



HUME CITY COUNCIL **LIVE GREEN NEWS**

Hume's Sustainability Newsletter
Spring 2021

 hume.vic.gov.au/environment



Let's Grow Hume

Hume City Council has launched a new edible gardening program called Let's Grow Hume. The program aims to provide resources and access for Hume residents to explore growing food at home.

You can participate in a range of online workshops delivered by the experienced organic gardening gurus from Sustainable Gardening Australia and permaculture expert Kat Lavers. We hope to be offering some in person events in the future too!

Gardens for Renters and Gardening in Small Spaces Wednesday 10 November, from 7pm

Come along (from the comfort of your own home) to this special workshop event focusing on gardening in rental properties and small spaces. This workshop will go through what can be carried out in a rental property and is a must for those interested in portable gardening and small-scale produce production.

Water Smart Gardening Wednesday 15 December, from 7pm

Just in time for the warmer months! This workshop explores how to become a water smart gardener. This workshop will demonstrate ways to reduce your water usage in the garden but still ensure your plants and veggies are getting the water they need. Learn about design, dry climate plants, the pros and cons of various mulches and rainwater use.



Dealing with Garden Pests Wednesday 12 January 2022, from 7pm

Are you tired of pest animals and bugs getting to your garden before you do? This is the workshop for you! Come along to this online workshop to discover safe and organic methods to keeping pests away from your garden so that you can enjoy the fruits of your labour before they do!

Growing Micro Greens Wednesday 2 February 2022, from 7pm

Growing micro greens has got to be the cheapest, quickest way to get some healthy, nutritious greens into your diet. Come along to this workshop to discover how simple it is to spring into micro green gardening.

These are free events, but registrations are essential. Register online at hume.vic.gov.au/letsgrowhume



More events are planned for the Let's Grow Hume series including edible seedling giveaways, kids and family gardening activities, worm farm and compost set ups and loads more! The best way to stay up to date is through the Live Green eNewsletter at hume.vic.gov.au/livegreennews



Council exceeds solar target

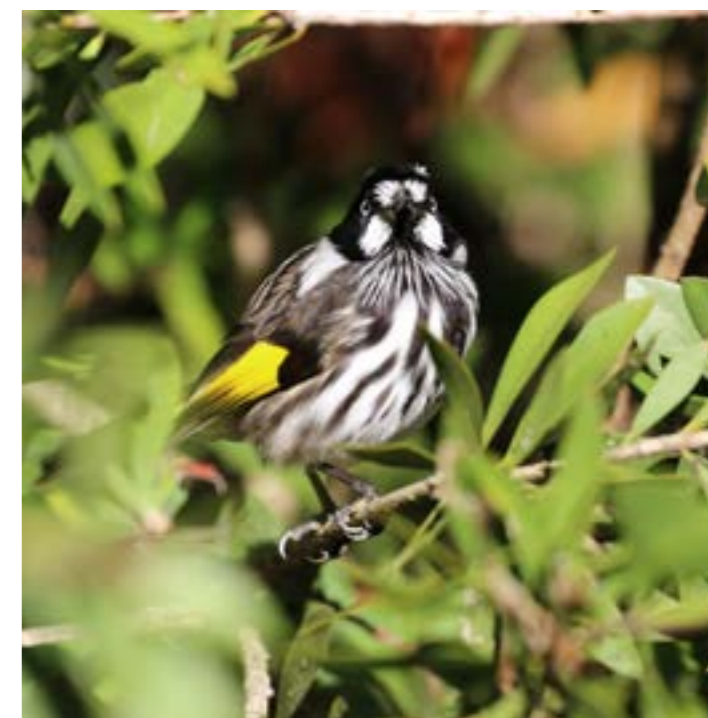
Thanks to recent installations, the combined capacity of solar panels installed in Hume City Council buildings is more than two megawatts, exceeding our Greenhouse Action Plan target of 1.2 megawatts!

Two megawatts of solar in Melbourne produces around 2,628,000 kilowatt hours of renewable energy per year – enough to power 400 average Australian homes.

Now that Council is buying 100 per cent GreenPower (accredited renewable energy) the solar systems don't further reduce Council's greenhouse gas emissions, but they do make good financial sense with paybacks of less than six years. Additionally, generating renewable energy locally reduces our reliance on GreenPower.

