



Hawkesbury City Council

environment
committee
business
paper

date of meeting: 6 July 2021

location: By Audio-Visual Link

time: 4:00 p.m.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Date: 6 July 2021

AGENDA

- **WELCOME**
- **APOLOGIES**
- **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
- **SECTION 1 - Confirmation of Minutes**
- **SECTION 2 - Reports for Determination**

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ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
SECTION 1 - Confirmation of Minutes

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ROC - Environment Committee Minutes - 13 April 2021 - (151938)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held in the Council Chambers and by Audio-Visual link, on 13 April 2021, commencing at 4:00pm.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Councillor Patrick Conolly, Hawkesbury City Council
Councillor Amanda Kotlash, Hawkesbury City Council
Councillor Sarah Richards, Hawkesbury City Council
Councillor Nathan Zamprogno, Hawkesbury City Council

Apologies: Nil.

In Attendance: Mr Andrew Kearns, Hawkesbury City Council
Ms Adriana Genova, Hawkesbury City Council
Mr Justin Murphy, Hawkesbury City Council
Ms Charles McElroy, Hawkesbury City Council
Ms Tracey Easterbrook - Minute Secretary, Hawkesbury City Council

Attendance Register of Environment Committee

Member	13/04/2021
Councillor Patrick Conolly (Mayor)	✓
Councillor Amanda Kotlash (Chairperson)	✓
Councillor Sarah Richards	✓
Councillor Nathan Zamprogno	✓

Key: A = Formal Apology ✓ = Present X = Absent - no apology

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interests made.

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SECTION 1 - Reports for Determination

Item: 001 **EC - Election of Chairperson - (151938)**

Division: City Planning

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:

That a Chairperson of the Environment Committee for the period from April 2021 to September 2021, be determined.

The Manager Strategic Planning, Mr Kearns, acted as Returning Officer for the election of the Chairperson.

The Returning Officer called for nominations for the position of Chairperson.

One nomination was received:

Councillor Kotlash	Nominated by the Mayor, Councillor Conolly Seconded by Councillor Zamprogno
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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

There being no other nominations, Councillor Kotlash was declared the Chairperson of the Environment Committee for the period from April 2021 to September 2021.

Councillor Kotlash assumed the Chair as Chairperson.

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Item: 002 **EC - Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure - (151938)**

Division: City Planning

Mr Bill Sneddon addressed the Committee speaking for the recommendation in the Business Paper.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:

That the Environment Committee:

1. Receive and note this report.
2. Recommend that Council develop an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Policy and Guidelines to address how electric vehicle charging infrastructure will be managed on public land.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Conolly, seconded by Councillor Richards.

That the Environment Committee:

1. Receive and note this report.
2. Request that staff provide a report on electric vehicle charging that includes consideration of:
 - The NSW Roads Act 1993
 - Location and proximity to other vehicles of charging infrastructure
 - Traffic related implications
 - Source of electricity for charging
 - Options associated with ownership of charging infrastructure
 - An appraisal of how other Councils are dealing with this matter
 - Examples of other Council's Electronic Vehicle policies which are to be attached to the report.
3. Request that this report be brought back to the Environment Committee so that feedback and ideas can be sought from the community, tourism operators, the NRMA and similar peak bodies, and the Australian Electric Car Association for example.
4. Compile the outcomes of the report and consultation and recommend that Council develop an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Policy and Guidelines based on these outcomes.

For the Motion: Councillors Conolly, Kotlash, Richards and Zamprogno.

Against the Motion: Nil.

Absent: Nil.

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Item: 003 **EC - Water Management and Quality - (151938)**

Division: City Planning

Mr Bill Sneddon addressed the Committee speaking for the recommendation in the Business Paper.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:

That the Environment Committee:

1. Receive and note this report.
2. Support the current activities being undertaken by Council to monitor, protect and enhance the Hawkesbury River and its catchment.
3. This matter be brought back to the Environment Committee for advice as the Hawkesbury Coastal Management Plan progresses.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Conolly, seconded by Councillor Richards.

