collaboration with Parks Victoria occurred in 2022-23 through pest animal management programs at Police Point and fire management works associated with Mornington Peninsula National Park.</p> <p>Partnerships with the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority, Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water through successful joint grant program submissions for environmental weed control works at Arthurs Seat State Park/Shire reserves, Westernport Ramsar sites and other locations.</p> <p>We work in partnership with the Western Port Biosphere Foundation and four other councils to protect the unique values of the internationally recognised Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve.</p>	<p>on the Peninsula. To support this initiative, the Shire developed a Pilot Deer Control Program for works to be undertaken at Woods Bushland Reserve. Along with the on-ground works component of the program, community engagement with reserve neighbours was undertaken, and support for the program was high. Future deer control programs will look to working with neighbouring private land managers and Parks Victoria in this area.</p> <p>We continued our collaboration with the Western Port Biosphere Foundation and four other councils to protect the unique values of the internationally recognised Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve. Key projects supported through this collaboration include the promotion of biolinks to the community, supporting the Biosphere's Koala Awareness Program, and Blue Carbon Project which is investigating how much the biosphere reserve could help fight climate change thanks to its wealth of carbon-absorbing marine habitats.</p> <p>Strong collaboration between the Shire and Melbourne Water also continued this year, refer to Action 6.3.</p>
5.8	<p>Progress with consideration of conservation covenants for high value, biodiverse Shire-owned reserves to increase their level of protection and help fund improvement works.</p>	<p>Natural Systems, in collaboration with Trust for Nature have selected four, highly significant, Shire-owned bushland reserves for consideration of protection by conservation covenants. We have conducted initial site visits to the reserves with Trust for Nature representatives to commence the assessment process.</p>	<p>Significant progress has been made to protect four shire-owned bushland reserves with a conservation covenant. Trust for Nature have now completed the draft documentation for the proposed covenants and provided this for the Shire's consideration. The total area proposed for protection is approximately 100 hectares.</p>

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5.9	Advocate to state government for local participation in decision making forums relevant to biodiversity protection and management on the Mornington Peninsula.	Throughout 2022-23 we have continued to work with and support the Westernport Biosphere Foundation to highlight participation in biodiversity conversations.	Advocacy for local participation in decision making forums continues in partnership with the Westernport Biosphere Foundation. Also refer to Action 5.7 and 6.9.
6.1	Increase investment in Shire biodiversity management programs in bushland, foreshore, and roadside reserves, for habitat improvement, environmental weed control and pest animal management.	<p>An increase in investment to Shire biodiversity management programs in 2020 has helped expand our current programs.</p> <p>Achievements in 2022-2023 include the delivery of environmental weed control and habitat restoration works across 130 bushland reserves through our Biodiversity Works Program. Pest animal control works were delivered across 623 hectares of Shire-managed land to protect significant fauna species including Swamp Skinks, Southern Brown Bandicoot, Long-nosed Bandicoots, White-footed Dunnart, Rakali, Australasian Bittern and migratory shorebirds. Works are prioritised to focus on a few key locations and are co-ordinated with other land managers. Target species included foxes, rabbits, and cats.</p>	<p>Achievements delivered through Natural System's biodiversity works program this year includes the control of high threat environmental weeds and habitat restoration works across 850 hectares of bushland within 125 high priority bushland and foreshore reserves across the Peninsula.</p> <p>Pest animal control programs delivered across 578 hectares of Shire-managed land. Key landscapes protected through this program, in collaboration with other land managers include the Tootgarook Wetland Complex, Westernport Ramsar site, Point Nepean area including Police Point and Mornington Peninsula National Park, Devilbend Reservoir and surrounds in Tuerong.</p>
6.2	<p>Provide ongoing support to the community in planning and developing biolinks on the Mornington Peninsula:</p> <p>a) Develop a decision tool for the prioritisation of biolinks, that integrates natural landscape links and considers the social, environmental and economic values of different options, to assist with biolinks planning;</p> <p>b) Provide advice, technical and on-ground support to the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network for the delivery of their biolinks plan; and</p>	<p>Completed and on-going. The Shire has developed a biolinks decision support tool, which is used collaboratively with applicants for the Shire's Biolink Support Grant program to make assessments and develop skills.</p> <p>The third round of the Shire's Biolinks Support Grant program opened in July 2022. Funding totalling \$80,600 was allocated to ten projects in this round. Applications submitted represented a diverse range of local community groups - including Landcare, Friends of and Traditional Owner Groups, as well as Committees of Management.</p>	<p>Funding totalling \$82,800 was allocated to 13 biolink projects in Round 4 of the Shire's Biolink Support Grant Program. Recipients included 6 Landcare Groups, 4 volunteer Friends Groups.</p> <p>This funding supported the protection and enhancement of 31 hectares of biolinks, including planting of 6,000 indigenous species across the Mornington Peninsula.</p>

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	d) Provide overall co-ordination of biolinks planning across the Peninsula.	Projects were undertaken on both public and private land.	
