



## MINUTES

The Minutes of the **Environment Reference Group Meeting** held in the Ros Crichton Pavilion, 200 Miller Street, North Sydney on Tuesday 7 March 2023.



Councillor Bourke in the Chair, the Mayor Councillor Baker and Councillor Santer

**Staff:** Peter Massey, Manager Environmental Services  
Bo Karaula, Waste Management Co-ordinator  
Danielle Birkbeck, Sustainability Programs Coordinator  
Emmaline Callaghan, Waste Operations and Education Officer  
Gareth Debney, Bushland Management Co-ordinator (remote)  
Peita Rose, Governance Officer (Minutes)

**Citizen Members:** Bruce Handmer, Community Member  
Wendy Pryor, Community Member  
Philip Worrall, Community Member (remote)

**Visitors:** Anne Prince, A P Consulting

**Apologies** were received from Councillor Beregi, John Berry-Resident and Anne Edwards-Community Member.

#### **1. Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 November 2022, 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.

The Food Waste Trial was brought forward due to the guest speaker Anne Prince from A P Consulting being in attendance to present an update to the Reference Group on this item.

### **3.5. Food Waste Trial**

Report of Bo Karaula, Waste Management Co-ordinator

This report provides an overview of the results of the six month Food Scraps Trial in Multi Unit Dwellings (MUDs).

State Government legislative framework requires Councils to implement food and garden organics collections for all NSW households by 2030.

The previous Council resolved to undertake a six-month food waste collection trial to determine to what extent a separate Food Organics collection and processing service is feasible in (MUDs) which make up approximately 90% of the housing stock in the LGA.

The trial was implemented in May 2022 and ran for six months. It examined the participation and food scraps contamination rates whilst gathering cost and operational data. Such data is required in order for Council to make long-term strategic decisions on resource recovery options prior to the renewal of the waste collection and processing contracts in June 2029 (includes the extension options having been exercised for these contracts). Preparation of Tender documents for Food Organics Collections and Processing services would require at least a two-and-a-half-year lead time before Tenders are sought for such services. Additionally, the successful contractors would require at least 18 months lead time to mobilise the necessary plant and equipment to fulfill their obligations prior to the commencement of the new contract/s in June 2029. This assumes there will be a viable food processing facility available for Council to deliver the food organics for processing.

The main objective of the trial was to engage a diverse sample of MUDs large enough to generate data that is a good representation of the LGA. MUDs are inherently more difficult to manage due their high transient population. To reduce the risk of the results being biased or distorted a direct random sampling method of recruitment was used. A total of 413 individual unit dwellings were recruited across 10 MUD blocks in four suburbs. Participants were provided with the necessary infrastructure such as kitchen caddies and compostable caddy liner bags to ensure the Trial ran smoothly. Each building was provided with 120 L MGBs allocated on a shared basis. Participants were supported by educational resources including wall posters for lobby notice boards, bin and caddy stickers, bin bay signage, brochures etc. The once weekly collection was undertaken by Councils contractor, URM. The material was delivered to Earthpower owned by Veolia in Camelia where it was bulked up and transported to Wormtech in Forbes for composting.

As the trial progressed, audit results showed a decline in the amount of food waste separated by the participants as well as an increase in the contamination levels. Detailed results of the Trial and suggested options for Council to consider moving forward will be presented by APrince Consulting at the Environment Reference Group meeting.

Council was successful in securing a grant for \$ 180,000 from the State Government to assist with the delivery of the trial. The funding program allowed eligible councils to apply for a grant of up to \$180,000 to undertake projects that will increase the recovery of organics in the red-lid garbage bin.

The total cost of the project was \$215,000 which is less than the original project estimate of \$220,000. The Domestic Waste Management Budget funded \$40,000.

There are no financial implications for the purposes of this report.

**Recommending:**

1. **THAT** the Food Waste Trial report be noted.

The Motion was moved by Councillor Santer and seconded by Bruce Handmer.  
Voting was unanimous.

**Resolved to recommend:**

1. **THAT** the Food Waste Trial report be noted.

