

Newsletter

Vision for Werribee Plains

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Biogas Plant Headlines Zero Emissions Target for Western Water

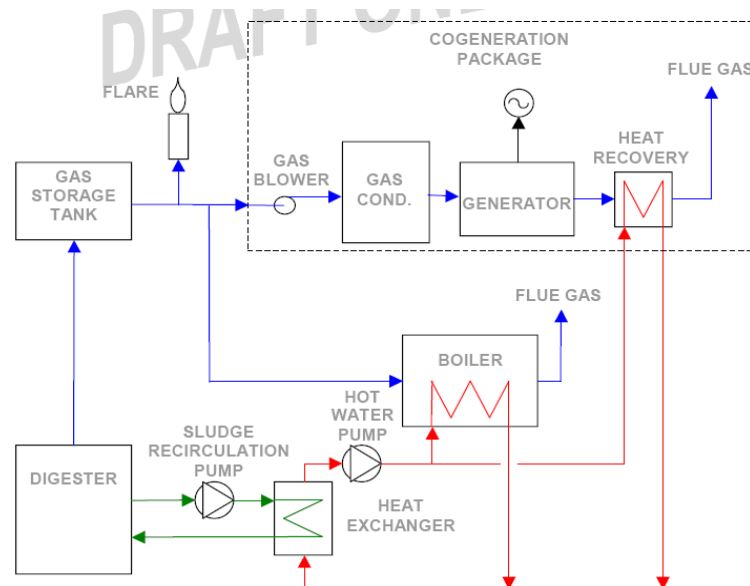
The Minister for Energy, Hon. Peter Batchelor MP, launched a new 200kW biogas co-generation plant at Western Water's Melton Recycled Water Plant (RWP) on June 30, 2010. The plant will produce enough electricity and heat energy to satisfy the power and direct heat requirements of the recently commissioned Class A recycled water plant, with additional electricity generated to be used by other processes at the site.

The project was the highest priority in Western Water's 2007 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy and received a contribution of \$700,000 from the Vision for Werribee Plains towards the cost of \$1.95 million, as an example of innovation to reduce net greenhouse emissions.

The Melton RWP Renewable Energy Project aims to generate green electricity and heat using biogas created during the treatment of recycled water and innovative technology, and prevent the annual release of 1800 tonnes of greenhouse gas - the equivalent to taking 450 average passenger cars off the road.

Western Water's schools and community education programs will integrate the biogas cogeneration project into its message that Melton RWP will become a one-stop recycling facility and achieve 100% water recycling, 100% biosolids reuse and 100% biogas reuse.

Figure 1: Concept Design for Biogas Heat Electricity generation



All-Abilities Playspace for Brimbank Park

People & Parks Foundation received a \$300,000 contribution from the Vision for Werribee Plains fund to promote increased access to Brimbank Park through the

installation of an all-abilities playspace and associated landscaping.

TODDLER / JUNIOR PLAY AND SCULPTURED TREE POST MAZE
This area provides low key imaginative and physical play for very young children. The ground level cubby, which is wheelchair accessible directly from the path system, relates to the junior stepped decks with a very low slide that make it easy for toddlers to step, climb and slide within easy reach of their adult carers. This area also has some spring toys.
A maze of tall sculptured tree posts with unique local themes by artists, to create an interesting chasey spot and a landmark feature.

NATURE ZONE WITH BRIDGE MAZE AND SNAKE MOSAIC
Designed for children of all ages and abilities, this nature zone and maze area has a series of custom designed bridges that radiate around a focal mosaic. The bridges have a variety of features, including custom tuned musical elements, wavy surfaces, and clattery or wobbly wheelchair accessible surfaces. The bridges are located off a path system and areas of dense planting between them create a nature zone that is slightly separate from the rest of the play area. The pebble mosaic and seating snake which will be designed and built by local artists forms a small gathering space with its own pathway access.

SECRET PATHS THROUGH VEGETATION
The design incorporates some magical paths through dense vegetation. These are short and easily supervised, but thrill children with the idea of scary places which convey a sense of adventure.

UPPER BODY CIRCUIT
For the children who need to hang by their arms, the monkey bar circuit provides hanging, bridges and track rides (mini flying foxes) designed at a range of heights to suit multi-aged children.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE MULTI-LEVEL PLAY STRUCTURE
Complex timber play towers with ramped access provide for a wide range of different physical, imaginative, social and creative play activities on upper and lower levels. This structure has many special features including:

- Use of the site levels to create a circuit that allows children in wheelchairs to move through the whole series of play structures without having to turn around and return the same way.
- Many climbing sliding and hiding activities, with bridges, lookouts and role play spots along the way.
- Activities to suit all ages and abilities.
- Special rock walls and river bridge to impart the special character of Brimbank Park.
- Ground level circuits: maximising the use of the cubby spaces under the bridges and towers, with peek-a-boo holes to connect with upper decks, narrow connecting climbers and runways, shop counters, interactive panels and shady resting spots.
- Special role play elements with a driving panel, vehicle dashboard, periscope, and other panels to stimulate imaginative play.

