

**Q:** Have you considered rabbit proofing?

**A:** We will put in raised garden beds. The community garden at Wollstonecraft had plastic rods which looked very effective so we might do that as well.

**Q:** There are a lot of people living adjacent to Woolcott Reserve. How have they reacted?

**A:** There was extensive community consultation at the outset and we have not had one objection. We consulted on another site in Mona Vale and half the surrounding residents objected so that site was abandoned. The garden has to be supported by the surrounding community or it just won't work.

#### Mona Vale Community Garden:

**Q:** Are other sites under consideration for the Mona Vale group?

**A:** We are looking at a Warriewood Valley and hopefully in discussions with Australand about a possible land swap to secure it. This site would be much more suitable as it has more space around it and it is away from neighbouring houses.

It is very difficult to find an ideal location to establish a community garden. It should be separate from homes as the compost can attract vermin. It is important that it is kept enclosed and secure. The Warriewood Valley works well as it references back to the Valley's market garden heritage.

The Mona Vale group is not yet at that stage. More gardeners are needed.

#### **REFERENCE POINT:**

- ***Mona Vale Residents Association to discuss with Ms Cronan re further supporting the Mona Vale Community Garden Group.***

---

---

## **NE4.4 Cannes Reserve Flying-fox Management**

### **Proceedings in Brief**

Mr Matt Hansen, Principal Officer - Natural Environment & Education, addressed the meeting on this item.

#### **DISCUSSION POINTS:**

**Q:** Was there any tracking on where the animals dispersed to?

**A:** The Royal Botanic Gardens did a large dispersal track with radio transmitters and this was discussed as an option. However, it was not really feasible as the Cannes Reserve camp is quite small and the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) recommended against tracking for this reason. There is a camp at the Warriewood Wetlands and it was thought that was where they would go. However, in constructing the new carpark at Warriewood Square a large extractor fan was set up and working 24/7. This coincided with the Cannes Reserve dispersal and both camps dispersed. Currently 200 animals have returned to Cannes Reserve and are having babies so nothing can happen for the moment.

**Q:** How are they defined as being a threatened species when there are so many of them?

**A:** They are a migratory species and follow food up and down the eastern seaboard. Numbers have been decreasing due to a reduction of food sources and habitat, plus recent heatwaves which can wipe out half a colony with heat stress.

**Q:** If they are endangered who gave Warriewood Square permission to work so close to a camp?  
**A:** It wasn't foreseen that the extractor fan would disturb the colony as it is a fair distance. It may have been truck movements and other reasons as well. It would not necessarily be a condition of construction as the work has not damaged the habitat. As soon as the building stops they will return.

**Q:** How does that bode for the success of your campaign at Cannes Reserve?

**A:** We are on a steep learning curve. We are the first Council to try this although Sutherland is now doing it too. The only experience to base the campaign on was the Botanic Gardens. It does actually work but we need follow up action to discourage their return such as habitat modification. The pruning of cabbage tree palms in Cannes Reserve has reduced potential roost sites. Just keeping numbers down is an improvement for residents and management plans include ongoing modification. The problem is that it is a beautiful rainforest environment, so we have to balance habitat modification measures against preservation of the rain forest. We will continue to consult with residents and need OEH approval on any future action.

**Q:** Does high frequency noise work?

**A:** No, the flying fox hears the same frequency as us. High frequency noise can affect bats, but any noise to deter flying foxes will be heard by residents.

- Flying foxes are not actually bats. Technically the term 'flying possum' may be more correct.
- Cannes Reserve is home not just to flying foxes but lots of other birds and animals that live in that rainforest. We don't want to deter them all.
- The camp has had a huge impact on residents. They have reported health issues in submissions and it was observed that an unhealthy environment was being created by the presence of the camp. The noise and the smell created high levels of stress for adjacent neighbours.
- The needs of the residents have to be balanced with the protection of native animals already experiencing loss of habitat.
- There is lots of other potential habitat, especially in National Parks, but they love Cannes Reserve. It is sheltered with all day sun and a rainforest environment. Perfect for a flying fox.
- The experience of North Coast camps is that they can just suddenly move for unknown reasons. Camps thousands strong have just disappeared or appeared overnight.
- The nature of a camp can change as well. Cannes Reserve was all young males at one stage and now it is almost exclusively a maternity ward.
- It is a complex and vexing issue but Council has resolved that it has to be addressed.

