AGENDA

ENVIRONMENT
STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Environment Strategic Reference Group will be held in the Flannel Flower Room, Civic Centre, Dee Why on

WEDNESDAY 7 JUNE 2023

Beginning at 6:00pm for the purpose of considering matters included in this agenda.

northern beaches council

Committee Members

Cr Kristyn Glanville (Chair)	Councillor
Mayor Sue Heins	Mayor
Cr Michael Regan	Councillor
Cr Michael Gencher	Councillor
Cr Stuart Sprott	Councillor
Individual or organisation representatives with specific expertise/experience:	
Alan Jones	Individual – Curl Curl Ward
Nigel Howard	Individual – Frenchs Forest Ward
Jamileh Jahangiri	Individual – Manly Ward
Oscar Jones	Individual – Manly Ward
Roberta Conroy	Individual – Pittwater Ward
Joeline Hackman	Northern Beaches War on Waste
Leigh McGaghey	Pittwater Natural Heritage Association and Canopy Keepers
Community members or group representatives with broad range of strategic views	
Natalie Warren	Community representative - Curl Curl Ward
Malin Frick	Community representative – ManlyWard
Billy Bragg	Community representative – Pittwater Ward
Jacqueline Marlow	Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment representative

Council Officer Contacts

Todd Dickinson	Director Environment and Sustainability
Yianni Mentis	Executive Manager Environment and Climate Change
Lesley Milbourne	Manager Governance
Anna Moore	Senior Advisor Governance

Quorum

A majority of members including the Chair or one of the elected Councillors.

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Agenda for Environment Strategic Reference Group Meeting to be held on Wednesday 7 June 2023 in the Flannel Flower Room, Civic Centre, Dee Why Commencing at 6:00pm

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10.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING Wednesday 6 September 2023

1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

As a sign of respect, Northern Beaches Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of these lands on which we gather and pays respect to Elders past and present.

2.0 APOLOGIES

All members are expected to attend the meetings or otherwise tender their apologies to the Chair and Governance at governance@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au.

3.0 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Members should disclose any "**pecuniary**" or "**non-pecuniary**" interests in matters included in the agenda. The Northern Beaches Council Code of Conduct (the Code) provides guidance on managing conflicts of interests.

A **pecuniary interest** is defined in Section 4 of the Code as:

> *an interest that you have in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to you or a person referred to in clause 4.3.*

A **non-pecuniary conflict of interest** as defined in Section 5 of the Code exists:

> *where a reasonable and informed person would perceive that you could be influenced by a private interest when carrying out your official functions in relation to a matter.*

If you required further information or guidance about disclosing an interest please contact Governance at governance@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au.

4.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP MEETING HELD 27 APRIL 2023

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Environment Strategic Reference Group meeting held 27 April 2023, copies provided, be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

5.0 WASTE & CIRCULAR ECONOMY

ITEM 5.1	**WASTE AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY STRATEGY – ACTIONS, ASPIRATIONS AND TARGETS - ANDREW WARD-HARVEY - 20 MINS**
REPORTING OFFICER	**EXECUTIVE MANAGER WASTE MANAGEMENT & CLEANSING**
TRIM FILE REF	**2023/323638**
ATTACHMENTS	**NIL**

PURPOSE

To provide an update to the Environment Strategic Reference Group (ESRG) on the status of Council's draft Waste and Circular Economy Strategy and outcomes of the recent ESRG workshop.

SUMMARY

Council conducted a workshop on the Waste and Circular Economy Strategy at the ESRG meeting on 27 April 2023.

As resolved at that meeting, Council then organised a separate workshop on the draft Waste and Circular Economy for ESRG members.

Council's staff workshopped the actions, aspirations and targets of the draft Waste and Circular Economy Strategy with the group on 25 May 2023.

Council staff intend to present the feedback from the 25 May workshop to the ESRG, together with next steps for the Waste and Circular Economy Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION OF EXECUTIVE MANAGER WASTE MANAGEMENT & CLEANSING

That members of the Environment Strategy Reference Group note the key outcomes of the 25 May workshop of ESRG members.

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION & BIODIVERSITY

ITEM 6.1	**AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL GRANT - REWILDING SYDNEY - CHRIS MUNRO - 5 MINS**
REPORTING OFFICER	**TEAM LEADER, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING**
TRIM FILE REF	**2023/345722**
ATTACHMENTS	**NIL**

ISSUE

Council participation in Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant - Urban Rewilding: Ecologically and Community-informed Futures.

