

**World Environmental Health Day**  
**26<sup>th</sup> September 2013**  
[www.ifeh.org/wehd](http://www.ifeh.org/wehd)

## **Initiatives of the City of Mitcham, South Australia**

### **Resilient South Project**

#### **Introduction**

The Resilient South Project will develop a Regional Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the southern Adelaide region (covering the Cities of Holdfast Bay, Marion, Mitcham and Onkaparinga). The project's foundation is a set of scientifically rigorous projections regarding regional climate impacts such as sea level rise, reduced rainfall, increased storms, bushfires and heatwaves. The project will engage a large number of stakeholders from a variety of sectors throughout the region to investigate how these impacts may affect them and how they could be effectively addressed. The project's final product, due to be published in the middle of 2014, will be a set of detailed and prioritised recommendations for actions to address those impacts throughout the region.

The project is funded jointly by the participating partner councils, the South Australian Government and the Australian Government (through its Natural Disaster Resilience Grants Scheme), and is one of six regional climate change adaptation planning projects that are being, or have already been, completed in the state under the State Government's Climate Change Adaptation Framework, released in August 2012.

Climate change impacts are expected to affect particularly strongly sectors such as water resources, food and wine, health, emergency management, coastal management and natural resource management. The Resilient South project is in the process of engaging representatives of organisations and groups from these and other sectors to accurately assess their climate adaptation needs and support them in increasing their resilience to key projected climate change impacts.

Further information on the Project can be found at [www.resilientsouth.com](http://www.resilientsouth.com) or [www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au/](http://www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au/)

### **Greenhouse Gas Inventory**

The City of Mitcham with assistance from Balance Carbon Pty Ltd has integrated a carbon and sustainability monitoring and reporting system to provide an accurate and verifiable Greenhouse Gas Inventory for our corporate operations in line with the standards set out under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 and the National Carbon Offset Standard 2009. This system developed provides Council with a mechanism for analysing energy, greenhouse gas, waste and water performance across our asset base, which provides opportunities to target meaningful abatement measures.

## **Clean Sites Educational Program**

The City of Mitcham, in partnership with KESAB and the Adelaide Development Company has introduced the Clean Sites Educational Program.

One of the biggest sources of pollution in our waterways is building and construction waste. The Clean Site Educational Program provides information, training and examples of positive clean site practices through local events to prevent pollution from building and construction sites entering our waterways and polluting our environment.

Keeping our rivers, creeks and beaches free from pollution is up to all of us. Stormwater acts as a carrier for pollution picked up from private properties, public places and building sites. It is then transported through drains to our waterways and coasts.

Litter is one of the most visible forms of stormwater pollution, however, contaminants such as sediments, detergents, fertilisers and oil also add up to cause environmental harm. Sediment is a particular problem in our waterways because it smothers aquatic plants and animals and silts up creeks, rivers, reservoirs and dams.

## **Waste Management**

Waste management is an issue where both society and the environment can be detrimentally affected if not dealt with appropriately. The environment bears the burden of all the waste sent to landfill and the pollution caused by poor waste disposal practices. On the other hand, humans are at risk of disease and pest infestations if their waste is not disposed appropriately.

Councils in South Australia have a legislative responsibility to provide waste collection services to its residents. These services have expanded to include a three bin kerbside system where residents split their unwanted materials between general waste, recycling and green organics. This is one service the City of Mitcham has provided for many years.

In the past financial year the City of Mitcham has renewed its focus on waste management. This new commitment stemmed from rising costs to collect and dispose of waste and recyclables, the environmental impact from sending 13,000 tonnes of waste to landfill each year and the need to improve resident's consumption behaviours whilst still providing an essential service. Council has adopted the view that by effectively managing issues the community can become more sustainable and better equipped to respond to future waste challenges, such as landfill shortages.

Mitcham Council staff have developed a solid understanding on the current status of the waste services provided, analysed waste management finances and have had a more prominent waste minimisation and recycling message within the community, staff and Elected Members. All of this aiming towards achieving Council's strategic goal of responsible consumption and waste minimisation.

An improvement recently implemented has been the roll out of a new kerbside waste and recycling calendar. Over recent years the information provided to residents on

the calendar was limited. The City of Mitcham, with Zero Waste SA, developed a more modern calendar that expands on the kerbside service educating residents on what goes in each bin, encouraging resource recovery and introducing the idea of avoiding waste in the first place. The subsequent improvements in resource recovery and waste minimisation will be monitored through routine data analysis.

As Council moves towards improving our waste management portfolio, the focus will shift to developing strategies that clearly set future directions. Concurrently, the community education program will become formalised and Council will pursue the idea that as a society we need to become responsible consumers and look at unwanted materials as resources not rubbish.

## **Integrated Design**

The City of Mitcham is championing sustainable civil development initiatives that will deliver major benefits to the environment and flow-on health benefits to the community and individuals. The well documented links between nature and human health underpin Council's focus on maintaining well vegetated urban areas including streetscapes, parks and public open spaces. To ensure vegetation is preserved and enhanced Council has a strong water sensitive urban design focus at the local and streetscape scale. From the start of the planning process, civil works designs incorporate stormwater harvesting and soil infiltration devices to provide passive irrigation for street trees and other vegetation, reduce the quantity of stormwater runoff and to improve the quality of water which does make it downstream to receiving waters. These types of initiatives will help to ensure that the Mitcham of the future, is as green and amenable as the Mitcham of the past.