### **Notes:**

The General Manager offered his congratulations to staff, many of whom have been out there at 3.00am in all weather.

The Chair and members thanked Mr Hansen for his presentation.

---

## **NE4.5 Discussion Points Survey Results**

### **Proceedings in Brief**

Mr David Bremner addressed the meeting on this item. The purpose of the survey was to identify those issues identified by Reference Group members as being most important with a view to informing the topics that Council brings to future meetings.

The Natural Environment Reference Group identified the three top priorities across the three key strategic directions as follows:

#### **Beach and Coastal Management Strategy:**

- Rating 4.4: Impact of increasing development and private ownership on foreshores.
- Rating 4.3: Improve community education and learning to increase the appreciation of our beach and coastal environment.
- Rating 4.2: Continual stabilisation and maintenance of sand dunes with preference towards vegetation.

#### **Catchment Management Strategy:**

- Rating 4.5: Intensification of development and its impact on catchment processes, creeks, wetlands and watercourses.
- Rating 4.4: Impacts of urbanization and human impacts on the catchment including waste, pollutants, energy and water consumption.
- Rating 4.3: Placement of stormwater drains so they do not terminate in environmentally sensitive areas.

#### **Flora & Fauna Management Strategy:**

- Rating 4.7: Preserving native flora and fauna in the face of urban development.
- Rating 4.4: Effective enforcement of flora and fauna protection.
- Rating 4.4: Weed management.

**Q:** How did you decide on the ordering?

**A:** Weighted average sorted from most to least important. The question order was randomised across each survey download with each person scoring 1-5 on importance.

The current Strategic Plan has a raft of issues and there may be some duplication across the Key Strategies. The results probably need to be further distilled, but these results do at least present a framework specific to the strategies being address by each reference group on which to focus interesting topics. This is important as it is an opportunity to achieve valuable feedback.

**Q:** How did the Natural Environment priorities align with other key strategies across groups?

**A:** The questions were specifically tailored to this group in alignment with the Natural Environment Group key strategies. We did the same for each group.

---

## **5.0 Emerging Business**

### **5.1 Dunes Damage Survey Update**

This item has been deferred until the meeting on 10 February 2016 when both Mr Bill Thomson and Cr McTaggart can be present.

### **5.2 Wood Smoke Update**

Previous to the meeting Cr McTaggart provided a copy of the following motion carried at the recent 2015 Local Government NSW Annual Conference in order to update members on Wood Smoke and the installation of Wood Fire Heaters:

#### ***Motion 86 - Carried***

#### ***Leichhardt Municipal Council***

#### ***Clean Air Regulation to Enhance Operation of Wood Fire Heaters***

***Given that these provisions apply only to new installations after October 2016, LGNSW makes representations to the Minister for Health to strengthen the state government legislation in regard to all wood heaters and open fireplaces in metropolitan cities to address the detrimental health effects caused by wood heaters as reported by Asthma Australia.***

It was likely that the original motion would have failed as it did not take into account the country vote. Cr McTaggart was able to move an amendment to the wording (see red text added to the original motion from Leichhardt Council which appears below):-

#### ***Motion 86 - Leichhardt Municipal Council***

#### ***Clean Air Regulation to Enhance Operation of Wood Fire Heaters***

***Given that these provisions apply only to new installations after October 2016, LGNSW makes representations to the Minister for Health to strengthen the state government legislation in regard to all wood heaters and open fireplaces in metropolitan cities to address the detrimental health effects caused by wood heaters as reported by Asthma Australia.***

#### ***Note from Leichhardt Council accompanying the Motion:***

***The Environment Protection Authority recently contacted all NSW councils requesting a survey to be completed regarding the use of solid fuel heaters and subsequent issues associated with wood smoke. As a result of this survey the Environment Protection Authority is seeking a formal position from NSW councils regarding the proposed changes to the regulatory framework for the installation and use of new solid fuel heaters.***

A copy of Motion 99 put forward by Pittwater Council and carried at the 2014 Conference was provided for the information of members.