BRIMBANK PARK
accessible playspace

March 2010

The western region of Melbourne has a higher rate of disabilities than Melbourne as a whole and currently has no dedicated playspace for people of different physical ability in the public parks.

Brimbank Park is a logical location as Brimbank is the regional centre for provision of disability services.

The project will cost nearly \$1 million to develop, and corporate investors, community groups and schools will all be invited to contribute to the project with either cash or in-kind support.

Rachel Laurie, Project Co-ordinator for the Foundation, said the Vision for Werribee Plains funding was vital to securing contributions from corporate and philanthropic sources.

People & Parks Foundation is an independent not-for-profit environmental charity and donations of \$2 or more to the Foundation are tax deductible. Enquiries about this project should be directed to Rachel Laurie, Project Co-ordinator; Ph 9695 9013 or e-mail: rlaurie@peopleandparks.org

Eastern Barred Bandicoot Recovery Project

A cute and cuddly species will soon be back in the west after Conservation Volunteers Australia were approved for a Vision for Werribee Plains contribution of \$250,000 to establish a captive breeding population of Eastern Barred Bandicoots at Serendip Sanctuary. The project is being undertaken as part of the national EBB recovery plan which recommends establishing three reintroduced populations and a captive breeding population that is self-sustaining.

The project has benefits for more than just the bandicoots, including a strong community education component to showcase the plight of the grasslands and its rare species such as Brolgas, Golden Sun Moth, Bustards and Spotted Diuris.

Community involvement is an important component of this project, and the 'Volunteer Interpreter Program' encourages involvement in management and community engagement regarding this endangered species. The project is in partnership with Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, Mt Rothwell and the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Recovery Team.

Farmers and Waste Management Group Explore Joint Business Opportunity

Dryland farmers in the Balliang area and the Metropolitan Waste Management Group (MWMG) have partnered to explore the use of green waste from urban waste centres as organic matter under dryland crops.

Spokesman for the Balliang Cropping Group, Mr Chris Sharkey, said the farmers were noticing a slow but steady decline in soil organic matter and were keen to see if green waste could be ripped into the soils to hold moisture in the soil for longer, going in to summer, and provide a better finish for crops.

The MWMG is keen for the project to be a success as the seasonal supply of green waste to its centres outstrips demands at times during the year, creating storage problems.

The farmers are testing the green waste material, chopped to 19mm and 40mm, at 10 & 20t/ha and applied to the surface as well as in deep ripping trials, with the area being sown to wheat.

Chris Bluett of HRZ Consulting is overseeing the project and SITA Environmental Solutions Green Organics recycling site at Epping has supplied four loads of the product.

Technical difficulties have been encountered and are being resolved as the trial proceeds. A full economic analysis will be conducted at the end of the project when the crops are harvested, with a follow-up analysis in the following year to assess any carryover effects.

Moisture probe access tubes are installed to assist monitoring of soil moisture at varying levels through the term of the project. Monitoring and recording of any 'exotic' weeds will also be conducted.

A workshop is to be held in early spring, to discuss the farmers' experience of using the green waste material in crop production and enquiries about the trial should be sent to Chris Sharkey Ph 0417 134600 or e-mail chriskatesharkey@bigpond.com

The project is supported by a grant of \$28,780 from the Vision for Werribee Plains fund.



Figure 2: Sampling compost at SITA's Epping site.



Figure 3: From left, Tim Johnston, and Renick Peries, Department of Primary Industries, and Chris Sharkey, farm owner, adjust the sub-soiler machine.

Implementing the Regional Sustainability Framework

Leadwest has taken responsibility for leading the roll-out of the RSF in association with seven councils and a \$100,000 contribution from the Vision for Werribee Plains.

The RSF was completed in March by the Australian Conservation Foundation but its recommendations still need to be implemented.

The Grant Selection Panel will be giving preference to projects that help to implement the RSF, details of which can be obtained from the Internet at http://www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section_id=260

Alan Thatcher NRM and Planning consultants have been engaged to manage the project with support of sustainability officers from councils as a reference group. Alan's contact details are 0417 387 678 or e-mail: thatcha@bigpond.net.au

The main themes in the RSF are (a) adapting to climate change (b) water efficiency and new and renewable sources of water, (c) and connectivity of biodiversity.

An annual scorecard is to be produced to monitor progress against sustainability measures, and the whole process is to be put on a self-supporting business footing.

One theme of the RSF has been to promote reduced local car travel over 50% of trips for many residents using the following model.