Solar installations have recently slowed down due to the pandemic, but work will commence shortly on the installation of a large 200 kilowatt solar array at SPLASH Aqua Park and Leisure Centre. Solar installations at SPLASH will complement the recently commissioned 140,000-litre underground rain tank that will save tens of thousands of litres of water per year.

Council will continue to install solar panels on council buildings leased to the community – including sports pavilions where sporting or community groups pay the bills. This helps reduce bill stress and running costs for clubs.



Protect wildlife from fruit tree netting

As of September 2021, netting used to protect household fruit trees is required to have a mesh size of five millimetres by five millimetres at full stretch.

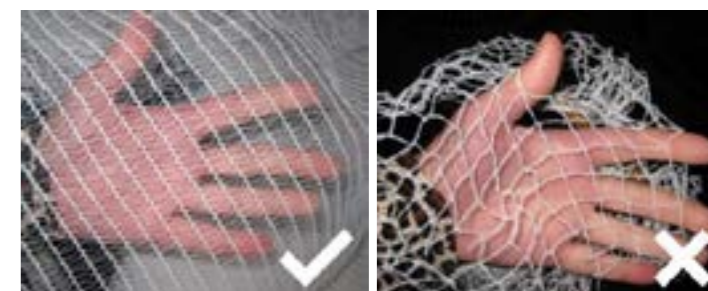
This is a new mandatory requirement introduced under Victoria's *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 2019*.

Netting is a popular way to protect fruit, but some types of netting can kill or injure animals such as birds, possums or flying foxes.

By using netting with a small mesh size, you reduce the risk of animals becoming entangled – which means you're protecting local wildlife as well as protecting your fruit.

The maximum penalty for using fruit netting that does not comply (or for advertising or offering non-compliant netting for sale for household fruiting plants) is 15 penalty units (\$2726.10 as at 1 July 2021).

For more information about safer fruit tree netting, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au and search for 'harvest without harm'.



(Source: Department of Agriculture, 2021)

Energy Savvy Upgrades Program – Increase in subsidy for Hume households

Are your energy bills causing you stress? Is it hard to keep your home cool in summer or warm in winter? Home upgrades can lower your energy costs and make your home more comfortable.

People who are finding it difficult to pay their bills can book a home assessment for \$70 (usually valued at \$495). The assessment provides recommendations to make your home more comfortable and to reduce your energy costs. Potential upgrades include insulation, draught proofing, heating and cooling upgrades, shading, lighting and hot water service upgrades.

If you decide to proceed with recommended upgrades you will be required to contribute a minimum of \$350 (the \$70 for your assessment is refunded) and you will be eligible for up to \$2,000 (GST inclusive) to help you pay for the upgrades.

If you would like to participate but have concerns about the cost of the home assessment and upgrades, please call Council's Household Energy Officer on 0447 772 429 to find out if you are eligible for the Victorian Government's \$250 Power Saving Bonus and support claiming it.

There are a limited number of upgrades available for Hume households for a limited time. Call Draught Busters on 1300 130 364 to check your eligibility, find out more and book an assessment.



Hume Solar Roll-out

The Hume Solar Roll-out program makes it even easier for Hume households to take advantage of government rebates and install solar panels.

The Victorian Government is currently offering rebates up to \$1,400 and a four-year, no-interest loan up to \$1,400 to eligible households to help them install solar panels. Savings on your electricity bills will usually more than cover loan repayments. These rebates are decreasing over time, so there's no time like the present to install solar and start generating your own renewable energy to reduce your electricity bills.

To be eligible, your household income must be less than \$180,000 a year and property value of less than \$3 million. (For more information about eligibility, rebates and loans, go to solar.vic.gov.au).

Council is working with the Yarra Energy Foundation and accredited solar supplier Green Home Green Planet to deliver the Hume Solar Roll-out for residents. As with any purchase, you may wish to shop around before choosing a provider.

Hume Solar Roll-out standard pricing

System Size (kW)	Cost with a standard inverter	Upfront cost (rebates and loan applied)	Cost with premium inverter	Upfront cost (rebates and loan applied)
2	\$ 2,450	\$ 0	\$ 3,300	\$ 500
3	\$ 3,350	\$ 550	\$ 4,200	\$ 1,400
4	\$ 3,850	\$ 1,050	\$ 4,890	\$ 2,090
5	\$ 4,560	\$ 1,760	\$ 5,590	\$ 2,790

To get a free Covid Safe no obligation quote, register your details at humesolarprogram.org.au or call Yarra Energy Foundation on 1300 866 634.

