



Our Backyard, Our Community, Our Future.



What is EarthCheck?

Mansfield Shire Council has committed to the **EarthCheck** Sustainable Communities initiative (formally known as Green Globe) to benchmark our environmental and social performance and develop a shared vision for the future.

EarthCheck addresses the activities of the municipality as a whole, as well as the Council organisation which is expected to lead by example. EarthCheck is a performance tool. It is a means of achieving goals, targets and actions identified by Council and the community, and provides a series of key performance indicators.

It is about empowering the community to act together, through providing education about the impacts of our daily living, activities and resource use and how we can work together to reduce those impacts.

The program is designed to complement existing and future efforts being made by the community. This is done through measuring and benchmarking our progress and success with sustainability initiatives. We are then able to compare against international standards and track our changes and improvements over time.

Shared Vision

A fully involved, thriving community where children are educated on sustainability in schools, businesses are green, tourism is sustainably focused and the community sets their own benchmarks for the future.

Consultation Process

In February 2010 residents, business owners and community groups attended information and education sessions to raise awareness of the **EarthCheck** program that Mansfield Shire Council has committed to implementing throughout the municipality.

Ten community consultation and engagement sessions were then held throughout Mansfield Shire with one session in Melbourne for absent and Melbourne based ratepayers.

Participants were able to have their say about:

- How can we protect our local and global environment quality?
- What does a sustainable future look like in the Mansfield Shire?
- Are there ways we can be less wasteful and more efficient?
- What is important to you?

The ideas, vision and priorities identified throughout the interactive consultation sessions have now been incorporated into the Sustainable Communities program.

Snapshot of the results

People who attended the sessions provided advice about which benchmarking indicators are most important to the community and helped to develop a shared vision about what a sustainable community is and what **EarthCheck** Accreditation will mean for the community.

The community prioritised the **EarthCheck** benchmark indicators:

1. *Commitment to the EarthCheck Program*
2. *Water Quality*
3. *Energy Consumption*
4. *Waste sent to Landfill*
5. *Biodiversity Conservation*
6. *Potable Water Consumption*
7. *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*
8. *Air quality*
9. *Green Space*
10. *Business Accreditation*
11. *Other*

Challenges were also identified relating to current sustainability concerns, the following were identified as most critical:

- * **Recycling/Waste Management**
- * **Water Management**
- * **Bushfire**
- * **Knowledge and Education**
- * **Biodiversity Management**
- * **Building Regulations and Planning**
- * **Toxic Chemicals**
- * **Recreation**
- * **Air Quality**
- * **Heritage**
- * **Resorts**





Benchmarking Data

In October 2010, Council achieved Benchmarked status and became the first community in Australia to do so.

A report was received that detailed the Shire's performance against the indicators and set baselines to allow Council and the community to target and plan to improve our performance.

Council was measured against each of the 10 indicators and an additional two indicators were developed to assist measure potable water consumed and social sustainability through community satisfaction levels.

Mansfield Shire performed at or above the baseline for all indicators except Business Accreditation which was below the baseline.

Environment Strategy

Council is developing an overarching Environment Strategy which will become the strategic document for guiding resource allocation and decision making processes to address environmental issues. The Environment Strategy will feed directly in to Council's Annual Plan.

The Environment Strategy will also guide the action planning phase for **EarthCheck** and using **EarthCheck's** resources the outcomes can be measured and evaluated.

Through the development of the Environment Strategy and the ongoing commitment to **EarthCheck** Council and the community will be equipped with a shared vision, environmental performance baselines, targeted areas for improvement, a detailed action plan and the methodology and resources to achieve a more sustainable community, environmentally, socially and economically.

For more information visit the environment pages on:
www.mansfield.vic.gov.au

Next Steps

The next steps towards **EarthCheck** accreditation for the Mansfield Shire Council will be to:

- * continue with the collection, compiling and reporting of the required baseline data required for each of the 10 benchmark indicators and the 2 optional ones
- * work with the community reference group – Council's Environment Committee
- * keep the community updated on the projects progressions and how they can be involved
- * develop strategic action plans to incorporate the EarthCheck requirements, to identify how to address the key challenges captured during this public consultation project and to clearly plan actions, outcomes, resources, responsibilities, and timeframes.

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MANSFIELD SHIRE

For more information

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