That the Environment Committee:

1. Receive and note this report.
2. That this report be provided to Council for consideration as to whether any further advice is required from the Environment Committee.

For the Motion: Councillors Conolly, Kotlash, Richards and Zamprogno.

Against the Motion: Nil.

Absent: Nil.

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Item: 004 **EC - Zero Litter to Ocean Policy - (151938)**

Previous Item: 227, Ordinary (10 November 2020)

Directorate: City Planning

Mr Bill Sneddon addressed the Committee speaking for the recommendation in the Business Paper.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:

That the Environment Committee:

1. Receive and note this report.
2. Recommend to Council that:
 - a) Without significant new Commonwealth and/or State Government Funding, as outlined in the Zero Litter to Ocean Policy, that Council does not commit to a Zero Litter to River Target.
 - b) Council consider this matter further should new Commonwealth and/or State Government Funding become available in the future.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Conolly, seconded by Councillor Richards.

That the Environment Committee:

1. Receive and note this report.
2. Request that a report be brought back to the Environment Committee, so that it can consult with the wider community on the following:
 - a) What Council might have the capacity to do in the future to prevent litter going into our rivers and oceans.
 - b) What future opportunities Council might have to partner with others to combat this problem.

For the Motion: Councillors Conolly, Kotlash, Richards and Zamprogno.

Against the Motion: Nil.

Absent: Nil.

The meeting terminated at 4:57pm.

oooO END OF REPORT Oooo

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SECTION 2 - Reports for Determination

Item: 1 **Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy - Options Report - (151938)**

Previous Item: 113, Ordinary (15 June 2021)

Directorate: City Planning

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

The purpose of this report is to outline the options available to Council to develop a Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At Council's Ordinary Meeting on 15 June 2021, Council considered a Notice of Motion regarding the development of a Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy. Following discussion on the on the matter, Council resolved:

"That Council request that staff produce a report for the Environment Committee on options available to Council to prepare such a Strategy by mid July 2021, using the information provided in the background section below as a guide."

This report has been prepared for consideration by the Environment Committee as a response to that resolution.

Three options outlining how Council may better coordinate the management and delivery of actions that protect and enhance the Hawkesbury's natural environment have been provided.

Option 1: Incorporation into the Draft Sustainability Strategy

The development of the Sustainability Strategy will highlight gaps in Council's current policies, strategies, and actions, identifying where future efforts of officers should be directed and suggest timeframes for future actions.

Option 2: Gap Analysis and Action Plan

Conduct a review/ gap analysis on how Council is currently managing the Hawkesbury's biodiversity. Review the outcomes, in order to inform the future development of strategies, identify, and prioritise actions which address current policy and management gaps.

Option 3: Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy

A comprehensive in-depth review and analysis of the Hawkesbury's biodiversity.

Each of these options has resourcing implications which are outlined in the report.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Environment Committee consider the options outlined in this report, and provide a recommendation and advice to Council.

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BACKGROUND

At Council's Ordinary Meeting on 15 June 2021, Council considered a Notice of Motion regarding the development of a Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy. A copy of the Notice of Motion is included as Attachment 1.

Following discussion on the on the matter, Council resolved:

"That Council request that staff produce a report for the Environment Committee on options available to Council to prepare such a Strategy by mid July 2021, using the information provided in the background section below as a guide."

DISCUSSION

In response to Council's resolution, three options have been outlined below, including:

Option 1: Incorporation into the Sustainability Strategy

Council's adopted Local Strategic Planning Statement includes the development of a Sustainability Strategy as an action, and officers are currently developing that Strategy.

The Sustainability Strategy is being prepared as an overarching umbrella type document outlining all current and future projects to:

- Increase sustainability across the Hawkesbury Local Government Area
- Identify how we will continue to protect, maintain, and enhance the local area
- Prepare for the projected impacts of climate change.

