

**9.4****Draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

Recommend Council approval to place the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS) on public exhibition.

Summary

The ESS (Attachment Booklet) will serve the dual function of forming the basis for Council's annual environmental planning as well as being the basis for ongoing conversations with our community members and other stakeholders. The draft ESS sets a long-term direction for how best to balance growth with the environmental, economic and social values of the Warringah community. The Strategy supersedes Council's 2001 Environmental Strategy which primarily focused on natural resources and the environment. Given the long-term focus of the draft Strategy, an adaptive approach has been taken to allow flexibility and room for new knowledge to be continuously considered over the expected 10 year lifespan of the strategy. For this reason, the Strategy does not seek to define and assign specific actions and responsibilities which quickly would be outdated.

Financial Impact

Financial commitment to addressing particular aspects of the draft ESS is given once the individual projects or programmes appear in the Council's Strategic Community Plan and related documents.

Policy Impact

The draft ESS has the potential to impact on Council policies as they relate to service provision in all of Council areas and in particular:

- Natural Environment
- Parks, Reserves & Foreshores
- Roads, Traffic & Waste
- Community Services
- Children's services
- Development Assessment and Compliance
- Strategic Planning
- Business and Enterprise Risk
- Procurement
- Property & Commercial Development

**RECOMMENDATION OF ACTING DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER
STRATEGIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

That the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy be placed on public exhibition for a period of 30 days.

REPORT

Background

The draft ESS (Attachment Booklet) supersedes Council's 2001 Environmental Strategy which primarily focused on natural resources and the environment. The inclusion of the word 'sustainability' in the title of this current Strategy emphasises that the issues of today are complex and are linked to broader societal issues.

The ESS seeks to address complex environmental and societal pressures and challenges holistically. Based on projections determined by the State Government, Warringah's population is expected to increase by an estimated 25,000 by 2030 – an increase of approximately 18% from 2011 (where the population was approximately 145,000 people). At the same time environmental pressures that are deeply related to how we live and work are increasing: climate change; pollution; erosion; loss of biodiversity; noxious weeds; stormwater run off; and floods and bush fires are some of the overriding and interrelated issues which must be managed carefully with regard to future generations.

The Strategy is written as a long-term guiding document for Council. The purpose is to set overarching strategic directions for how Council approaches environmental sustainability: providing a 'compass direction' in contrast to plotting a specific route on a map. This adaptive approach allows flexibility and room for new knowledge to be continuously considered over the expected 10 year lifespan of the strategy.

Strategic directions: commitments and aspirations

The draft ESS defines eight strong strategic directions which are comprised of 'commitments' and 'aspirations'. Commitments refer to target areas that are within Council's sphere of control, such as relating to corporate environmental performance. Aspirations signify areas where Council has only partial ability to influence outcomes and where partnerships with the community and other levels of government are particularly critical to our success.

The strategic directions are holistic targets that will require lateral thinking and cooperation. For example, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we need to change the way we live and work as well as examine ways of becoming more energy efficient.

On the basis of the strategic directions, the draft ESS identifies specific outcomes which Council will be working to achieve. In turn, the outcomes have been grouped into six focus areas which combined provide the thematic management framework.

Implementation and evaluation

The ESS is intended to provide a 'big picture' overview of outcomes that we wish to achieve in the long-term and the strategic directions that will guide us. Shorter-term actions and detailed prescriptions on how we will progress, what projects to implement and when - will be derived from this Strategy as an integral part of our annual business planning framework.

We will monitor progress and effectiveness of the ESS on the basis of our business planning framework and cycles. Our implementation and evaluation framework is best described in terms of three key principles to our approach and described in more detail below:

Inform and provide direction: placing the ESS within our organisational and operational context to ensure integration and synergies between programmes, projects and general council operations and provision of services and assets.

Alignment of reviews within our planning cycle: timing our review and monitoring of progress of the ESS to take advantage of Council's annual and four yearly review processes.

Pragmatic approach: making sure that measurement of progress provides a good, effective and cost-efficient basis for further decision-making.

The ESS will be reviewed in alignment with our annual and four-yearly business planning cycles in order to ensure that any factors that may influence our strategic directions and outcomes are considered as part of the evaluation of the ESS.

Consultation

Community members were consulted early in the project to provide guidance and input into the design of the strategy. Two community focus group meetings, one general community workshop and one Councillor workshop took place during the initial stages of the project. Each of these meetings was facilitated by an independent and experienced facilitator. In addition, three workshops for youth (high school students) were held on environmental sustainability during a Warringah Youth Forum in November 2010.

During the later stages of the project, the Environmental Sustainability Strategic Reference Group (ES-SRG) provided valuable advice on finalising the draft document during three separate workshops.

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Group Manager Strategic Planning

Attachment Booklet – Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2012 – 2022 (Draft)