BACKGROUND

Biodiversity is highly threatened in Australian cities. Sydney University has been successful with a significant Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grant project which aims to prevent further wildlife loss by creating a blueprint for the ecological restoration of urban spaces. Working with 7 Councils including Northern Beaches Council, Taronga Conservation Society and State Government agencies in northern Sydney, this project will experimentally assess a new approach to conservation by restoring regionally present but locally missing wildlife to urban bushland reserves.

DISCUSSION

Expected outcomes of the 3-year grant project include the restoration of ecosystem services (for example pollination) provided by wildlife and increased opportunities for community engagement with nature. Project benefits include: initiating rewilding in urban areas, improved public education on the benefits of restoring wildlife and greater potential to conserve biodiversity.

The grant team comprises experts in urban ecology, vertebrate pest ecology, social science, genetics, and conservation. The research methodology builds on extensive historical data, combining present-day ecological surveys with wildlife population genetic data to model and test urban rewilding actions in the northern Sydney.

The longer-term aim of the project is to deliver an evidence-based, community-supported strategy to enable the return of native animals to the “backyards” of urban Australians.

RECOMMENDATION OF TEAM LEADER, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING

That the ESRG note Council’s participation in the ARC Linkage Grant**.**

ITEM 6.2	**PROSPERITY WETLAND UPDATE - DAVID HELLOT - 20 MINS**
REPORTING OFFICER	**SENIOR ENVIRONMENT OFFICER - CATCHMENTS**
TRIM FILE REF	**2023/345745**
ATTACHMENTS	**NIL**

PURPOSE

To provide information to the Environment Strategic Reference Group (ESRG) through a presentation on the Prosperity Wetland (the Project) at Valley View Reserve, Warriewood.

BACKGROUND

Council is managing the creation of a constructed wetland to water quality within Valley View Reserve, Warriewood which flows to Narrabeen Lagoon.

The Warriewood Valley Development Contributions Plan, Warriewood Valley Landscape Masterplan and Warriewood Valley Water Management Specification (Public Domain) 2018 all identified this reserve location as an opportunity to incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) into public open space. The Reserve was originally constructed in 2006 with the key objectives being flood protection, passive public open space, water quality improvement.

DISCUSSION

The wetland will improve the water quality of Narrabeen Creek by directing and filtering low flows through the wetland while complementing the existing flood management and storage functionality of the site.

The design of the wetland project has been completed and a contractor has been engaged to undertake works.

The main project objectives are:

- improve the water quality of Narrabeen Creek
- maintain flood management and storage functionality of the site
- increase environmental diversity
- reinforce the ecological function of the adjacent riparian corridor
- naturalisation and activation of the lower section of the reserve.

The completed wetland will be planted with approximately 15,000 plants, most of which will be macrophytes and associated wetland species to help filter and improve water quality.

The project is currently underway and the construction activity is managed to minimise any environmental impacts. Works are expected to be completed mid July 2023 weather permitting.

RECOMMENDATION OF SENIOR ENVIRONMENT OFFICER - CATCHMENTS

That the information in this report and the presentation be noted.

7.0 CLIMATE CHANGE & SUSTAINABILITY

ITEM 7.1	**UPDATE ON ELECTRIFYING OUR FLEET - KARA TAYLOR - 20 MINS**
REPORTING OFFICER	**SENIOR SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER**
TRIM FILE REF	**2023/343919**
ATTACHMENTS	**NIL**

PURPOSE

To provide information via a presentation to the Environment Strategic Reference Group on Council's progress to electrify its fleet.

REPORT

Following the switch to 100% renewable electricity in January 2021, which resulted in an 80% reduction in Council's corporate emission profile, the contribution of fleet and plant to our remaining emissions increased to now account for around 50% of the remaining emissions. Transitioning our fleet from fossil fuel to low and no emissions vehicles has therefore become one of the key focus areas for Council as we work towards delivering our net zero commitments and aspirations, as adopted through the *Protect. Create. Live – Northern Beaches Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2040.*

We are working to replace fleet vehicles with Hybrid or EV equivalents as they reach end of life wherever feasible. Council recently accelerated this with the purchase of 11 new EVs, bought with the assistance of a $40,000 NSW Government grant. The grant program is also supporting the installation of 11 charging stations on Council worksites. Council has also bid for funding to purchase an additional 3 EVs in the next round of the incentive.

