

NATURE IN THE CITY

THRIVING BIODIVERSITY AND HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

SUMMARY



INTRODUCING NATURE IN THE CITY

Nature in the City is an inspirational strategy to enable and realise a thriving urban ecology to enhance the future liveability of our city.

Our vision:

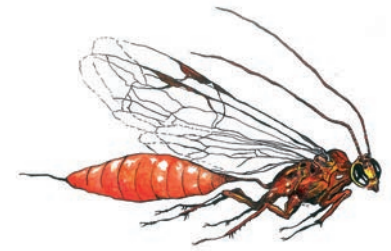
The City of Melbourne will support diverse, resilient, and healthy ecosystems that improve the environment and wellbeing of our community, providing the foundation for a liveable city.

Nature in the City was developed collaboratively between the community and the City of Melbourne and echoes community aspirations and values. Nature in the City is unique in that it infuses novel transformative elements into the management of urban ecosystems such as the application of 'Caring for Country' principles, adaptive management approaches, and ecosystem-driven climate adaptation, whilst emphasising the positive influence of nature on human health.

What is nature in the city?

Nature in the City of Melbourne includes all living things and how they interact with each other, as well as with non-living objects and processes. When a community of living things interact with the local environment and become reliant upon each other, they are called an ecosystem. Healthy and resilient ecosystems include a broad range of living things, otherwise known as 'biodiversity'.

Whilst locally indigenous plants and animals are frequently the focus of biodiversity conservation efforts, it is also important to consider plants, animals, and other organisms that now call Melbourne home. This strategy focuses on the full complement of biodiversity that occurs within the municipality in the present, and most importantly, considers what we want into the future.



Why is nature in the city important?

The City of Melbourne is home to a world-renowned network of parks, gardens, and streetscapes. These green layers contribute to its status as one of the world's most liveable cities. Yet whilst much is heard about Melbourne's liveability, its biological diversity is less-often celebrated. Despite the tall buildings, extensive paving, and large human population, our city is far from being a 'concrete jungle'; it supports living and breathing ecosystems.

Ecosystem services in Melbourne:

The city's urban forest is realised not only through its trees, but through the supporting and associated ecosystems that include the soil, water, birds, insects, bacteria, and fungi. The connections between these components enable the urban forest to provide many ecosystem services, including the removal of significant amounts of pollution to clean the air that people breathe every day. These services are critical for supporting the health and wellbeing of those who inhabit and visit the city. Biodiversity also underpins other critical services such as pollination, micro-climate moderation, water filtration, and pest regulation.

Green spaces and wetlands, and the biodiversity within them, play a vital role in maintaining people's health and wellbeing. There is a large and increasing body of evidence demonstrating that time spent in natural spaces is linked to positive health benefits including faster illness recovery, strengthened immunity, stress reduction, and treating depression. People that are healthy and happy in a thriving, tight-knit community with a strong 'sense of place' are more likely to be able to cope and adapt in the face of challenges. By providing meaningful places for people to live, work, and play, as well as the basics for clean air, water, and food; biodiversity underpins the delivery of critical services that sustain healthy environments and people.

The range of environments in the City of Melbourne reflect the Aboriginal, European colonial, and more recent immigrant history of the city and provide an important connection to our natural heritage, identity, character, and sense of place.



Why do we need a Nature in the City Strategy?

Our green network both provides and depends upon many ecosystem assets and services. The resilience and enhancement of our ecosystems is dependent on timely and considered action to address a range of complex issues. Challenges such as rapid population growth, increasing density of buildings and infrastructure, land-use legacies, invasive species, and climate change, continue to test our ability to adapt.

Melbourne is a biodiverse region with 239 species of birds, 12 species of reptiles, 18 species of mammals, seven species of frogs, at least 1500 species of insects, and 31 species of fish recorded in the last 20 years in the municipality. Unfortunately, many of these species are threatened and how the City of Melbourne responds to these challenges will fundamentally affect which species live and thrive in the city, the services that ecosystems can provide, and subsequently the liveability of the city for people.

While the City of Melbourne has many initiatives that help provide space for people and biodiversity, this strategy provides a blueprint for boosting biodiversity and creating a healthy and liveable urban environment. This strategy aligns with many international biodiversity strategies and initiatives as seen in Figure 1. It also draws together numerous existing Council ambitions, inter-governmental agreements, and provides a framework to guide us towards enabling our vision for nature in the city. This strategy will contribute to a greater connection to nature and more effective management of our own urban ecosystems, as well as providing benefits to ecosystems more broadly.

