



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**23 June 2015**

## **Reporting on the state of the Western Port Biosphere Reserve**

At the launch of the Western Port Biosphere's Pilot Report Card today, Mr Duncan Malcolm, Chair of the Western Port Biosphere Foundation, said "This Report Card has been an opportunity for us to work together as a region. This is a Pilot Report Card showcasing what we are all doing to work towards sustainable development for the region."

"The Western Port Biosphere Reserve is unique, encompassing five diverse local government areas and French Island. Whilst recognising and valuing the differences and individuality of each council, across the whole there are values common to everyone" Mr Malcolm said. "We have an opportunity to work together as a region to protect and conserve, while also fostering a vibrant economy and a rich social fabric." Representatives from Bass Coast Shire, Cardinia Shire Council, City of Casey, Frankston City Council and Mornington Peninsula Shire Council spoke at the launch about their sustainability initiatives.

The Pilot Report Card provides a snapshot of how we are doing against environmental, social and economic indicators. It is a step towards sharing the story of Western Port Biosphere, the region in which we all play a part in its health and sustainability.

The Biosphere was designated in 2002 under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme and has recently successfully undergone a 10 year review by UNESCO.

The strategic plans of our member Councils address the environmental, social and economic development of each municipality. All five of our member Councils have plans in place to reduce emissions, with actions such as moving to renewable energy for Council buildings and the replacement of street lighting with energy-efficient lights already underway. These are practical demonstrations of their commitment to foster sustainable development in the Western Port Biosphere.

The Western Port Biosphere's Pilot Report Card provides a focus for discussion about how we live in this region and work to foster sustainable development within the Biosphere Reserve. In future Report Cards we will refine the measures we use to report against economic, social and environmental indicators.

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