The transition does come with significant challenges in Australia with limited EVs available and significant supply chain issues for all vehicles. There are currently no feasible heavy plant or commercial/UTE Hybrid or EV options available and as such the majority of fleet and heavy plant vehicles transition to electric is being considered in our longer-term planning. We are progressing with trials, planning for future charging needs and considering operational impacts so that we are in a good position as they become available and viable.

Council is also supporting our community to take up EVs through providing and supporting an expanded public charging network locally and providing information sessions such as the recent "Is an EV right for me?" session: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPV1B6qW4Jg

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RECOMMENDATION OF SENIOR SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER

That the Environment Strategic Reference Group note the information outlined in this report and presentation.

ITEM 7.2	**TRANSITION FROM GAS PLAN PROJECT - KARA TAYLOR - 15 MINS**
REPORTING OFFICER	**SENIOR SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER**
TRIM FILE REF	**2023/344764**
ATTACHMENTS	**NIL**

PURPOSE

To provide information to the Environment Strategic Reference Group through a presentation on the Transition from Gas Plan Project (the Project).

BACKGROUND

Council's current operational emissions profile attributes approximately 28% to emissions from gas. To meet our net zero emission targets we are working to transition Council's sites from gas to 100% renewable electricity. Council has approximately 26 gas-using sites, the largest single user being Manly Andrew 'Boy' Charlton Aquatic Centre. As well as emissions savings, it is anticipated that electrification of our assets/sites will bring significant cost savings.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Assess existing gas usage across Northern Beaches Council facilities
- Develop recommendations to replace gas using equipment with electric alternatives considering factors such as existing asset end-of-life, corresponding building and mechanical plant modifications and electrical supply capacity changes
- Identify opportunities to reduce or remove gas usage at leased sites
- Integrate priority recommendations for replacement of gas using equipment with electric into Council's forward capital works program
- Explore opportunities to influence gas usage in our leased assets.

These objectives will allow Council to demonstrate leading by example in environmental sustainability and will enhance our financial and strategic capacity to deliver against Council's net zero targets. The project is currently underway and is expected to be completed early in the 2023/24 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION OF SENIOR SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER

That the Environment Strategic Reference Group note the information in this report and the presentation.

8.0 RESILIENCE AND NATURAL HAZARDS

ITEM 8.1	**NARRABEEN LAGOON ENTRANCE CLEARANCE - OVERVIEW AND NEXT STEPS - SCOT HEDGE - 5 MINS**
REPORTING OFFICER	**ACTING MANAGER, STORMWATER & FLOODPLAIN ENGINEERING**
TRIM FILE REF	**2023/345760**
ATTACHMENTS	**NIL**

ISSUE

Provide an update on entrance clearance operations at Narrabeen Lagoon.

BACKGROUND

Mechanical opening of the Narrabeen Lagoon entrance is undertaken for the primary purpose of flood mitigation. This is an ongoing management activity identified as a key action of the Narrabeen Lagoon Entrance Management Strategy (EMS), adopted by Council in September 2022. The EMS is a component of the Narrabeen Lagoon Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan 2019.

DISCUSSION

Staff are currently preparing for entrance clearance operations at Narrabeen Lagoon. The last entrance clearance works were completed in December 2021.

In accordance with the Narrabeen Lagoon Entrance Management Strategy (EMS) staff are reviewing the design of entrance clearance operations, including investigating smaller scale, strategic removal of sand from upstream and downstream areas of Ocean Street bridge.

Sand removed from the lagoon entrance is transported south to Collaroy-Narrabeen Beach by truck. The majority of the sand is deposited at Mactier Street and spread on the beach. Placement of sand at other road heads is also being considered.

We are in the process of developing design documentation for the sand removal and placement, as well as a Review of Environmental Factors for the activity. Once finalised a tender process will be undertaken to engage a contractor to deliver the works.

A program of community notification will be undertaken for the project, including publishing of the Review of Environmental Factors in accordance with relevant guidelines. Works are anticipated to commence during September and be finalised prior to the summer school holiday period in December 2023.

RECOMMENDATION OF ACTING MANAGER, STORMWATER & FLOODPLAIN ENGINEERING

That the Environment Strategic Reference Group note the information outlined in this report.

ITEM 8.2	**DRAFT BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE - CHRIS MUNRO - 5 MINS**
REPORTING OFFICER	**COORDINATOR, BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT**
TRIM FILE REF	**2023/345772**
ATTACHMENTS	**NIL**

ISSUE

The Northern Beaches Draft Bush Fire Risk Management Plan has been released on public exhibition from Monday 22 May 2023 until 5pm on Monday 17 July 2023.