6.3	<p>In collaboration with Melbourne Water, determine measures required to improve waterway health and landscape connectivity in priority catchments and along waterways identified as part of the 'Healthy Waterways Strategy' and:</p> <p>a) Work with the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network to encourage private landowners to undertake conservation works along priority waterways; and</p> <p>b) Undertake management works along priority waterways on Shire-managed land.</p>	<p>Annually the Shire works collaboratively with Melbourne Water and the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network on all aspects of waterway health. This strong collaboration continued in 2022-23 with complementary works programs along important creek corridors. The Shire delivered on ground works to protect and restore habitat along important creek corridors within 22 bushland reserves across 602 hectares.</p>	<p>We continued to collaborate with key partners including Melbourne Water and the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network to identify and delivery on ground works along priority waterways to support waterway health and landscape connectivity. This year, the Shire delivered on ground works to protect and restore habitat along important creek corridors within 50 bushland reserves across 530 hectares.</p>
6.4	<p>Support the implementation of the 'Co-Designed Catchment Program for the Westernport and Mornington Peninsula Region' and facilitate co-operation between the Shire, local land managers, scientists, Traditional Owners, and the community, to ensure a co-ordinated and adaptive approach to waterway management at the local scale, which aligns with the Program.</p>	<p>The Shire continues to be active in working with Melbourne Water and other agencies when planning and delivering works programs within or near wetlands and waterways. The Shire collaborates with numerous agencies on landscape scale programs including Ramsar Protection Program, Peri Urban Weed Management Partnerships, and in the delivery of the Shire's Tootgarook Wetland Management Plan. Further work is being done to engage with traditional owners and plan waterway adaptation to climate change.</p>	<p>Natural Systems and the Coast & Waters team continue to support the implementation Melbourne Water's Catchment Management Program for our region. See notes under Action 6.3</p>
6.5	<p>Work with Agriculture Victoria, the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority, agricultural landowners, and industry bodies to promote an understanding of sustainable agriculture,</p>	<p>The Shire's Food Economy and Agroecology Strategy was adopted in 2022. This 5-year strategy aims to foster a thriving local food economy and building resilience to climate change through sustainable farming practices, enhancing</p>	<p>This year, Natural Systems participated in the Sustainable Food Economy and Agroecology Taskforce, to provide guidance and context on where there are opportunities to align with biodiversity conservation priorities.</p>

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	and the benefits to agricultural productivity from biodiverse landscapes.	<p>biodiversity and adopting circular economy principles.</p> <p>In 2023, the Shire partnered with Melbourne Water, Westernport Catchment Landcare Network and Bass Coast Landcare Network on the delivery of the federally funded Smart Farming for Westernport project which included delivery of 12 farmer discussion groups, 2 field days and a Regenerative Agriculture Training Program.</p>	<p>This year, the Shire partnered with Melbourne Water, Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network, Westernport Catchment Landcare Network, Bass Coast Landcare Network, and the Victorian Farmers Federation on delivery of 12 farmer discussion groups, a composting workshop, and the Farmers Digging Deeper trials and training sessions. Topics covered included native seed propagation, revegetation on farms, multi-species pastures, soil microbiology and regenerative agriculture.</p> <p>We also partnered with the above stakeholders on a federal grant for climate smart agriculture programs.</p>
6.6	Update the Shire's 'Smart Water Plan – 2013' to align with key directions from the Victorian Government's 'Water for Victoria – Water Plan' and 'Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria' to include measures that contribute to biodiversity protection and healthy waterways	Completed. The Shire's updated Integrated Water Management Plan was adopted in 2021. The plan includes sound measures for biodiversity protection among the 150 actions, including supporting the implementation of the Healthy Waterway Strategy.	Completed.
