



MINUTES

The Minutes of the **Environment Reference Group meeting** held in the Ros Crichton Pavilion, 200 Miller Street, North Sydney on Monday 21 November 2022.



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Councillor Bourke in the Chair, Councillor Baker, Beregi, Bourke, Lamb and Welch.

Staff: Therese Manns, General Manager
Peter Massey, Manager Environmental Services
Danielle Birkbeck, Sustainability Programs Coordinator

Peita Rose, Governance Officer (Minutes)

Citizen Members: Anne Edwards, Community Member
Bruce Handmer, Community Member (remotely)
Philip Worrall, Community Member (remotely)
Wendy Pryor, Community Member

Visitors: Gerry Haines, Resident

Apologies were received from John Berry

1. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 July 2022, copies of which had been previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

Moved by Councillor Lamb and Seconded by Councillor Beregi.

2. Disclosures of Interest

Nil.

Virginia Brunton updated the Committee on the Commercial Food Waste Trial that MI consulting Group is proposing for Crows Nest.

The commercial food Waste Project in Crows Nest is a project that has been funded by the EPA. The EPA have forwarded a mandate for commercial businesses that generate food waste to have a food waste collection service by 2025.

They have offered two options to the EPA in putting forward these projects. One was an industrial path type precinct and the second was the collection of food waste in Crows Nest

North Sydney Council are assisting with the project through the Better Business Partnership Program. To date, they have engaged with 42 businesses, twenty-two of which have signed up to the project. They have visited all the business along Alexander Street, Willoughby Road and Albany Street and few of the outliers as well. There is a meeting organised with the purpose being to get businesses to think about what challenges they will face in diverting food waste as well as what things they need to change in their business and what infrastructure they might need.

The biggest hurdle that businesses face is getting a relatively well priced and competitive price for the collection of food waste.

So far, they understand there is limited bin area, and limited hours where bins can be collected.

There are education challenges as well as logistical challenges and the project is looking at how they might overcome some of those challenges that the businesses face.

The trial is likely to run until June 2023, and the plan is to identify what the challenges are and put some steps in place to overcome those challenges as well as to see what it is that they can implement.

A Motion was moved by Councillor Beregi and seconded by Councillor Welch,

1. THAT we thank Virginia for her presentation and that the Reference Group have regular updates on how the project is going.

Voting was unanimous.

Resolved to recommend:

1. THAT we thank Virginia for her presentation and that the Reference Group have regular updates on how the project is going.

3. Committee Reports

3.1. RecycleSmart Trial Update

Report of Emmaline Callaghan, Waste Operations and Education Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the progress of the RecycleSmart trial which commenced July 2022 for an initial period of three months and extended for a further period of three months to 30 December 2022.

In the Council meeting on 28 March 2022, Council resolved to offer RecycleSmart a three-month trial to enable difficult to recycle items to be collected and transferred to local recycling infrastructure. Council also resolved that an agreement be sought with the Community Recycling Centre (CRC) member Councils, about engaging with King Cotton to provide a textile recycling collection bin at the CRC.

RecycleSmart offers a household pick up service for difficult to recycle items such as soft plastics, textiles and e-waste. Residents can subscribe for free and get up to 2 bags (the size of shopping bags) picked up per month. Additional bags cost the resident \$5 each. Alternatively, the resident can book a single pick up for \$10 for 2 bags.

Materials are delivered to local infrastructure such as Coles and Woolworths Recycle bins (for soft plastics), charity shops (textiles) and the CRC (e-waste and hazardous household waste). During the first three months of the trial an average of 295 bags per month was collected. The trial has been extended for a further three months to the end of December 2022 to ascertain whether there will be an increase in the uptake of the program in the lead up to the holiday period.

The cost of the first 3 months of the trial was \$15,000 plus GST for an unlimited number of bags. There is no additional cost for the extended 3-month period, however if the number of bags collected exceeds 1000 per month, then Council will be charged \$7 per bag thereafter. Based on the current data, it is unlikely that more than 1000 bags will be collected per month. For the three months from 5 July 2022 – 30 September 2022 the results are as follows:

- 421 bookings
- 884 bags collected
- 1,446 kilos collected
- 49% soft plastics, 25% textiles, 16% e-waste, 10% other (batteries, printer cartridges and x-rays etc)

Council has received positive feedback from the local community about the RecycleSmart service. One issue encountered was that some bags have been collected inadvertently as an illegal dumping.

The service is growing and there has been an increase in the uptake, however at this stage the number of bags being collected is below the 1000 bag threshold, which have kept costs to the minimum.

The extension of the trial to December 2022 has been offered at the same rate as the initial trial, at a cost of \$15,000 plus GST for 3 months. However, if more than 1000 bags are collected, each bag over 1000 will be charged at \$7 per bag.