BACKGROUND

A Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (BFRMP) is a strategic document that identifies assets and values that may be at risk from bush fire, and outlines coordinated multi-agency objectives and associated treatment strategies to reduce the risk over a 5-year period.

The development of a BFRMP is a legal requirement under section 52 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* (NSW). The BFRMP, including the accompanying appendices and spatial data, is prepared by the Northern Beaches Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) and is approved by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC).

Treatment strategies may include hazard reduction burning, mechanical clearing, targeted community engagement programs and ignition prevention activities. The treatment strategies are implemented by the member agencies of the BFMC and cover both public and private land.

The BFRMP is applied in conjunction with the BFMC's Fire Access and Fire Trail (FAFT) Plan and Operations Coordination Plan to provide a comprehensive approach to risk mitigation and operational preparedness. The plan is to be reviewed and monitored annually, or after significant fire events.

Once approved, the plan will replace the two existing plans that currently remain in effect throughout the Northern Beaches, being the Warringah Pittwater Bush Fire Risk Management Plan 2010 and the Manly, Mosman, North Sydney Bush Fire Risk Management Plan 2010.

DISCUSSION

The NSW Rural Fire Service has developed a new process for identifying and analysis risk, which has been piloted in the development of the BFRMP.

The foundation of the BFRMP is underpinned by a risk quantification methodology based on fire behaviour modelling (Phoenix RapidFire). The fire simulation process applies an ignition model, local historical weather and historical fire information to determine where fires are most likely to occur in the landscape. A Bayesian Decision Network model is used to quantify the bush fire risk to each asset in the landscape based on relevant vulnerability criteria.

Bush fire risks may also be identified during the process from qualitative assessment methodologies. For example, where expert local knowledge identifies a significant area of concern, challenges in firefighting or locally significant values.

There are 4 main categories of assets considered in the BFRMP with subcategories contained in each. These categories include:

- Human settlement – Including residential areas and Special Fire Protection Purpose areas such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes and tourist facilities

- Economic – Including commercial, agricultural, industrial, infrastructure, water catchment and recreational assets
- Environmental – Including threatened flora and fauna, fire sensitive vegetation communities, statutory conservation or biodiversity agreements, heritage areas, geologically significant lands, environmentally significant lands identified in LEPs/DCPs and other significant environmental assets
- Cultural – Including Aboriginal heritage sites and non-indigenous cultural heritage items or places identified in relevant registers.

Four maps showing the current risk to these asset categories have been published to accompany the BFRMP whilst on exhibition.

With the combined resources of all BFMC stakeholders it is still not possible or practical to actively treat all bush fire risks across the landscape. The BFMC has determined through an analysis of the quantitative risk assessment data, and other factors such as the social vulnerability of the community, access and egress and local significance to primarily focus on 9 key Focus Areas.

These Focus Areas are:

- Allambie Heights
- Beacon Hill to Collaroy Plateau
- Belrose/Davidson
- Cottage Point
- Duffys Forest/Terrey Hills
- Elanora Heights/North Narrabeen
- Ingleside/Bayview/Church Point
- Mackerel Beach to McCarrs Creek (Inc. Scotland Island)
- North Head.

These are areas that have been specifically identified as having an unacceptable risk and require additional, targeted treatment strategies within the 5-year BFRMP.

There are 4 key objectives available to manage the bush fire risk to Focus Areas and each objective has several associated treatment strategies. The BFMC has identified the most appropriate objectives and treatment strategies for each Focus Area in the BFRMP. The Focus Area treatment strategies selected by the BFMC will be further addressed annually as part of the BFMC Annual Works Program.

The BFRMP also contains a Fuel Management Register and a list of hazard reduction activities. The fuel management treatments include prescribed burns and vegetation maintenance in asset protection zones. All activities listed in the Fuel Management Register are proposed to be completed within the 5-year term of BFRMP and those activities linked to a Focus Area will be treated as a priority.

A map showing the Focus Areas and Fuel Management Register has been published to accompany the BFRMP whilst on exhibition.

The NSW Rural Fire Service are facilitating the public exhibition of the BFRMP on behalf of the BFMC. The BFRMP is available to view at:

- Online (https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/managing-bush-fire-risk/bush-fire-management-committees/northern-beaches)
- Northern Beaches Fire Control Centre, Thompson Drive Off Kamber Road, Terrey Hills
- Council's Customer Service Centres (Mona Vale, Dee Why and Manly).

