



## MINUTES

The Minutes of the **Environment Reference Group Meeting**  
held in the Ros Crichton Pavilion, 200 Miller Street, North Sydney  
on Tuesday 14 May 2024.



Councillor Santer in the Chair, Councillor Baker and Welch

**Staff:** Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Community, Planning and Environment  
Gabrielle Rennard, Service Unit Manager Community Resilience and Sustainability  
Gareth Debney, Bushland Management Coordinator  
Peita Rose, Governance Officer (Minutes)

**Citizen Members:** Wendy Pryor, Community Member  
Philip Worrall, Community Member  
Anne Edwards, Community Member  
Bruce Handmer, Community Member  
Jane Theau, Community Member

**Visitor:** John Slaytor, Resident

**Apologies:** Councillor Beregi; Danielle Birkbeck (Senior Sustainability Programs Coordinator)

## 1. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 March 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

Moved by Bruce Handmer and seconded by Wendy Pryor

## 2. Disclosures of Interest

Nil.

## 3. Reports

### 3.1. The state of the Urban Forest in North Sydney LGA

**AUTHOR** Jessica Karam, Urban Forest Officer

The purpose of this report is to showcase the work conducted by Council's Urban Forest team and provide a summary on our outcomes and achievements.

- The Urban Forest team at North Sydney Council is constantly seeking new opportunities to enhance the canopy cover within the region.
- The Urban Forest team plants and ensures the establishment of at least 350 trees per annum, and maintains all existing trees around the Local Government Area (LGA) (irrigation, pruning, removal when necessary, treatment for diseases, etc.)
- Continuous monitoring of the Urban Forest (whether by visually assessing trees or by remote sensing-based mapping) highlights the changes throughout the years on

different land categories, allowing us to set out plans to mitigate or lower the impact of any loss and to identify locations where trees are most needed, including replacing dead or senescent trees.

- Infrastructure projects undertaken in North Sydney LGA, as well as urban developments, are causing a dramatical loss of canopy.
- Trees for Newborns program has been in place since July 2023. 100 trees have been requested by the community for planting on their own property.
- Education programs are being prepared and implemented to raise awareness among the stakeholders about the value and benefits of trees in an urban environment.
- Plans and policies are continuously reviewed and updated for the protection of the trees in the LGA.

The Urban Forest team operation is funded through the recurrent operating budget provided by the Council. Other initiatives such as Trees for Newborns, LGA canopy cover mapping, street tree audits, and converting low voltage conventional powerlines to aerial bundled cables are fully financed through the annual budget allocated from the Environmental Levy.

**Recommending:**

1. **THAT** the report on the state of the Urban Forest in North Sydney be noted.

The Motion was moved by Jane Theau and seconded by Wendy Pryor.

Voting was unanimous.

**Resolved to recommend:**

1. **THAT** the report on the state of the Urban Forest in North Sydney be noted.

### **3.2. Coal Loader Schools Education Program**

**AUTHOR** Leonie Netting, Coordinator Coal Loader Sustainability Centre

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Coal Loader Schools Education Program.

- A core function of the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability is environmental education.
- In recent years, the Coal Loader's education program for schools has not been adequately resourced and an opportunity to refocus efforts in FY23/24 has allowed for a complete program review and overhaul.
- A comprehensive review of the existing school's education program was undertaken, followed by the design of a new program.
- The new Coal Loader Schools Education Program is set to be launched in July FY24/25.
- Funding for the Coal Loader Schools Education Program comes from the Environmental Levy.

**Recommending:**

1. **THAT** the report on the Coal Loader Schools Education Program be received.

The Motion was moved by Bruce Handmer and seconded by Wendy Pryor.

Voting was unanimous.

**Resolved to recommend:**

1. **THAT** the report on the Coal Loader Schools Education Program be received.

### **3.3. Tracking Towards Net Zero: North Sydney Council and Community Emissions**

**AUTHOR** Danielle Birkbeck, Acting Manager Environmental Services

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on North Sydney Council's operational emissions, and the emissions profile of the North Sydney community. The report outlines how each are tracking toward Council's 2030 targets.