If Council decides to engage RecycleSmart on ongoing basis after the trial period ends, the costs will be as follows:

Bags collected per month	Monthly Cost to Council
0-1000	\$7,000 (base)
1001-3000	\$7.00 per bag
3001-5000	\$6.50 per bag

>5000	\$6.00 per bag
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If Council wishes to proceed with a 12-month collection agreement with RecycleSmart, this will be at a minimum cost of \$84,000 plus GST per year. This can be funded from the Domestic Waste Management Budget.

Recommending:

1. **THAT** the report be received.
2. **THAT** Council continues to provide the RecycleSmart program for Council residents for an additional twelve months after the trial period ends.

The Motion was moved by Councillor Beregi and seconded by Councillor Lamb.

1. **THAT** the report be received.
2. **THAT** Council continues to provide the RecycleSmart program for Council residents for an additional twelve months after the trial period ends.
3. **THAT** during the period and beyond Council engage with Owner's Corporation and Precincts for the complimentary better management of such waste.

Voting was unanimous.

Resolved to recommend:

1. **THAT** the report be received.
2. **THAT** Council continues to provide the RecycleSmart program for Council residents for an additional twelve months after the trial period ends.
3. **THAT** during the period and beyond Council engage with Owner's Corporation and Precincts for the complimentary better management of such waste.

3.2. The Case for Carbon Offsets to Achieve Carbon Neutral

Report of Danielle Birkbeck, Snr Sustainability Programs Coordinator

This report provides a background to carbon offsets and the role they have in achieving Councils 2030 carbon neutral target.

Council has a target to become carbon neutral by 2030 and predicted modelling shows carbon offsets will need to be purchased to cover our residual emissions profile. Carbon offsets are used as a tool for organisations to achieve carbon neutrality after implementing all other operational measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This report provides information on Councils emissions profile, carbon offsets, carbon neutral certification and proposes a pathway to achieve carbon neutrality before 2030.

Funding for the purchase of carbon offsets will come from existing funds in the Environmental Levy.

Recommending:

1. **THAT** the report is received and noted.

A Motion was moved by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Beregi,

1. **THAT** the report is received and noted.

2. THAT there be a standing item on the agenda on the progress of the 2030 Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

Voting was unanimous.

Resolved to recommend:

1. THAT the report is received and noted.

2. THAT there be a standing item on the agenda on the progress of the 2030 Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

3.3. North Sydney Bushcare's 30th Anniversary

Report of Gareth Debney - Bushland Management Coordinator

The purpose of this report is to advise on Council's plans to recognise and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the North Sydney Bushcare Program in 2023.

2023 will mark the 30th Anniversary of North Sydney's Bushcare Program. To celebrate this milestone, the Bushland Management Team have partnered with Council's Communications Team to undertake video interviews of five "Bushcare Champions" – volunteers who have been involved in the program since its beginnings in 1993. These five long-serving volunteers will share their recollection of Bushcare's origins, its growth over the years and how they have seen the bush change in response to volunteer bush regeneration work. They will also be asked why they volunteer, what they get out of the participating and what they would say to other prospective volunteers.

Each Bushcare Champion video will be edited with drone footage, to be recorded over several iconic North Sydney bushland areas – highlighting the natural beauty of these areas and their irreplaceable value as community assets.

A number of other 30th anniversary initiatives have been suggested by our Bushcare Groups Convenors. These will be considered by the Bushland Management Team and incorporated (where possible) into the overall plan for 2023's celebrations.

Funding for this project will be sourced from existing allocations in the Environment Levy.

Recommending:

1. THAT the report be noted.

The Motion was moved by Councillor Beregi and seconded by Councillor Lamb.

1. THAT the report be noted.

Voting was unanimous.

General Business

Electrical Vehicle Charging

Bruce Hander requested that Council consider EV charging from parking meters in some locations in the LGA. He also advised that the City of Sydney has installed some of the charging points in their LGA.

Pet Ownership

Phil Worrall requested that pet ownership be added to the agenda or raised as a general business item when appropriate.

Waste from Vaping

Phil Worrall advised that vaping is an extraordinary waste compared to a cigarette butt and has there been any moves to put a deposit on those? Or maybe it's a matter for the local government conference next year but a lot of waste is going to go onto the street in the meantime.

Council Manager Environmental Services advised that he hadn't heard anything about vaping waste at all but could raise it in the NSROC waste officers' group and see if they have heard anything about the issue in their areas.

Boat Launch Ramp – Sawmillers Reserve, Berrys Bay

Bruce Handmer would like to thank whoever organized the replacement of the dangerous boat launching ramp at Sawmillers Reserve, Berrys Bay. It was an environmental issue as so many people use the park.

Thanks from Mayor

The Mayor thanked the community members of this reference group for their attendance at this year's meetings, and that it is the last meeting for the year.

4. Closure

The meeting closed at 8:30pm.