6.7	<p>Annually review and coordinate actions of the Shire's 'Smart Water Plan' that target environmental protection of waterways, wetlands, groundwater, and marine waters. Key actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development and implementation of a Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) Masterplan, and WSUD guidelines for capital works projects; and a) b) Continued implementation and review the Shire's Wastewater Management Plan, to align with legislative changes 	<p>The Shire's Environmental Protection team continued the implementation of the Wastewater Management Plan 2018-2023. The plan aims to address the environmental and public health risks posed by residential and commercial wastewater on the peninsula and includes environmental monitoring actions that help protect biodiversity.</p> <p>The Water Sensitive Asset Masterplan, which identifies medium to large scale Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) opportunities, was completed in early 2022. Implementation is subject to funding availability.</p>	<p>The Shire's Wastewater Management Plan is the strategic plan to manage environmental and public health risks posed by septic systems on the Mornington Peninsula. The actions in the 2018-2023 Wastewater Management Plan were completed and the plan was reviewed to support the development of the 2024 - 2029 Wastewater Management Plan. The development of this plan also involves consultation with South-East Water, EPA, Melbourne Water, environment groups, local industry and residents.</p> <p>This draft Wastewater Management Plan aligns with comprehensive EPA guidance and fulfils Council's requirements in the State Government Obligations for Managers of Land and Infrastructure. Community</p>

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	and the Southern Peninsula Sewerage Scheme.	WSUD construction hold point training was held for construction, engineering and asset officers in 2023 to improve understanding of WSUD design and function and ensure assets are built to standard.	consultation on the draft Wastewater Management Plan will commence in November 2024.
6.8	<p>Review coastal planning across the Shire in the context of potential risks associated with climate change and investigate adaptation strategies. As part of this review:</p> <p>a) Consider using tools such as those developed by Coast Adapt to assess potential impacts to beaches and estuaries, such as inundation, erosion, sediment transport and identify strategies to protect coastal areas; and</p> <p>b) Advocate to the Victorian Government for coordinated response planning and biodiversity protection works for which climate change is particularly challenging (e.g. near-shore marine and coastal habitats, beach nesting and migratory shorebirds).</p>	<p>The Shire's coastal planning team continues to work with DELWP (now DEECA) to assess and develop management actions for risks associated with climate change. Issues identified include cliff instability and erosion, sand movement, vegetation loss and increased impacts from high intensity storm events. These issues are also noted in the Climate Emergency Action Plan and associated actions listed. The Port Phillip Bay Coastal Hazard Assessment data is due to be released in 2024 and will be key to determining priorities in coastal management. Many decision-making guidelines have been recently reviewed or are under review including Marine and Coastal Policy 2020, Marine and Coastal Strategy, Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast, DELWP Bathing Box Policy, MPS Bathing Box Policy.</p>	<p>The Shire is developing the Our Coast Our Future Coastal Strategy as part of the Victoria's Resilient Coast Program. The Strategy has collated best available coastal hazard data (including the Port Phillip Bay Coastal Hazard Assessment) to develop coastal hazard maps for the Mornington Peninsula which visually represent expected coastline changes across multiple timeframes. This data has allowed for risk assessments to better understand how the predicted changes will impact the coastline and its values, including environmental impacts. This information will be used to prioritise management and inform targeted areas for coastal adaptation to avoid or minimise impacts.</p>
6.9	<p>Advocate for regional scale, multi-agency action to protect marine and near shore biodiversity in Western Port and Port Phillip Bays.</p>	<p>The Shire is a member of the Ramsar Protection Program working group which aim to protect the coastal ecological values of Western Port. The group plans, coordinates and delivers works programs in Western Port including environmental weed control, pest animal management for biodiversity protection and ecological monitoring.</p> <p>We continue to work in partnership with the Western Port Biosphere Foundation and four other councils to protect the unique values of the internationally recognised Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve.</p>	<p>The Shire continued its contribution to the Ramsar Protection Program working group this year, through the implementation of on ground works through collaborative grant programs.</p> <p>We continue to work in partnership with the Western Port Biosphere Foundation and four other councils to protect the unique values of the internationally recognised Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve. This includes recent advocacy for a Strategic Framework for the future Western Port Bay.</p>