

## City of Greater Bendigo A place in the sunlight

### Award for Excellence in Green Purchasing — Regional Council

**This award recognises the regional council with the largest investment in green products as a percentage of available expenditure.**

The purchase of a wide range of ecologically sustainable products—from the standard (recycled copy paper) to the more unusual (hybrid composting toilets) —saw City of Greater Bendigo achieve a green spend equivalent to 5% of its total budget to take out the ECO-Buy Award for Excellence in Green Purchasing-Regional Council for 2010.

Greater Bendigo is a major regional centre servicing the towns and rural areas of the Loddon region, about 150 kilometres North West of Melbourne.

The region experiences comparatively good solar exposure, making investment in products powered by solar energy a logical choice.

What has been impressive is the range of products purchased, and willingness of Council to test new technologies as part of their regular maintenance and replacement programs.

The noticeable breadth of green product purchasing by Greater Bendigo is testament in part to the success of its Natural Environment Strategy, which places efficient use of resources and reduction of everyday environmental impacts squarely in the consciousness of policy makers and operational managers.

The big tick on Councils action plan last year was the purchase and installation of 22 solar powered ticket machines to replace the City's 100 conventional mains power operated machines.

In addition to making the most of an abundant natural resource in sunlight, these highly visible pieces of necessary infrastructure have allowed Council to reduce non-renewable energy consumption, save emissions and achieve financial and environmental savings during installation of the machines.

According to Neville Zimmer, Manager, Parking & Animal Control, solar powered ticket machines are simpler to install than conventional machines. "There is no need to disturb pavements or footpaths install pits and plug into the grid. That alone reduces the installation costs and environmental disturbance."

Solar powered ticketing machines also have the benefit of lasting longer than conventional machines, reducing maintenance and disposal costs and maximising the embodied resources used to manufacture the machines.

The machines will be ideal for use in remote locations where there is no mains electricity available.

Bendigo's first fleet of 22 solar powered ticket machines have been so successful that City of Greater Bendigo plans to replace its remaining four mains connected ticket machines with the new solar machines.

In addition to other solar energy purchases, which included installation of solar lighting and solar hot water systems, Council purchased energy saving LED lights and Sun Lizard solar heaters.



Solar powered ticket machines are easier to install. Photo: City of Greater Bendigo

Council's green purchasing focus also extended to water saving initiatives which included converting of turf to warm season varieties on 6.4 hectares of playing fields and the use of drought resistant plants and grasses in parks and gardens.

Bendigo City Council's green purchasing streak doesn't end with the visible green purchases. There's the 20% biodiesel used to fuel the Council's buses, machinery and other equipment, and the five parks and the sports field which feature underground irrigation systems to reduce the amount of water required to keep them green, plus the recycled water.

So the climate keeps the ticket machines running and the water hot – and Council reduces its impact on climate change by better using available resources.



The solar panels on the solar powered ticket machines Photo: City of Greater Bendigo

#### **GREEN PURCHASING BY CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO:**

- Solar power systems, lights, ticket machines and hot water systems
- Purchase of LED lighting
- Purchase of drought resistant grasses and conversion of 6.4 ha of playing fields to warm season turf
- 290 litres of recycled water and more than 860,000 litres of biodiesel
- Downsize of seven fleet vehicles, purchase of LPG vehicles and EURO 4 compliant trucks to replace ageing equipment
- 12,000 Recycled content mobile garbage bins
- Recycled mulch and soft fall mulch for playgrounds
- Sustainable irrigation of five parks and one sporting field