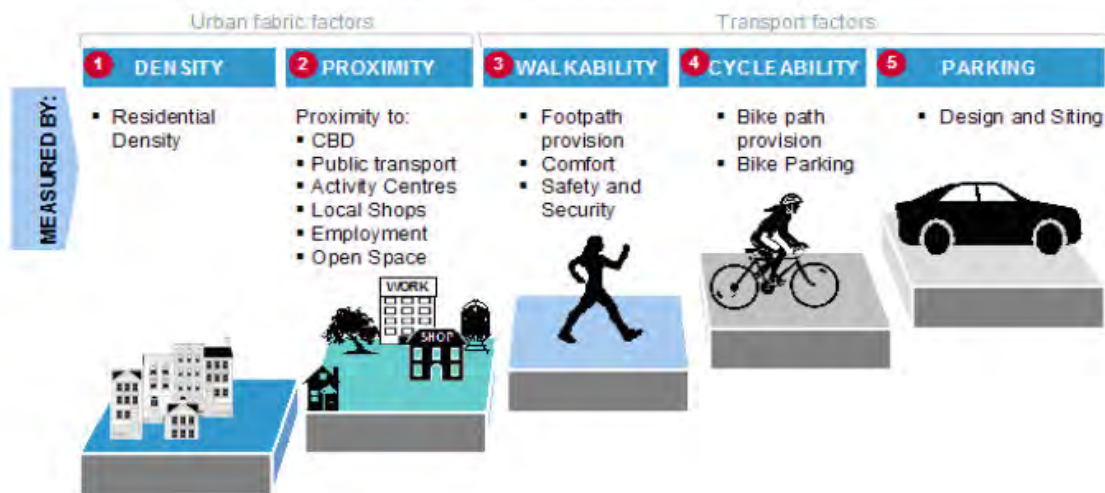


Figure 4: Drivers and Measures of Car Dependence

Source: *Werribee Plains: Reducing car dependence: transport & urban design solutions*. Pvi (2010). Booz & Allen for Australian Conservation Foundation.

http://www.acfonline.org.au/uploads/res/Werribee-Plains-Transport_Report.pdf

Parwan Gorge Recovery Project Stage 2

Parwan Landcare is back at it again after successfully receiving its second round of funding to expand its weed removal and revegetation works upstream along the Werribee River. Working in steep gorge country the Landcare group has been able to successfully control box thorn and serrated tussock through the gorge and across the adjoining grasslands.

With funding of \$13,650 Parwan Landcare has earmarked one area for serrated tussock removal and 3 areas for boxthorn removal. With the help of Melton Special School the group hopes to continue to plant hundreds of seedlings grown from seed the group collects locally.

The program of weed removal, revegetation and reduced grazing pressure will help improve the health of the Werribee River and improve the riparian vegetation along the important wildlife corridor between Djerriwarrh Creek, Long Forest Conservation Reserve, Eynesbury and Pinkerton Forest.



Figure 6: Parwan Gorge



Figure 7: Seedling propagation

Solar mapping to deliver more targeted investment

Rooves across Melbourne’s west will be mapped according to their potential for capturing solar energy, with the maps published on a local government scale.

The Western Alliance for Greenhouse Abatement (WAGA) is to conduct the project in association with DSE’s Division for Environmental Policy and Climate Change.

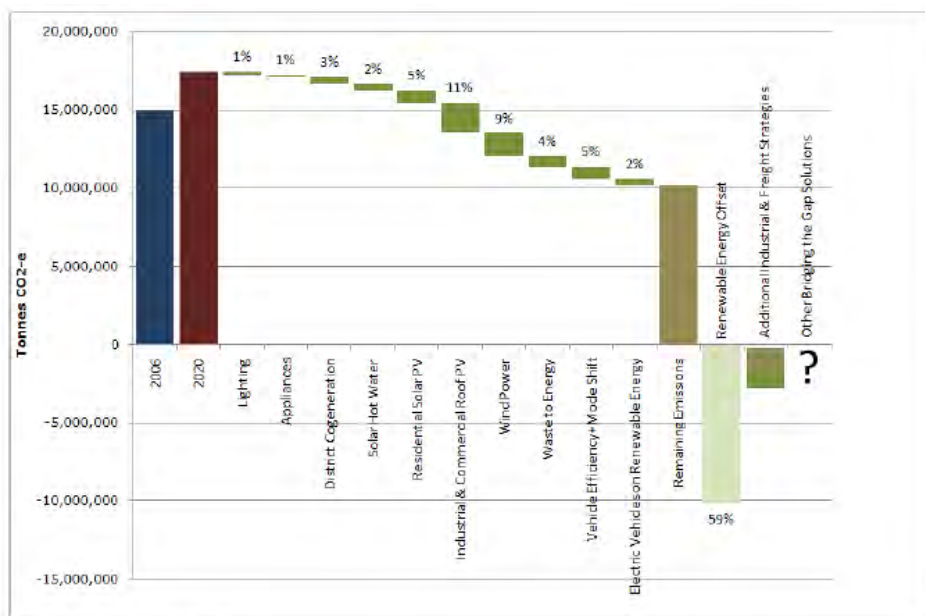
The Vision for Werribee Plains fund has contributed \$50,000 to the project which is expected to cost in excess of \$500,000.