Community members and agencies are encouraged to provide feedback to the BFMC regarding the BFRMP by 5pm Monday 17 July 2023. Feedback can be provided:

- Online (https://nswrfs.jotform.com/230930815074958)
- Email - northernbeaches@rfs.nsw.gov.au
- Post – Northern Beaches Fire Control Centre, PO Box 111, Terrey Hills NSW 2084.

RECOMMENDATION OF COORDINATOR, BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT

That the Environment Strategic Reference Group note the public exhibition of the Northern Beaches Draft Bush Fire Risk Management Plan.

ITEM 8.3	**LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICER / DISASTER FUNDING - GARETH BIRCH - 5 MINS**
REPORTING OFFICER	**RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER**
TRIM FILE REF	**2023/345781**
ATTACHMENTS	**NIL**

ISSUE

Update on the projects to reduce and prepare for disaster risk in the LGA.

BACKGROUND

Recent natural disaster events such as floods, bushfires and storms have had devastating impacts across NSW. While significant effort and resourcing has been required for the response and recovery operations following these events, there has also been a growing appreciation for the imperative of proactively preventing and preparing for natural disasters. Council has received funding from the NSW Disaster Risk Reduction Fund to carry out 3 key projects to reduce and prepare for disaster risk in our LGA. These projects are:

Flood warning tool upgrade

This project looks to update and improve our flood warning tool to utilise recent advancement in real-time radar and rainfall data collection combined with fast running flood modelling software. Incorporating these emerging tools in our existing flood management processes will greatly enhance our risk management capability and allow Council to produce advanced flood intelligence outputs and rapid alerts prior to, and during high rainfall events. This ability will be of significant value to the emergency service agencies that Council supports during flood responses, including the SES and Police. Over time, these intelligence outputs can also be used to greatly enhance our flood risk reduction programs for flood prone communities across the LGA.

Manly Dam scour valve investigation

Undertake an investigation to better understand the relationship, or lack thereof, between dam scour valve openings, and downstream lagoon levels. This study will examine previous flood events, develop and model a range of rainfall and scour valve opening scenarios and determine optimum management of dam water levels. A report will be prepared which will provide a strong evidence base and series of recommendations to optimise timing and management of dam scour valve openings.

Online Disaster Dashboard

This project will develop a public online Disaster Dashboard to provide accurate and timely information for our communities, providing them with both guidance on how to prepare for emergencies, and information and updates during a disaster event.

RECOMMENDATION OF RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER

That the Environment Strategic Reference Group notes the information outlined in this report.

9.0 SUPPORTING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

ITEM 9.1	**UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE BUSINESS POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS NETWORK - ED MCPEAKE - 5 MINS**
REPORTING OFFICER	**MANAGER, GREENER COMMUNITIES**
TRIM FILE REF	**2023/345800**
ATTACHMENTS	**NIL**

ISSUE

Update on Progress of the Business Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and Sustainable Business Network.

BACKGROUND

Council is supporting local businesses by helping to facilitate a group of buyers from the Northern Beaches business community to secure a 100% renewable, long-term electricity PPA.

The Sustainability Business Network brings together businesses looking to connect and learn from each other. Council aims to develop a network that supports significant sustainability improvements and shares knowledge and experiences.

DISCUSSION

Council appointed Business Green Energy in March 2023 as the aggregator to facilitate a 100% Renewables PPA for Northern Beaches businesses and other high energy using organisations to tackle rising energy costs and carbon emissions.

We aim to execute the group PPA in early 2024. We are now encouraging businesses to share their interest in participating in a PPA and sign up to our buyers group.

We are assisting local businesses with their sustainability goals via Council's Sustainability Business Network. By supporting them to join a group PPA, we hope they can achieve their net zero goals, and help deliver Council's commitments towards net zero in the community.

Council has also produced a series of resources including a 'Toolkit', which set out the steps towards net zero. The guides not only provide information on general environment sustainability goals but also seeks to provide emission reduction opportunities for businesses too.

The toolkit has been designed to enable businesses to begin and expand their sustainability journey, reduce their carbon footprint and achieve sustainability targets. Specific areas include energy, waste, water and resource use. They include solar, LED lighting, water reduction, waste minimisation, building and office operation and purchasing.

Council has also developed an interactive map. The map acts as a directory to search for like minded businesses, share best practice, discuss ideas and learn how other businesses make changes to improve sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION OF MANAGER, GREENER COMMUNITIES

That Council continue to support the ongoing strategic progress of the Business PPA and Sustainable Business Network with the local business community.