The Sustainability Strategy will outline how these projects align with the Planning Priorities of the Greater Sydney Region Plan, and the Western City District Plan. The following is an outline of the intended themes of the Sustainability Strategy:

- Our Natural Environment
 - Bushland, National Parks
 - Open Spaces
 - Urban Forest/Green Infrastructure
 - Biodiversity
 - Waterways/Water sensitive city - Rivers, Creek
- Resource Efficiency
 - Energy and carbon emissions
 - Water/wastewater
 - Waste/landfill
- Resilient Communities
 - Climate change
 - Urban heat
 - Bushfire
 - Flood
 - Active transport - walking, cycling

The development of the Sustainability Strategy will highlight gaps in Council's current policies, strategies, and actions, identifying where future efforts of officers should be directed, and suggest timeframes for

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future actions. Attachment 2 'City of Parramatta Environmental Sustainability Strategy' provides an example of such a Strategy.

The theme of *Our Natural Environment* will provide an introduction to Hawkesbury's environment, including the following:

- Importance of our natural environment
- Percentage of national parks and open space
- Our water catchments
- Highlight our current achievements & stakeholder partnerships in protecting and enhancing our natural environment
- The threats to our environment, such as climate change, urban heat and bushfire.

As part of preparation of the Sustainability Strategy, community engagement has already commenced. This included during the 2021 Hawkesbury Show, with Council officers seeking feedback from Hawkesbury residents and visitors to prioritise Sustainability Strategy themes. A report on the outcomes of that community prioritisation exercise will be prepared once other planned engagement on the Sustainability Strategy has been completed, including:

- Consultation with staff, Councillors and Environment Committee
- Western Sydney University, Sustainability Education Team - seeking assistance and input on how to best incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals within the Sustainability Strategy and appropriate reporting methods based on the actions Council can undertake
- Engagement with our Aboriginal community
- Shopping Centre 'pop-ups'
- Youth Week engagement- unable to proceed due to Youth Week event cancellations. Further methods of youth engagement to be determined.

Community engagement on the Sustainability Strategy is currently on hold due to a number of reasons, including flood recovery, staff availability and public health orders associated with Covid-19.

The development of the Sustainability Strategy is currently being undertaken internally by Council officers, with no budget allocated for consultants. Progress on the Strategy is impacted by changing work priorities, and external factors such as natural disasters which has seen an officer seconded to flood recovery.

Option 2: Gap Analysis and Action Plan

This option involves:

- Conduct a review/gap analysis on how Council is currently managing the Local Government Area's biodiversity
- This analysis will require the input of staff, Councillors and local environmental groups
- The review outcomes would inform the future development of strategies, identify, and prioritise actions which address current gaps.

It is recommended that a suitably qualified consultant be engaged to undertake this gap analysis. It is estimated that such an analysis could incur unbudgeted costs in the order of \$50,000+. In addition, Council officers across the organisation would be required to liaise with the selected consultants to ensure the gap analysis is informed by current management practises, budgets and resourcing, and to contribute to the development of future actions impacting our natural environment.

Option 3: Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy

A comprehensive in-depth review and analysis of the Hawkesbury's biodiversity. Proposed headings under a Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy, could include:

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Context and our why

- Purpose and aims of the strategy - protect and enhance biodiversity
- What Biodiversity is and its importance
- Linkages to Community Strategic Plan
- Linkages to Greater Sydney Region Plan, Western City District Plan
- Council's role in Biodiversity conservation

Hawkesbury's Biodiversity

- Local information- size of Local Government Area, landscape - linkages to aboriginal landscapes/heritage
- National Parks and percentage of the Local Government Area
- Our Flora and Fauna
- Our Rivers, Tributaries, Wetlands
- Threats to our biodiversity - climate change, land clearing, invasive species etc

Protecting and Restoring our Biodiversity

- Legislative context
- Strategic planning context - Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan, Metropolis of Three Cities Plan and District Plan. Local Strategic Planning Statement, Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan
- Linkages to existing strategies/policy linkages eg Net Zero Emissions and Water Efficiency Strategy
- Biodiversity stewardship sites and role/offsets/opportunities of Council/private landholders
- Reference to the Department of Planning Industry and Environment values mapping
- How Council manages its lands - bushfire, bushland, volunteers, Council nursery, Park Plans of Management, Urban Tree Management Plan.