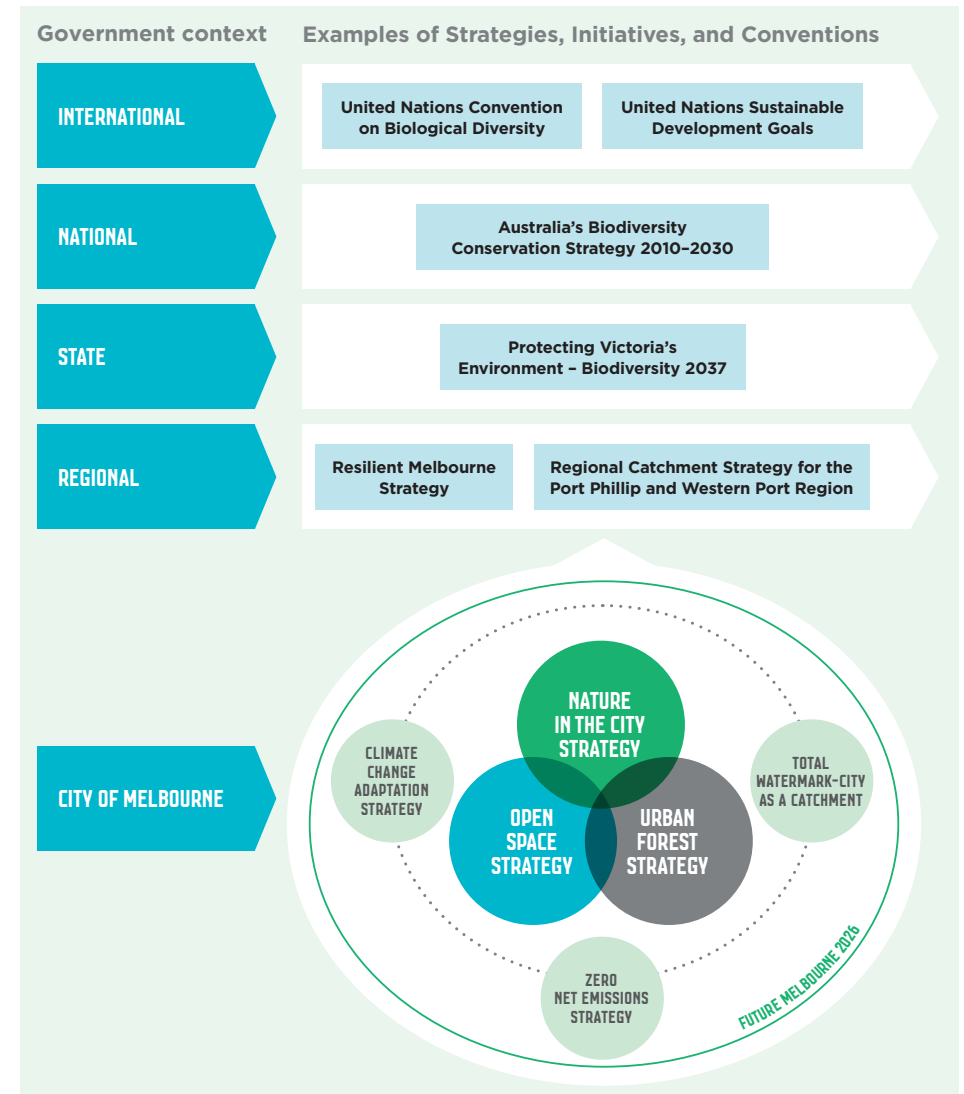


Figure 1: An overview of the existing and proposed strategies and other projects undertaken by the City of Melbourne. Nature in the City is one of the three strategies that have intentional ecological outcomes, along with the Open Space Strategy and Urban Forest Strategy. These strategies fit within the wider context of sustainability action at the regional, state, national, and international levels.

Goals, priorities, and targets

Our vision is for the City of Melbourne to support diverse, resilient, and healthy ecosystems that improve the environment and wellbeing of our community, providing the foundation for a liveable city. This strategy has three goals and

six priorities that will guide the next 10 years of planning, development, and management of the city's biodiversity and ecosystems. It also details a set of actions and targets to evaluate the success of implementation.

VISION

The City of Melbourne will support diverse, resilient, and healthy ecosystems that improve the environment and wellbeing of our community, providing the foundation for a liveable city.

Goals

1 Create a more diverse, connected, and resilient natural environment

2 Connect people to nature

3 Demonstrate leadership in urban ecology and conservation of biodiversity

Priorities

1 Improve ecosystem health and biodiversity.

Target:

There is a net increase in biodiversity, habitats, and ecosystem health within the City of Melbourne by 2027.