### **5.3 Sydney Water – Wastewater Notices on Beaches**

Mr Martin Porter advised that Sydney Water have drafted a warning sign to be displayed at Turimetta Point advising that heavy rain can result in WTP outflows. A copy of the draft sign is attached at **Appendix 4**. Mr Porter has been asked for comments and he has suggested some changes including that the signs be erected at both Turimetta Point and Warriewood Beach as both can be affected by outflows.



## **5.4 Tree Preservation Strategy Across Pittwater**

Ms Karen Lambert (West Pittwater Community Association) commented on the loss of the spotted gum canopy across Pittwater as evidenced by aerial photographs. Ms Lambert enquired as to how Council and community can together devise a strategy whereby significant trees such as the spotted gum are protected.

### Scotland Island: Trees and Council Depot:

As an example of how this comes back to processes and work observances, Ms Lambert tabled photographs showing the informal Council Depot established on Scotland Island where site storage practices had resulted in the loss of around six trees. The photographs are attached at **Appendix 5**. Ms Lambert commented that Council needs to ensure that staff undertaking work understand proper work practices to protect and preserve trees.

**Q:** Council staff should be protecting trees or there should have been community engagement process if the trees were scheduled for removal. Is there any redress? Will those trees be replaced?

**A:** The Chair advised that the trees were not native to Pittwater and not a protected species having been planted by the Fire Brigade some years ago.

**Q:** So shouldn't the community have been consulted anyway prior to the trees removal?

**A:** These trees were not protected under the Tree Preservation Orders. If the community want infrastructure on Scotland Island they need to have a depot over there. The community has been adamant that this is what they need, but there has to be some trade off to enable establishment of a depot so that work can proceed.

**Q:** Katherine Park and Elizabeth Park are multi-use reserves where community amenities coexist with bushland and wildlife. Apart from fire mitigation measures no real care is expended on these parks and there is a repeated lack of communication between the different users of the parks. Could a Council Management Plan be formulated detailing support for the bushcare groups and for the bushland?

**A:** The General Manager responded that he didn't think a Management Plan would resolve the issues. There was a need to improve communication across Council Business Units with more regular meetings and improved work management coordination. But in the last six months there has been lots of money spent on Scotland Island covering repairs to infrastructure by Council and contractors.

If Council does not observe best work practices it creates a platform for other people to do the wrong thing and encourages lazy environmental habits in the community.

### Trees and Bushland across Pittwater:

The General Manager advised that the key to effective management of all multi-use reserves across Pittwater is ensuring all user aspects through better works coordination.

Ms Jenny Cronan advised that Council manages about 817ha of open space including 496ha of natural areas. We need to retain the balance between bushland and parkland. Council is doing a very good job protecting and maintaining the trees on Council land.

The majority of land in Pittwater is in private ownership and gardens could accommodate more trees. Council has a tree replenishment program including free trees, but the majority of people are reluctant to plant them.

The Pittwater spotted gums are tall forest trees. They should be planted in groups so the roots interlock to give them greater stability. They should always be planted at some distance from homes such as along the back boundary of a property.