Connectivity

- Biodiversity corridors and what they are
- Map of biodiversity corridors - public and private land (education and encouragement).

Action and Implementation Plan (short, medium and long-term)

- List of possible works and programs to address how our biodiversity can be protected and enhanced
- Will include current actions and potential future actions.

Evaluation and Reporting

- Will define the frequency and format of reporting on the Strategy.

By way of comparison to the proposed Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy, an example of a Biodiversity Strategy has been provided in Attachment 3: Central Coast Council Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

Should this option be adopted, it is recommended that a suitably qualified consultant be engaged to develop this Strategy at an unbudgeted cost in the order of \$150,000+. In addition, Council officers across the organisation would be required to liaise with the consultants to ensure the Strategy is informed by current management practises, budgets and resourcing, and to contribute to the development of future actions impacting our natural environment.

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Resourcing Implications

In addition to the preparation of the Sustainability Strategy, lead by Council's Environmental Sustainability Coordinator the following projects are also currently being undertaken:

- Projects to deliver the Net Zero Emissions and Water Efficiency Strategy, including working with Endeavour Energy with respect to network resilience and grid scale community batteries (internal staff resources, grant and partnership opportunities)
- Officer currently involved in flood recovery - approximately 25% to 50% of present workload (internal staff resources)
- Review of Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan and Climate Change Risk Assessment (internal staff resources across multiple departments, and grant opportunities)
- Review of Department of Planning Industry and Environment's Local Government Climate Change Toolkit (internal staff resources)
- Biodiversity Strategic Planning Framework (continuing budget funded project and internal staff resources)
- WSROC Energy Program projects (continuing budget funded subscription and internal staff resources across multiple departments)
- Electric Vehicle charging report (combined use of Sustainability Advantage membership consultant hours (30 Hours) and internal staff resources)
- Zero Litter to Ocean Policy report (internal staff resources)
- Cool Burning Report (internal staff resources across multiple departments)
- Cities Power Partnership Annual Report (internal staff resources across multiple departments)
- WSROC Waste survey and focus groups (shared funding with WSROC and internal staff resources)
- Acquittal of various grant projects including Dashboard (internal staff resources)
- Implementation and engagement for the *Cooling the Hawkesbury* Greening our City grant (Approved grant funded project and internal staff resources across multiple departments)
- Involvement in the development of the Urban Tree Management Plan (budget funded project and internal staff resources across multiple departments).

The engagement of a consultant to undertake the abovementioned options would ensure that the work is completed within a set timeframe, regardless of internal and external factors influencing work priorities. If a consultant is not engaged to undertake the identified options, given the current staff resources available to undertake these various projects, it is considered necessary for the Environment Committee to provide advice to Council with respect to the various priorities of existing projects. Based on that advice, and consideration by Council then appropriate work plans of staff can be amended to factor in the addition of the preparation of a Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not required at this stage. Will be undertaken during the development of the preferred option.

ATTACHMENTS:

- AT - 1** Notice of Motion- Natural Conservation and Restoration Strategy.
- AT - 2** City of Parramatta Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2017 - *(Distributed under separate cover)*.
- AT - 3** Central Coast Council Biodiversity Strategy 2020 - *(Distributed under separate cover)*.

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AT - 1 Notice of Motion- Natural Conservation and Restoration Strategy

ORDINARY MEETING
SECTION 5 – Notices of Motion
Meeting Date: 15 June 2021

Item: 114 **NM2 - Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy - (138881)**

Submitted by: Councillor Kotlash

NOTICE OF MOTION:

That Council:

1. Agree that a Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy is a necessary addition to Council's set of strategic documents, that could be nested under the higher umbrella Sustainability Strategy and would complement many of Council's existing strategic documents.
 2. Request that staff produce a report for the Environment Committee on options available to Council to prepare such a Strategy by mid July 2021, using the information provided in the background section below as a guide.
 3. Request that the Environment Committee assess the options identified in the staff report and advise Council on the best way of achieving a Strategy that has achievable actions that will make a discernible difference to the natural environment.
-

BACKGROUND

We are totally dependent on the natural environment which we share with every other living thing; it is arguably the most precious thing we have. It provides our shelter, food, water and air.