### 3. Committee Reports

#### 3.1. Imperfect Low Waste Living Program

Report of Jordan Moy, Sustainability Education Officer

This report provides a program review of the Imperfect Low Waste Living Program that was delivered in 2022.

Imperfect Low Waste Living (ILWL) Program assists residents to significantly reduce their household waste by providing a range of affordable, low-tox and zero or low waste alternatives for common household waste items. It is a wholistic program that focuses on one key area of the house per week, and is designed to fit residents means, ability, energy, access, and time. The intensive four-week program has been running since 2021 and 60 participants have achieved an average of 45% reduction in their household waste.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview and evaluation of the most recent 2022 Imperfect Low Waste Living Program.

This project is funded through Council's Environment Levy. The project budget was \$10,000 with the majority of this going towards facilitator costs, staff time and materials for the program participants.

**Recommending:**

1. **THAT** the report regarding the Imperfect Low Waste Living Program be received.

The Motion was moved by Wendy Pryor and seconded by Councillor Santer.

Voting was unanimous.

**Resolved to recommend:**

1. **THAT** the report regarding the Imperfect Low Waste Living Program be received.

#### 3.2. Bushcare Calendar of Events and Activities

Report of Andrew Scott, Bushcare Officer

To inform Councillors and the community about the purpose and benefits of North Sydney Council's Bushcare Calendar of Events and Activities Program

In 2023, the Bushland Team will provide over 45x biodiversity education and engagement activities to the North Sydney community. The Calendar Program is in addition to ad hoc corporate volunteer and school Bushcare activities that occur on a request-basis. Bushcare events are held both in and out of area; they include Introduction to Bushcare Training; guided interpretive bushwalks, school holiday activities, an Aboriginal Cultural Awareness activity, community tree planting events, wildlife workshops, inter-Council Bushcare activities and the Bushcare Volunteer Christmas Party.

Funding for the Bushcare Calendar Program is included in the adopted 2022/23 budget.

**Recommending**

**1. THAT** the Bushcare Calendar of Events and Activities Report be noted.

The Motion was moved by Councillor Baker and seconded by Bruce Handmer.

Voting was unanimous.

**Resolved to recommend:**

**1. THAT** the Bushcare Calendar of Events and Activities Report be noted.

**3.3. Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability Update**

Report of Leonie Netting, Coordinator Coal Loader Sustainability Centre

To provide an overview of the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability activities over the last six months, as well as a projection of activities for the next six months.

This report includes a brief synopsis of Coal Loader activity including education, events, tours, site activities and other activations, as well as a projection of planned activities over the period.

**Recommending:**

**1. THAT** the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability Activities report be noted.

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

Voting was unanimous.

**Resolved to recommend:**

**1. THAT** the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability Activities report be noted.

**3.4. Gore Cove Reserve Walking Track Upgrade**

Report of Gareth Debney, Bushland Management Coordinator

This report informs Councillors and the community about the development and coordination of upgrades to the Gore Cove Reserve bushland walking track in Wollstonecraft.

The Gore Cove Reserve bushland walking track in Wollstonecraft is being upgraded with funding from North Sydney Council (Capital Works) and a grant awarded by the NSW Department of Lands.

This combined funding will enable new track features to be constructed as well as replacement of aging track elements such as sleeper box steps; raised boardwalks; track edging; water-bars and handrails.

The last time a major upgrade was carried out on the Gore Cove track was in 2008. Due to significant access constraints that are a characteristic of this linear foreshore reserve, track elements were constructed from treated pine building materials which have a limited lifespan particularly in sheltered, moisture-affected areas like Gore Cove and the Berry Creek riparian corridor. Despite being only fifteen years old, many of these timber track elements were approaching their safe useful life expectancy and required replacement. The additional funding afforded by the grant has enabled replacement of these timber elements with large-dimension sandstone blocks. Whilst moderately more expensive upfront, sandstone building materials in bushland provide far greater longevity, improved resistance to moisture and an aesthetic appeal that is highly compatible to a bushland setting.

Under normal circumstance, the use of dimension sandstone would not be possible in a difficult-to-access reserve like Gore Cove, however the grant funding has enabled the use of aerial materials delivery via a specialised helicopter lifting service, more commonly seen in National Parks or larger Council bushland areas like Manly Dam on the Northern Beaches.