There are lists of locally native plants suitable for gardens on the Council website (see link below):-

[http://www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/environment/native\\_plants](http://www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/environment/native_plants)

---

## **6.0 Proposed 2016 Meetings Schedule**

The proposed meetings schedule of the Natural Environment Reference Group was endorsed by members as follows:-

- Wednesday, 10 February 2016 commencing at 4.00pm
- Wednesday, 11 May 2016 commencing at 4.00pm
- Wednesday, 10 August 2016 commencing at 4.00pm
- Wednesday, 09 November 2016 commencing at 4.00pm

**There being no further business  
the Natural Environment Reference Group  
meeting closed at 6.22pm on Wednesday,  
11 November 2015.**

## Boomerang Bags

### About this Item

Speakers	Stokes Mr Rob
Business	Private Members Statements, PRIV

### BOOMERANG BAGS

Page: 84

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) [6.28 p.m.]: My community of Pittwater is situated on the beautiful northern peninsula of Sydney with the Pacific Ocean on one side and Pittwater on the other. It is the unique coastline, beaches, waterways and wildlife that make this area so special. When I hear about the great work being undertaken by members of my local community to protect our natural environment, I beam with pride. Last week I met some of the members of the Boomerang Bags Avalon community group. Hearing about the great work they are doing for my community makes me proud.

Boomerang Bags is a not-for-profit community initiative aimed at reducing the use of plastic bags by encouraging local communities to use a sustainable alternative—shopping bags made out of recycled materials that can be used over and over again. The Surfrider Foundation and Living Ocean have joined forces to bring Boomerang Bags to Avalon in an effort to reduce the distribution of plastic bags. Members of the Boomerang Bags Avalon community group told me that in Australia about 4,000 plastic bags are used every minute. Plastic bags are made out of petrochemicals, which end up in landfill, clog our waterways and can suffocate our marine life. Concerned local residents, surfers and ocean enthusiasts alike are working together with a number of local businesses and community members to support this project by donating second-hand materials, signing up to attend sewing bees and spreading the word that Boomerang Bags are coming to Avalon.

A boomerang bag is a reusable tote bag—preferably homemade out of recycled fabric—that can be used communally over and over again. I have one here. The donated boomerang bags are available in centrally located locations around shopping villages. People can borrow a bag to take home their items and then return it later for others to use. This system provides shoppers with the same convenience as a plastic bag—except the boomerang bag is not harmful to the environment. They can be used over and over again and are often made from recycled materials that would otherwise be thrown out.

I often hear the common statement that it is so convenient to just use a free plastic bag from the shops. The boomerang bag addresses and counters this, as it is a free bag from the shops that is not plastic and



can be reused. There are a number of locations around Australia where projects are being launched. Avalon Beach, Cabarita, Pottsville, Manyana Milton Ulladulla districts and Crescent Head in New South Wales are leading the way. Also in Torquay in Victoria, Burleigh Heads in Queensland, and Margaret River and Perth in Western Australia are also involved. The Avalon Beach project is still in the development stages. It is hoped that the project will launch early in 2016.

At the moment weekly sewing meetings are being held and volunteers are being sought to help sew the bags. The idea is to have approximately eight boxes full of bags placed in different parts of Avalon where customers can pick one up. Shopkeepers will help by storing the boxes in their shops overnight and wheeling them outside again in the mornings. In addition to homemade tote bags, the Avalon project members are looking for old tote bags that organisations or clubs no longer want. I am advised that recently Macquarie University donated about 50 bags. This initiative gets around the tricky laws that would prohibit plastic bags, which raises the concerns of placing costs difficulties or regulatory imposts on small businesses.

The boomerang bags initiative is driven by and for the community. Positive outcomes of this initiative include, but are not limited to: creating awareness, engaging the community's interest in our local environment, and subtly changing behaviours of both shoppers and shop owners. It is also a follow-the-leader model. As more businesses become involved subtle pressure will be placed on others to follow suit and get with the times. I am advised that Pittwater Council is supportive of the project and so is the Avalon Chamber of Commerce. It is great to see the widespread support from business owners. There are opportunities for schools to also get involved in sewing bags. The organisers really want the Avalon community to take ownership of the project and be proud of it; be proud that Avalon is helping to lead the way.

The hope is that other shopping villages in Pittwater and across the northern beaches will adopt the concept after seeing the success in Avalon. This could not be done without the passion and energy of some key movers and shakers. They include: local residents like Kirsty Gyles and Laurel Wood, the Surfrider Foundation especially Jess Hansman, the Living Ocean especially the founders Kim and Deon Hubner, and Carol and Robbi Newman, Pittwater Council, Avalon Chamber of Commerce and all the volunteer sewers. Special mention to Annabelle Kristevic, who is one of the most dedicated sewers.