Council's Community Strategic Plan 2017-2036 contains a section called "Our Environment". It lists the following 4 Key Directions and Strategies:

- 3.1 The natural environment is protected and enhanced
- 3.2 To live sustainably and reduce our ecological footprint
- 3.3 We reduce, reuse and recycle
- 3.4 The sustainability of our urban environment is improved.

While all of these are important, the first one, *3.1 The natural environment is protected and enhanced*, is probably the one that is most in need of a strategy. We need a strategy that looks at the natural environment from a systems perspective - that identifies its interconnectedness and how it relates to many aspects of Council's areas of operation in its own right.

This proposed strategy would complement the:

- Rural Lands Strategy;
- Open Space Strategy;
- Biodiversity Strategic Planning Framework;
- Urban heat Planning Tool kit;
- Waste and recycling initiatives; and
- Net Zero Emissions & Water Efficiency Strategy.

Our Rural Lands Strategy deals with the natural environment as it related to rural land use, particular agriculture. Likewise, our Open Spaces Strategy looks at some aspects of environmental conservation and restoration in a patchy and ad hoc way as they relate to how we use the environment for recreation. Our

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Net Zero Emissions and Water Efficiency Strategy gives us actions to combat these issues from the standpoint of how they impact on our build human-inhabited environment.

Developing this strategy is undoubtedly a big task, but breaking it down into achievable and meaningful components is probably our best starting point. Since Council has limited resources to divert to this work, identifying and organising existing information and identify gaps in our knowledge will help us prioritise and get the most out of these resources. There is a lot of work already being done on environmental conservation and restoration by Council staff, many in the community - either individually or in groups, businesses, farmers, school and university students. Council is in a good position to be able to help to strategically guide or support some of this work.

The staff report for the Environment Committee could include, but not be limited to:

- An overview of what has been undertaken already in the ongoing preparation of the umbrella Sustainability Strategy;
- Suggestions on formats for deciding on content (issues/areas to be addressed) (e.g. Councillor workshops, staff input, community forums, input from schools and universities, expert panels, consultants);
- Suggestions on formats for writing and reviewing the strategy (e.g. council staff, consultants, expert panels, community forums, working groups appointed through the Environment Committee); and
- Suggestions on how the strategy might be delivered in terms of timing (e.g. rolled out chapter by chapter, all at once or become a perpetual document that is able to be added to whenever necessary).

Hawkesbury's Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy might contain the following chapters (these are just ideas and suggestions at this stage):

Chapter 1 – Introduction

- Why we need this strategy? Why do we need to conserve and restore our natural environment? Where it fits under the umbrella-type Environmental Sustainability Strategy.
- Features of our natural environment – e.g. food bowl of Sydney, lungs of the greater Sydney region.
- 58% of the Hawkesbury Local Government Area is National Park – what role should Council play in protecting it.
- 15 % is in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area – what role should Council play in protecting it.

Chapter 2 – Threats to our Natural Environment

- Habitat loss and fragmentation
- Invasive species
- Climate change
- Natural disasters -storms, fires, floods
- Soil degradation
- Water, air and soil pollution
- Decreasing biodiversity/loss of species.

Chapter 3 – How we characterise these threats and issues

- Sets out what information needs to be gathered to characterise these threats and underpin the strategy (e.g., Citizen Science programs, Frog Watch, Indian Myna eradication, Bird Watch, Koala Fest, Landcare, Bee programs, wetland care and restoration, weed management, bushcare, adopt a creek),
- What needs to be monitored and assessed and what doesn't.
- Existing information and programs - data mining existing Council information.
- Should we identify bioregions such as hydrological sub-catchments or native vegetation types and use these as a basis of our strategy?