The imaging will be done by Hydro Tasmania Consulting using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) mapping supplied by Melbourne Water Corporation.

The imaging will be done by Hydro Tasmania Consulting using LiDAR mapping supplied by Melbourne Water Corporation.

Executive officer for WAGA, Terry White, said “When landowners could see the potential for solar energy capture from their roof, they were much more likely to invest. Investors and government could also target those roofs likely to give the best return”.

Figure 8 below shows that the large areas of industrial and commercial rooves in Melbourne’s west are the most significant potential source of renewable energy in the region.



Source: Kinesis & SGS Economics & Planning

Figure 8: Potential Contributions toward Zero Emissions in the Werribee Plains

Source: Werribee Plains Energy Research Study P6 (2010) Internet: <http://www.acfonline.org.au/uploads/res/Werribee-Plains-ACF-WAGA-Energy-Research-Study.pdf>

For details on the project, contact Brett Luxford, Ph 9747 7286 or e-mail brettl@melton.vic.gov.au

Toolern Vale Landcare - Wildlife Biodiversity Corridors

Toolern Vale Landcare Group have received funding to revegetate 10.8 kilometres (22ha) of biodiversity corridors between 982 hectares of bushland. The Group will plant over 6,600 indigenous trees and grasses along two roadways as they implement their Local Area Biodiversity Action Plan.

The group is working with Melbourne Water, Melton Shire Council and liaising with Greening Australia and Western Plains Flora Vision through out the project. The Vision for Werribee Plains has contributed \$138,940 of the \$299,526 total project cost. The group will also be working with the local primary school to construct boxes for bird nests.

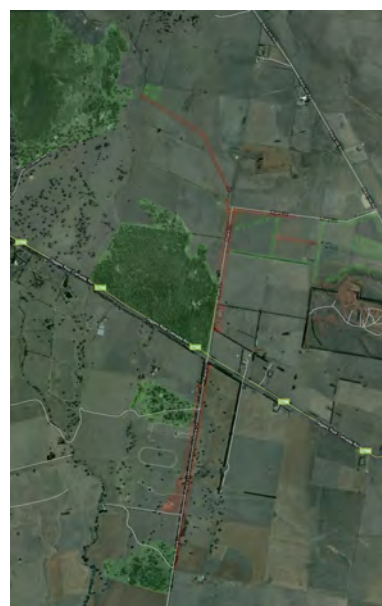
This project will contribute to several state and local government policies and will lead to an increase in biodiversity resilience in the region. The Landcare group will be working with 20 landholders to contribute to the natural values Toolern Vale has to offer.



Figure 9: One of the roadsides to be planted out



Figure 10: The proposed corridor (red) along Ryans Lane to connect existing remnant vegetation (green)



From the Project Manager's Desk

We have now had seven rounds of funding in Stage 2 of the Vision for Werribee Plains and have honoured the theme of '*Partnerships for Sustainability*' with funding for 40 projects and co-investment of \$8.3 million in cash and in-kind to match the \$5 million supplied through the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

There is still much to be done to ensure we achieve the government's aspiration of making the region world renown for sustainable development. We celebrate with and applaud the Shire of Melton in achieving the title of Most Sustainable City in the recent Keep Australia Beautiful Awards, along with the awards to groups and individuals in the region.

I especially wish to acknowledge the prestigious Dame Phyllis Frost Award bestowed on Daryl Akers, Melton, for his outstanding commitment to engage the wider community in appreciating the environment in which we live.

The V4WP project team looks forward to hearing about your next idea to make your area and our region more sustainable and hope you draw inspiration from the projects listed in the newsletter.

Max Coster, Project Manager

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Feedback

The Vision for Werribee Plains is interested in effective communication. If you have any suggestions that would improve our newsletter, or if you do not wish to receive our newsletter, please email us at:

werribee.plains@dse.vic.gov.au

As always, potential applicants are encouraged to register their interest in a Vision for Werribee Plains grant through an 'Expression of Interest' (EoI). Following receipt of the EoI, applicants will be contacted to arrange an interview to mentor them through the application process.

Applications may be lodged at any time and there will be four times each year when these will be processed. Application closing dates this year are as follows:

Round 8: 2nd August 2010

Round 9: 1st November 2010

Round 10: 1st February 2011

For further information, and to download the Expression of Interest form go to:

<http://www.ourwater.vic.gov.au/programs/recycling/v4wp/apply>