- The North Sydney Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030 lists both Council and community targets for emissions reduction.
- Council and the North Sydney community are on track to meet these targets through significant investment in renewable technologies, procurement of renewable energy contracts and the delivery of community education and incentivisation programs.

**Recommending:**

1. **THAT** the report Tracking Towards Net Zero: North Sydney Council and Community Emissions be noted.

The Motion was moved by Phil Worrall and seconded by Bruce Handmer.

Voting was unanimous.

**Resolved to recommend:**

1. **THAT** the report Tracking Towards Net Zero: North Sydney Council and Community Emissions be noted.

## 4. General Business

1) John Slaytor attended the meeting to discuss the following items:

- Tree Pruning

Mr Slaytor advised that he planted a Viburnum tree 20 years ago on his land and he now wants to have it pruned. He was told by Council that he needs a permit from council as well as a class 3 arborist to prune it. He asked where the financial incentive is and suggested a reduction in rates, or some sort of incentive scheme.

It was advised by Council's Bushland Management Coordinator that under certain conditions outlined on the NSC website, Council's Tree Vegetation Management Policy allows residents to prune up to 10% without seeking a permit from Council.

- EV Charging in Euroka Street, Waverton

Mr Slaytor advised that he resides in Euroka Street where at present there is no off street parking. He Purchased an EV and decided to charge it at night, and to do that he ran a cable across the footpath which was a metre until the grass verge which he covered as this stops the cable from being a trip hazard. He received a letter from Council that a Ranger had photographed the cord on the footpath at 10pm one evening, and warned him that if he did it again, he would be fined.

He received a letter from Council advising him that the street tree outside his house has caused damage to the pavement, and that Council will be replacing the pavement. He stated that this would be a great opportunity to run a PVC pipe under the pavement so that he could run a cord through it and charge his car.

He wrote to the Mayor stating that he understands it is Council's property but that he would be driving a private benefit if he could have a cable underneath the street, and at the same time, he is happy to open it to residents within Euroka Street to charge their cars. He would create a community street charging scheme using his existing network.

A Motion was moved by John Slaytor seconded by Jane Theau

**1. THAT** a report be prepared on EV charging and how it can be supported for our community.

Voting was unanimous

**Resolved to recommend:**

**1. THAT** a report be prepared on EV charging and how it can be supported for our community.

2) Jane Theau discussed the following:

Ms Theau advised that she is the head of an organisation called Textiles Sydney that operates out of the Primrose Park Art & Craft Centre and it has come to our attention that there is a vast quantity of used street banners stored at the Council. They are large and heavy items made from a pretty awful synthetic fabric that stands up to the weather but is unable to be repurposed.

- Are the banners relative to repeat events like Christmas reused? I understand there are a lot stored away for which this isn't the case.
- Given that the banners aren't used over and over, does the fabric have to be so robust?
- Can an alternative natural fabric be used for this purpose?

Given the alarming amount of textile waste, a better way to manage this waste stream is advisable.

Council's staff will investigate alternative natural fabric.

3) Phil Worrall discussed the following items:

- Textiles at NSROC

Mr Worrall advised that the NSROC facility at Artarmon is receiving wearable textiles and fabric with the trial nearing completion in May/June. Is there any direction for this to continue in the future? The Blue Mountains City Council receives all textiles and fabric with Zero Waste. Is there a capacity for NSROC to take all textiles and soft plastics?

The question has been taken on notice.

- Blister Pack Recycling

Mr Worrall advised that the chemist opposite IGA on Military Road, Cremorne recycles blister packs, they split the plastic and recycle both, and instead of bubble wrap they use paper.

4) Bruce Handmer discussed the following:

Mr Handmer advised that he regularly walks around Blues Point Reserve and picks up fishing lines. A couple of dog owners have said to him that there is nowhere they can take dogs where there is not a risk of fishing hooks.

The Mayor advised that Council isn't technically responsible for fishing on wharves, transport for NSW is the responsible party. As there were a couple of

instances at Sawmillers Reserve with dogs and hooks, Council's Rangers were doing a blitz on fisher folk and it seems to have improved.

The Mayor will send a letter to TfNSW and stated that the Director Community, Planning and Environment will talk to the Rangers to again do another fisher folk blitz and educate people.

## **5. Closure**

The meeting finished at 6.45pm.