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Chapter 4 - Role of Council

- The 5 main generic roles of Council as Manager/Leader, Critical Partner, Advocate, Supporter and Facilitator would need to be identified.
- This would involve all stakeholder from private landholder, developers, State and Federal Government agencies, community groups, schools, universities, tourism operators, farmers etc.

Chapter 5 – Action Plan

- Conservation or restoration or both?
- List of actions that will make a discernible difference.
- A hierarchy of spatial scales – backyards, urban blocks, big rural properties, turf farms, town centres
- A hierarchy of who can act – individuals, families, neighbours, groups, businesses, the three tiers of government.
- Case studies that show success stories and lessons learnt. For example, Kurrajong a Buzz, Wetland restoration, Willow Warriors, Hawkesbury Indian Myna Action Group, native plant rescue, etc.

Chapter 6 – Implementation

- Funding sources
- Partnerships
- Monitoring
- Review
- Reporting

NOTE BY MANAGEMENT

Council Officers have commenced work on preparation of a Sustainability Strategy as an umbrella type document, the draft outline of which includes amongst other sections:

Our Strategy

- Definition of sustainability
- Details that the Strategy is a higher level, umbrella type document that identifies:
 - Council's commitment to sustainability
 - Existing policies/ strategies that contribute to the delivery of the strategy
 - Additional policy/strategy work required to deliver the strategy
- Where the strategy fits into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework
- Higher level strategic context, including Greater Sydney Region Plan, Western City District Plan, and Hawkesbury Local Strategic Planning Statement.

Themes

- Our Natural Environment
 - Bushland, National Parks,
 - Open Spaces
 - Urban Forest/ Green Infrastructure
 - Biodiversity
 - Waterways/ Water sensitive city -Rivers, Creek.
- Resource Efficiency
 - Energy and carbon emissions
 - Water/ wastewater
 - Waste/ landfill.
- Resilient Communities
 - Climate change
 - Urban heat
 - Bushfire
 - Flood
 - Active transport- walking, cycling.

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In addition to preparation of the Sustainability Strategy, lead by Council's Environmental Sustainability Coordinator the following projects are also currently being undertaken:

- Projects to deliver the Net Zero Emissions and Water Efficiency Strategy, including working with Endeavour Energy with respect to network resilience and grid scale community batteries
- Review of Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan and Climate Change Risk Assessment
- Biodiversity Strategic Planning Framework
- WSROC Energy Program projects
- Electric Vehicle charging report
- Zero Litter to Ocean Policy report
- Cities Power Partnership Annual Report
- WSROC Waste survey and focus groups
- Acquittal of various grant projects including Dashboard.

As such, given the current staff resources available to undertake these various projects, should Council resolve to undertake a Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy, it is considered necessary for the Environment Committee to provide advice to Council with respect to the various priorities of existing projects. Based on that advice and consideration by Council then appropriate work plans of staff can be amended to factor in the addition of the preparation of a Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF NOTICE OF MOTION Oooo

oooO END OF REPORT Oooo

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Item: 2 **EC - Zero Litter to River - (151938)**

Previous Item: 004, Environment Committee (13 April 2021)

Directorate: City Planning

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

The purpose of this report is to respond to the recommendation of the Environment Committee to receive further information on programs and actions that Council can implement to reduce litter in our rivers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At the Environment Committee Meeting on 13 April 2021 a report on Zero Litter to Ocean Policy was provided. Following consideration of the matter, the Committee resolved:

"That the Environment Committee:

- 1. Receive and note this report.*
- 2. Request that a report be brought back to the Environment Committee, so that it can consult with the wider community on the following:*
 - a) What Council might have the capacity to do in the future to prevent litter going into our rivers and oceans.*
 - b) What future opportunities Council might have to partner with others to combat this problem."*

This report details major announcements from the NSW Government that may assist in significantly reducing litter in the environment, including waterways, rivers, and the ocean. It also outlines that new funding opportunities will be made available from the NSW Government .