Book review – Sustainable House by Michael Mobbs

Michael Mobbs is an author and environmental consultant that has been involved in sustainable gardening and design in Australia for over 20 years.

His first book, *Sustainable House* looks at how we can re-think our connection to food, sustainability, the environment and our homes.

In his book, Mobbs encourages us to think of clever ways we can look at our homes to grow food, re-use water and even cut down on mowing.

His explanations of the way small actions at home can have big impacts in our communities while making activities achievable is remarkable. He engages even the most novice of gardeners or home renovators to have a go.

The layout of the book is both informative and eye catching, with complex scientific and infrastructure ideas being broken down through pictures, flow charts and infographics.

Sustainable House includes large scale and small projects for homeowners and renters alike. Mobbs goes into detail about how to start a small gardening project with limited funds and resources and still have positive experiences in garden spaces.

Sustainable House is available for loan through Hume Libraries. Visit humelibraries.vic.gov.au and search the catalogue to check availability.



Results of the Live Green news survey

A big thank-you to all our readers who completed the Live Green survey. We're pleased to report that the feedback was very positive.

- 96 per cent of respondents found Live Green news informative.
- 91 per cent of respondents found Live Green news interesting.
- 80 per cent of respondents had been inspired to take some action from reading Live Green.

The three most popular sustainability themes were 'sustainable gardening', 'recycling and waste' and 'sustainable food'. Most respondents were happy with the current design and frequency of the publications. The overall satisfaction rating was 88 per cent. There were some good suggestions too and we'll be taking some of these onboard in future editions.

We heard from more than 70 readers and the vast majority were Live Green eNews subscribers. We only heard from five readers that receive Live Green hardcopy. The hardcopy takes extra time and resources to prepare, so we'd love to hear from more readers! We hope the publication still meeting a need for those who receive it – contact us to let us know on 0477 021 301.

The three lucky winners of the \$100 of plants from Bunnings were Nadia Montalto, Gary Drake and Kylie Jones.

To view the survey results, visit hume.vic.gov.au/livegreensurvey

If you would like to subscribe to Live Green eNews, head to hume.vic.gov.au/livegreennews





Celebrate art and nature in Sunbury this November

Join us for Grasslands Floating: an exciting day of art and nature activities celebrating the launch of a new public artwork and the Gardens for Wildlife program.

This free community event offers a wide range of speakers and topics, including:

- Indigenous cultural perspectives – Caring for Country
- history and conservation of native grasslands
- wildlife-friendly gardening and citizen science
- native bees hotels
- artistic immersion in nature, community and culture
- hands-on workshops and performances.

The theme of Grasslands Floating was inspired by a new artwork – *Float: reconnect, renew, regenerate* – created by local Sunbury artist Jacquie Blight. Taking the form of a giant mobile suspended in the foyer of the Hume Global Learning Centre – Sunbury, the artwork is inspired by the indigenous Murnong (Yam Daisy): a staple food for traditional Aboriginal communities across Victoria.

Grasslands floating

Sunday 21 November, 9am to 6pm
Hume Global Learning Centre – Sunbury (44 Macedon Street) and Evans Street Grasslands

This event is free but registration for this is required.

For more information and to register, visit hume.vic.gov.au/grasslandsfloating or contact the biodiversity team on 0409 702 086.

In the case of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, Grasslands Floating will be run as a shorter forum of online speakers.

Residents reducing landfill, one FOGO bin at a time

Around 36,500 households in Hume City have a food organics and garden organics (FOGO) bin, helping us divert 1,400 tonnes of organic waste from landfill every month!

FOGO bins can be used to dispose of food leftovers (including meat and seafood) and garden waste such as grass and small cuttings.

Instead of going to landfill, the contents of FOGO bins is composted.

This means you can also put small amounts of paper in, such as used kitchen paper towels (freeing up even more space in your garbage bin).