The Gore Cove track upgrade will deliver a safer, more enjoyable and environmentally stable track surface, including:

- 174x dimension sandstone block steps (replacing mostly treated pine sleeper box steps)
- 4x new/replacement raised boardwalks covering over 40 lineal meters
- New galvanised steel handrails
- Water-bars, track edging and removal of in-track trip hazards
- New interpretive signage

Implementation of the project has begun and is expected to be completed by the end of May 2023. Periodic track closures will be required for public safety and aerial delivery operations. Funding for this project is included in the adopted 2022/23 budget.

**Recommending:**

1. **THAT** the Gore Cove Reserve walking track upgrade report be noted.

The Motion was moved by Councillor Santer and seconded by Bruce Handmer. Voting was unanimous.

**Resolved to recommend:**

1. **THAT** the Gore Cove Reserve walking track upgrade report be noted.

### 3.5. Food Waste Trial

*(This matter was considered earlier in the meeting, see page 3)*

### 4. General Business

#### Party Boat Noise

Mr Bruce Handmer addressed the Reference Group on the following:-

I am sure no one objects in principle to businesses running parties and cruises on the harbour. Unfortunately, some of these boats ignore their own Code of Conduct and ignore NSW noise regulations. Raising the issue through the EPA appears to make no difference.

Whilst most boats have their sound systems inside, which limits the noise, one boat, Glass Island has it's DJ and speakers on the open top deck. I have measured their sound levels at over 70db inside our apartment with the windows and doors closed. People who work on other party boats have commented to me that this example of amplified music is at a "crazy" level. Additionally, smaller catamaran party boats tend to pick up moorings in sheltered water such as Berry's Bay and will stay there for hours whilst around 30 passengers each, party.

Sound travels over water very easily. The party boat, Glass Island's noise levels are extreme from when it approaches McMahons Point from the east, until it rounds Balls Head to travel into the next western bay, one and one half kilometres away. These boats travel slowly, so for fifteen to twenty minutes, in each direction of travel, residents are subjected to noise as if they lived overlooking an open air rock concert / dance venue. This happens anytime between 5pm and 11pm any night, although most usually Friday through Sunday. Given that on a busy night there may be a dozen party boats cruising past, some nights the noise is almost constant.

The issue with boats picking up moorings in Berrys Bay (or any other bay) is that they sit there for two or more hours, sometimes with loud music and almost always with excited and sometimes drunk people yelling happily to each other. Again, the sound travels easily to the shore and in some cases, apartment buildings are less than 100m away. So having a quiet afternoon or evening if you live anywhere near these bays is unlikely during the week and almost impossible on weekends. People who live near North Sydney Council's waterfront may as well have bought an apartment next door to an unrestricted music venue or under the flight path of Sydney Airport, given the constant noise.

Mr Handmer asked what can be done about the noise from a local government point of view?

The Mayor advised that the noise pollution from the party boats is ultimately governed by the State, the licensing Police and the Water Police who have been involved recently due to the behaviour on a series of boats.

The Mayor met with 'Friends of Sydney Harbour' who have set up a group some of whom are North Sydney residents from Cremorne Point. One of their issues was lobbying the Maritime, the Police and the State Government about the Party Boats noise. The Mayor met with them 6 months ago and again with the Mayors of Mosman and Lane Cove, even though the Councils can't do very much. The 'Friends of Sydney Harbour' are trying to prosecute it as not just being a noise issue, noise pollution generally but a safety issue, and to see if the party boats can be forced to abide by the law, but in particular those using the boats along with their own staff, as some incidences have been the staff on the boats themselves, as that might change the way they operate generally.

The Mayor advised that she will put Bruce Handmer in contact with David Morris from 'Friends of Sydney Harbour'.

Bruce Handmer advised that Stephen Goodbridge from the new Association of Charter Boats reached out to him and advised that they want to take action to try to resolve this in a positive way.

Bruce Handmer thanked the Mayor for her understanding of this issue.

**5. Closure**

Meeting closed at 8:30pm.