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Environment Committee:

1. Receive and note this report.
 2. Recommend to Council that any new grant programs and funding opportunities in terms of litter reduction and prevention be explored, and if appropriate grant applications submitted.
-

BACKGROUND

In 2020, Stormwater NSW and Ocean Protect produced the Zero Litter to Ocean Policy Paper. These two organisations through the policy paper outlined why the Commonwealth Government as part of its COVID-19 economic recovery response should invest approximately \$5.7 billion over ten years to prevent litter and pollutants entering waterways and the ocean.

The Zero Litter to Ocean Policy Paper outlines a range of initiatives that can be implemented to stop pollutants like plastics, sediments, heavy metals, tyre runoff, cigarette butts and nitrogen being washed into drains and straight into waterways. Untreated stormwater continues to have a significant impact on marine environments. The policy paper includes the rectification, installation, and appropriate management of existing and new stormwater treatment assets.

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Council at its Ordinary Meeting on 10 November 2020, resolved that Council provide in principle support to the Zero Litter to Ocean Policy and request the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee investigate the introduction of a Zero Litter to River target by 2030.

Furthermore, Council at its Ordinary Meeting on 9 February 2021 referred the matter of Zero Litter to Ocean Policy to the Environment Committee for consideration.

At the Environment Committee's Meeting on 13 April 2021, the Committee received a report which outlined the programs Council currently delivers to reduce litter entering the Hawkesbury River, and how they align with the Zero Litter to Ocean Policy.

To date, there has been no commitment by the Commonwealth or NSW State Government to implement the Zero Litter to Ocean Policy and provide the new additional funding that was requested.

However, the NSW Government in June 2021 released both its Plastics Action Plan and its Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 which both focus on reducing litter and meeting new litter targets. This includes funding for councils to implement new litter reduction and prevention projects.

Council already has a number of existing litter reduction and prevention programs. However, until a new funding announced by the NSW Government becomes available (likely to be after July 2021), Council has limited to no capacity, especially in the context of the flood recovery, to increase its litter reduction and prevention programs.

Relevant Legislation

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001 (NSW)

DISCUSSION

NSW Government Plastics Action Plan

As outlined above, to date there has been no commitment from the NSW Government to implement the Zero Litter to Ocean Policy and the associated funding request. However, in June 2021 the NSW Government released its Plastics Action Plan.

The Plastics Action Plan sets out how the NSW Government will phase out problematic plastics, tackle litter from plastic items such as cigarette butts, and support innovation and research. The Plastics Action Plan will introduce a new overall litter reduction target of 60% by 2030, and a plastic litter reduction target of 30% by 2025.

Table 1 *Phase Out Period for Single Use and Problematic Plastics*, below highlights the timeline for the phasing out of single use and problematic plastics which are major litter items that enter rivers, waterways, and the ocean.

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Table 1: Phase Out Period for Single Use and Problematic Plastics

Phase out period (from passage of legislation)	Single-use and problematic plastic items
6 months	Lightweight shopping bags
12 months	Plastic straws Plastic stirrers Plastic cutlery Expanded polystyrene food service items Cotton buds with plastic sticks Microbeads in rinse-off personal care and cosmetic products
Review in 3 years	Plastic bowls (including lids) and plates Plastic cups (including lids) Oxo-degradable plastics Fruit stickers (non compostable) Heavyweight plastic shopping bags Barrier/produce bags

NSW Government Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041

The NSW Government Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 released in June 2021, outlines actions and targets for waste reduction and landfill diversion. It also sets out how NSW will transition to a circular economy. The key targets and timeframes are outlined in Table 2 *Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 Targets*.

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Table 2: Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 Targets

<p>5 YEAR TARGETS</p> 	<p>Phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025</p>	<p>Plastic litter reduction target of 30% by 2025</p>	
<p>10 YEAR TARGETS</p> 	<p>Reduce total waste generated by 10% per person by 2030</p>	<p>80% average recovery rate from all waste streams by 2030</p>	<p>Introduce a new overall litter reduction target of 60% by 2030</p>
<p>SUB-TARGETS - PLASTICS</p> 	<p>Eliminate problematic and single use plastics by 2025</p>	<p>Triple the plastics recycling rate by 2030</p>	
<p>SUB-TARGETS - ORGANICS</p> 	<p>Halve the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030</p>	<p>Net zero emissions from organics to landfill by 2030</p>	

The Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 has several actions and funding programs related to reducing litter.