It's estimated that around 50 per cent of the average household's garbage bin is food waste. There are more than 85,000 households in Hume City – if all of them had a FOGO bin, we could save the equivalent of 2,500 garbage trucks of food waste from going to landfill every year. FOGO bins also reduce greenhouse gas emissions from methane when organics break down in landfill.

As part of Sustainability Victoria's Circular Economy initiative, Council is offering complimentary caddies for households in Hume City with an organics bin service.

The caddies can be used to transport your food waste to your FOGO bin, or even your compost bin or worm farm.

To learn more about FOGO and register your interest in a free caddy, visit hume.vic.gov.au/fogo or contact Customer Service in 9205 2200.



Tales from the community:

Growing Urban Jungles

Whenever we think of nature, we imagine a place with greenery, organisms, water and all things natural. Beautiful plants are a huge part of this. We are nature too because we came from elements all around and so did everything else.

My name is Harsimran Kaur and I did the Enviro Champions course run by Hume City Council in 2020. My project was to revegetate a patch of land with a technique called Miyawaki which is the brainchild of famous Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki.

I wanted to develop this idea and with support from Hume City Council and community members, we sought to improve a 100m2 plot along the Malcolm Creek in Craigieburn.

The Miyawaki technique aims to encourage jungle-like growth of vegetation through dense forestation on a mound of land. The Miyawaki area creates a dense habitat from ground up and is designed to be self-sustaining. The technique has been trialled in many parts of Asia and Europe; with uses such as noise reduction corridors and habitat creation.

A beautiful bunch of community members joined us on a chilly morning of July 4th and put more than 400 plants in ground.

A community submission by Harsimran Kaur.

For more information on the Enviro Champions program go to hume.vic.gov.au/envirochampions



Yaz Dincer's outlook on poppies

Poppies have generally been flowers that grow on a battlefield after bloodshed and war - growing in challenging locations and in depleted soil. They symbolise hope, dreams, sacrifices, sleep, death, regeneration and colour for the future.

The ancient Greeks associated poppies with Demeter, the goddess of agriculture and the harvest. They also associated poppies with Demeter's daughter, Persephone, the goddess of the underworld and spring growth and blossoming.

So on I paint them in burnt oranges and yellows. For optimism, regeneration, health, renewal and hope.

A community submission by Yaz Dincer, 2021.

If you would like the opportunity to have a story, artwork, photos (with a blurb) gardening tips or insights possibly included in Hume's Live Green publications, email them to environment@hume.vic.gov.au

Pieces can be between 50 and 200 words and should be in an editable format (notes, email, Word doc). Please note that your piece might be edited prior to inclusion.

What's on and things to do:



Latham's Snipe Community Survey Craigieburn

Help us conduct a survey of Latham's Snipe. This is the second national count and will be investigating how many birds are found in natural and constructed wetlands. A final survey will occur in January. You can participate in both or just one of these events.

Saturday 20 November and Saturday 15 January
9am – 10.30am at Aitken Creek (corner Cascade Terrace and Bayano Way), Craigieburn

This is a free event but registrations are essential. Register online at hume.vic.gov.au/lathamsnipesurvey



Become a citizen scientist at home

The DigiVol (digital volunteer) Wildlife Spotter platform is a collaboration between Australian Museum and the Atlas of Living Australia for online Citizen Scientists.

As a volunteer, you will help review and record the presence of animals through camera trap monitoring that support environmental conservation projects across Australia. Register to become a DigiVol at volunteer.ala.org.au/#/expeditionList and join digital expeditions taking place in real time!



Have your say: Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy

Hume City Council is developing a Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy and we want your feedback. The strategy will align with the Victorian government's Recycling Victoria policy which aims to divert 80 per cent of waste going to landfill by 2030.

Register to join in one of our community conversations (details below) or complete the online survey at participate.hume.vic.gov.au/waste-strategy-consultation

Community Conversation 1: Food and Green Waste
Tuesday 30 November, 7–8pm

Community Conversation 2: Hardwaste Disposal
Wednesday 1 December, 7–8pm

Community Conversation 3: Ideas to Reduce Waste
Thursday 2 December, 7–8pm



Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, which includes the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan, as the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to the existing family members of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and to Elders past, present and future.

To help save paper, let us know if you would like to receive Live Green News by email only. Feedback and contributions are welcome and can be emailed to environment@hume.vic.gov.au or call 9205 2200.

 hume.vic.gov.au/environment

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