2 Develop a more ecologically connected urban landscape.

Target:

By 2027, City of Melbourne will be a more ecologically-connected city than in 2017.

3 Increase the contribution of the private realm in supporting biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health within the municipality.

Target:

By 2027, the private realm is playing a significant role in supporting nature in the city.

4 Connect more people to nature to improve social resilience, health, and wellbeing.

Target:

By 2027, more residents, workers, and visitors encounter, value, and understand nature in the city more than they did in 2017.

5 Explore opportunities to use cultural and practical 'Caring for Country' principles to integrate people with nature.

Target:

By 2027, the City of Melbourne will, in collaboration with Traditional Owners and the local Aboriginal community, have integrated, celebrated, and promoted 'Caring for Country' approaches.

6 Demonstrate local and global leadership in conserving biodiversity and creating and sustaining healthy urban ecosystems.

Target:

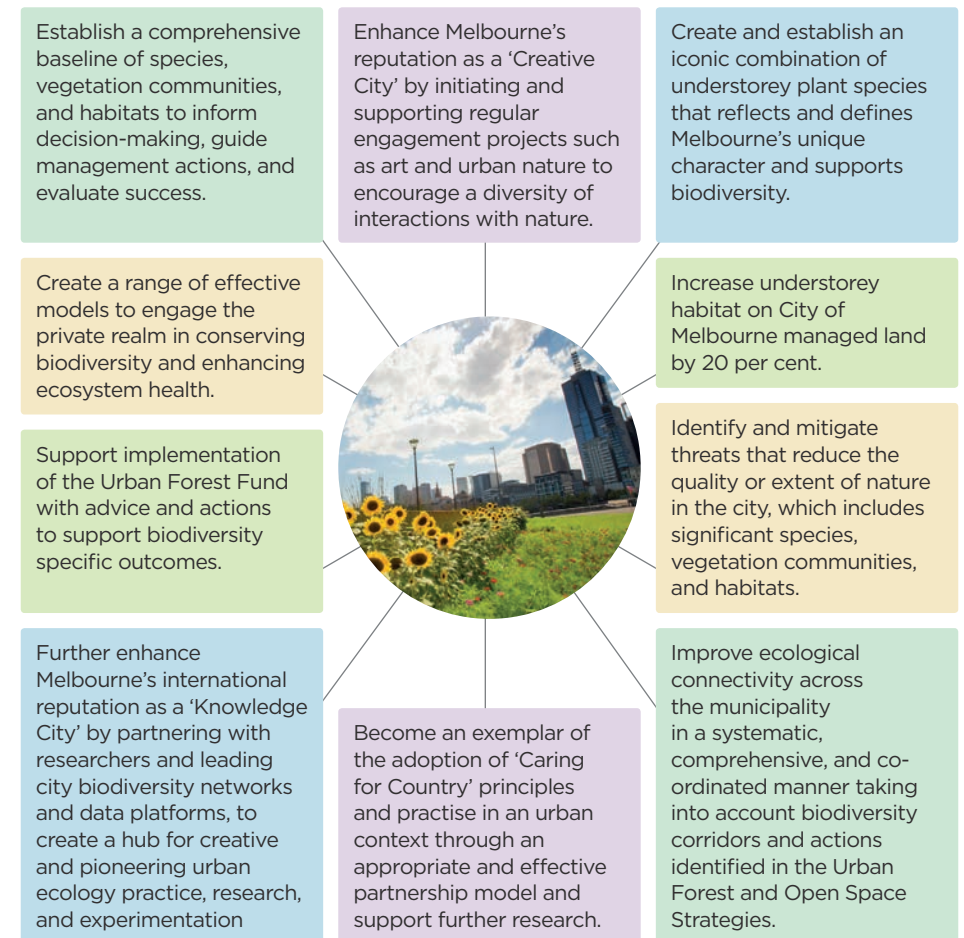
Deliver flagship biodiversity and urban ecology projects that are recognised locally and internationally as innovative and outstanding examples of enhancing nature in the city.

Implementation and monitoring

This strategy will be implemented by influencing existing City of Melbourne programs and projects and will be largely funded through existing budgets that are subject to the annual cycles and service delivery priorities. Healthy ecosystems

and biodiversity in a large city is still a relatively new concept in a rapidly expanding field of research and practice. An adaptive monitoring program will be implemented to learn from our actions and guide future decisions.

Below are 10 of the 23 actions outlined in the Nature in the City Strategy that will make Melbourne a leader in sustainability and urban ecology.



How to contact us

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Interpreter services

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call us via the National Relay Service: Teletypewriter (TTY)
users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9658 9658
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