I will write to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Mark Speakman, about their great work as I know this will be something he will be interested in. This Government is passionate about our ocean and cleaning up our waterways. The member for Drummoyne told me a couple of minutes ago that four dolphins have just been spotted in the



Parramatta River off Cabarita. It is great to see that after decades and decades of treating our waterways as receptacles that the process has been reversed and we are actually restoring our natural environment and making the beautiful waterways of Sydney more accessible, cleaner and better for everyone. This boomerang bags initiative is just one small piece of the puzzle that we all need to be involved in if we are going to get serious about cleaning up our oceans.

## **Waste Service Operations & Education**

**Natural Environment  
Reference Group  
11 November 2015**

**Robina Bramich**

## **Overview**

- General Clean Up bookings
- Garden Organics
- Offshore public wharves
- Public Places
- Waste Education activities
- Strategic Considerations

## General Clean Up - Mainland

- Booking service started on 6 January 2014
- Collected on same day as waste/recycling
- Phone: 9970-1233
- Metals are recycled at Kimbriki
- Approx. 30 bookings per day
- Improvements to street amenity
- Reduction in illegal dumping



## Garden Organics - Mainland

- Council was awarded a grant to provide free garden organics bins and education
- Approx 20,000 bins were delivered to households & multi unit dwellings
- Fortnight services from July 2014
- Increase from 8 to 26 collections per year
- 2 bins can be presented



# Offshore Services

- Smaller public wharf skip bins
- Improves safety for wharf users
- User friendly bin lid access
- To deter illegal dumping



# Public Place Services

- Bins stand replacement in park/reserves
- Deter illegal dumping





# Current Waste Education activities

- NSW EPA *Better Waste and Recycling Fund* grant:
  - Compost bins and worm farms
    - free to offshore residents
    - discounted for mainland residents
  - National Recycling Week: 9-15 November 2015
  - Car Boot Sales: reuse of general clean up items
  - Oz Harvest Food Rescue: SHOROC partnership
  - Recycling at Work: SHOROC partnership
  - Asbestos Awareness: planning for renovations and preventing illegal dumping

This project is a NSW EPA Waste Less, Recycle More initiative funded from the waste levy



## Strategic Considerations

- *Kimbriki Resource Recovery Centre*
- *SHOROC regional waste strategy actions*
- *Future NSW EPA grant opportunities*





## Community Gardens Update

A community garden is defined by the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network as

‘an area of shared land where people come together to cultivate fresh food, to learn, relax and to meet new friends.’

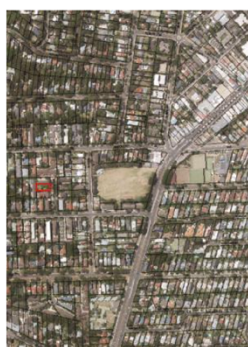
... and let's add to promote sustainable practices!



1



- Council developed the Community Gardens Policy and Guidelines in 2014
- Council's role is to support and facilitate
- Groups are self funded
- Membership - minimum five members from minimum of three households
- Mona Vale and Newport groups



Woolcott Reserve, Newport

2





Inaugural meeting 20 June 2015

3

### COMPLETED

- Inaugural meeting 20 June 2015. President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and three other committee members elected
- Dial Before you Dig
- Soil testing by VegeSafe, Environmental Sciences, Macquarie University
- Membership and Annual Subscription forms
- Incorporated Association and Constitution - Peninsula Community Gardens Inc.
- Opened a bank account – with donations and loans from local residents
- Prepared a budget
- Site plan
- Affiliation with and insurance through The Garden Clubs of Australia, Mona Vale branch, due to assistance from a local resident
- Licence agreement with Council
- Woolcott Reserve formally approved by the Council 2 November
- Bake Stall at Bunnings 28 November and Grants



4