The Strategy estimates:

“that the annual direct cost of litter clean-up in NSW is \$180 million. The NSW Government has invested in a range of successful programs and initiatives to tackle litter including the NSW container deposit scheme, Return and Earn, which has successfully diverted over 5 billion containers from litter and landfill for remanufacturing. Coupled with the highly successful Don’t be a Tosser! campaign and a suite of other litter behaviour and enforcement programs, litter in NSW has fallen by 43% since 2014, exceeding the state’s target of 40% by 2020.”

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The Strategy states that the NSW Government will invest \$38 million in litter prevention programs to protect our natural environment and waterways. The Strategy highlights that local government plays a critical role in managing the impacts of waste. The NSW Government will continue to support councils' litter reduction and illegal dumping prevention activities with more than \$10 million in grants.

The Strategy and NSW Government will:

“establish new litter partnerships designed to support capacity building and empower industry, community organisations and stakeholders to take ownership of local litter. A partnership approach with local councils, industry and the community will tackle place-based litter issues through prevention pilots and enforcement activities. The program will use a newly developed litter data framework to target problem hotspots and littering behaviour.”

COUNCIL'S EXISTING LITTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Currently, Council has several programs to address and reduce litter in our environment, and from entering waterways and rivers. These programs include:

- Public Place Litter and Recycling Bins.
- Community and School Waste Education Programs.
- Enforcement (including issuing warnings and fines for littering).
- Stormwater Quality Management for New Development.
- Council Stormwater Treatment Assets: Gross Pollutant Traps.
- Western Sydney Regional Litter Plan 2016-2021.

As reported to the Environment Committee on 13 April 2021, there is limited to no capacity to implement increases to these Council programs particularly in the context of the flood recovery. However, should funding and grants become available in the future, these will be assessed and if appropriate Council grant applications will be submitted. Council is also investigating potential partnership opportunities with various stakeholders including Keep Australia Beautiful and the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (Regional Litter Plan).

As an example of such a potential partnership, Keep Australia Beautiful have recently announced the a new program, being the Local Government Litter Index. The aim of this program is to provide Local Government Areas with the opportunity to acquire comprehensive litter data for their respective councils through engaging Keep Australia Beautiful to deliver a Local Government Litter Index based on the methodology of the Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index.

The Local Government Litter Index can be used by councils to:

- Develop strategies and policies around litter
- Analyse the effects of infrastructure placement
- Develop site or area specific budgets and plans
- Measure the impact of local education campaigns
- Engage with local businesses to offer ideas and resources around waste reform
- Engage, educate, and inform residents to reduce.

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For councils that join, Local Government Litter Index conducts inspections and litter audits at 16 sites. For example:

Site Type	Number of Sites
Beach	1
Highway	1
Main road	2
Small street	3
Shopping centre car park	2
Shopping strip	3
Park/ playground	3
Transport Hub	1
Total	16

The approximate cost for councils to participate in the Local Government Litter Index project is \$18,000 in the first year, and then ongoing \$16,000 p.a. Keep Australia Beautiful seek a minimum 3 year commitment from councils to be able to provide accurate trend and benchmarking data. Use of the Better Waste funding that Council receives from the Environment Protection Agency could potentially be used to fund Council's participation in this program, at least for the first year.

CONFORMANCE TO THE HAWKESBURY COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2036

The proposal is consistent with the following Focus Area, Direction and Strategies within the CSP.

Our Environment

- 3.1.1 Encourage effective management and protection of our rivers, waterways, riparian land, surface and ground waters, and natural eco-systems through local action and regional partnerships.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

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environment committee

end of business paper

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