



AGENDA

A meeting of the **Environment Reference Group** will be held on Cammeraygal Land at the Ros Crichton Pavilion Council Chambers, 200 Miller Street, North Sydney at 5:30 PM on Tuesday 16 May 2023.
The agenda is as follows.

Therese Manns
GENERAL MANAGER



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1. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 March 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

2. Disclosures of Interest

Nil

3. Committee Reports

3.1. Sustainable Business Program Review

AUTHOR	Daniella Mac Dowell, Sustainable Business Officer
ENDORSED BY	Peter Massey, Acting Director Open Space and Environmental Services
ATTACHMENTS	Nil
CSP LINK	1. Our Living Environment 1.2 Environmentally sustainable community 4. Our Social Vitality 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe

PURPOSE:

This report provides an overview of Council’s Sustainable Business Programs (CitySwitch, Better Business Partnership and Environmental Upgrade Agreements) and identifies opportunities to further assist North Sydney businesses on their sustainability journey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Sustainability is a core value of Council and is reflected in several of our strategic documents. These include the North Sydney Vision 2040 – Community Strategic Plan, which recognises climate change as a threat to the future of our community, and the North Sydney Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030, that establishes clear targets in 7 areas including carbon footprint, water conservation, water quality, sustainable transport, urban ecology, resource recovery and community engagement.
- This report provides information on Council’s Sustainable Business Programs and suggests opportunities to improve outcomes and increase their impact, as well as align the programs with targets set out in the North Sydney Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Sustainable Business Program report be received and noted.

Background

Council has been actively engaging businesses in implementing actions towards a more sustainable future since first piloting the 3CBD's Greenhouse program more than 20 years ago. Council currently has three programs to assist businesses regarding sustainability: CitySwitch, Better Business Partnership (BBP) and Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs).

Report

Much has been achieved over the past 20 years to engage businesses in North Sydney on their sustainability journey, however Council's Sustainable Business Programs have further opportunities to assist businesses improve and increase their impact and engagement and align with the targets set out in Council's strategic documents. The North Sydney Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030 states that Sustainability is one of Council's core values and establishes clear targets to reduce carbon emission, aiming to achieve 65% greenhouse gas reduction of 1996 community emissions levels before 2030 (Carbon Footprint Reduction target) as well as 90% of participants in Council's environmental sustainability engagement activities motivated and enabled to take actions to improve environmental sustainability outcomes before 2030 (Engagement in Sustainability target).

An overview of Council's business programs is provided below.

CitySwitch

CitySwitch is a national program, focused on office-based businesses that want to commit to net zero targets. North Sydney has been a member for more than 10 years, together with City of Sydney, Adelaide City Council and City of Melbourne. In September 2022, the CitySwitch Program revisited its objectives and strategic goals originally focussed on "Green Office" and, after doing a 12-month consultation with its signatories, relaunched the program with a broader and more strategic focus on "The Net Zero Pathway". This evolution was deemed necessary to meet the demands of the climate emergency and support business to decarbonise all aspects of their operations, as well as to become more aligned with Local, State and Federal carbon reduction goals. Figure 1 below is a graphical representation of the new pathway to net zero.

Your pathway to net zero

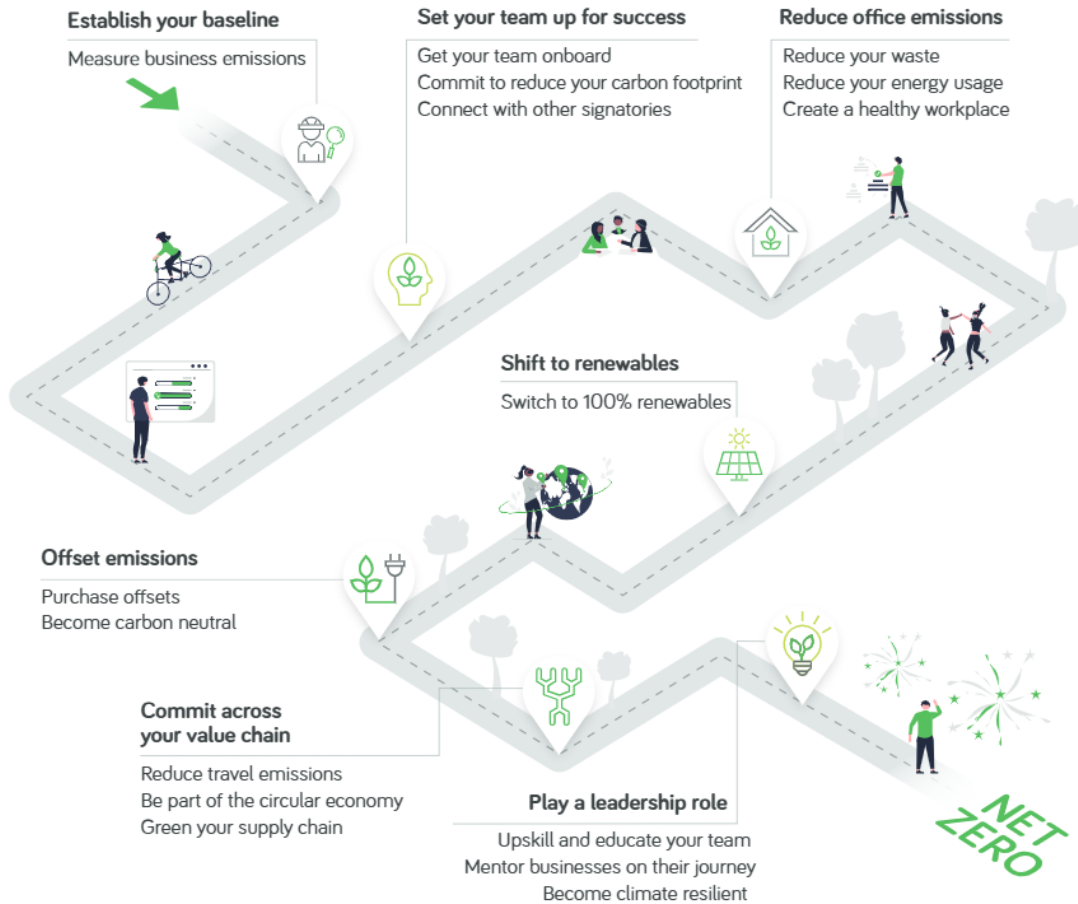


Figure 1. The Net Zero Pathway – CitySwitch

Out of the 543 national CitySwitch signatories, 29 businesses are in North Sydney, and from the 5 million square meters of NLA (Net Lettable Area) that is represented nationally by the program, 50,000 sqm NLA is currently represented by North Sydney. Figure 2 below represents the results from the CitySwitch Annual Report 2022, where signatories provided responses on their achievements regarding each milestone of the net zero pathway. CitySwitch signatories can also submit application for the Annual Awards, to celebrate their successes.

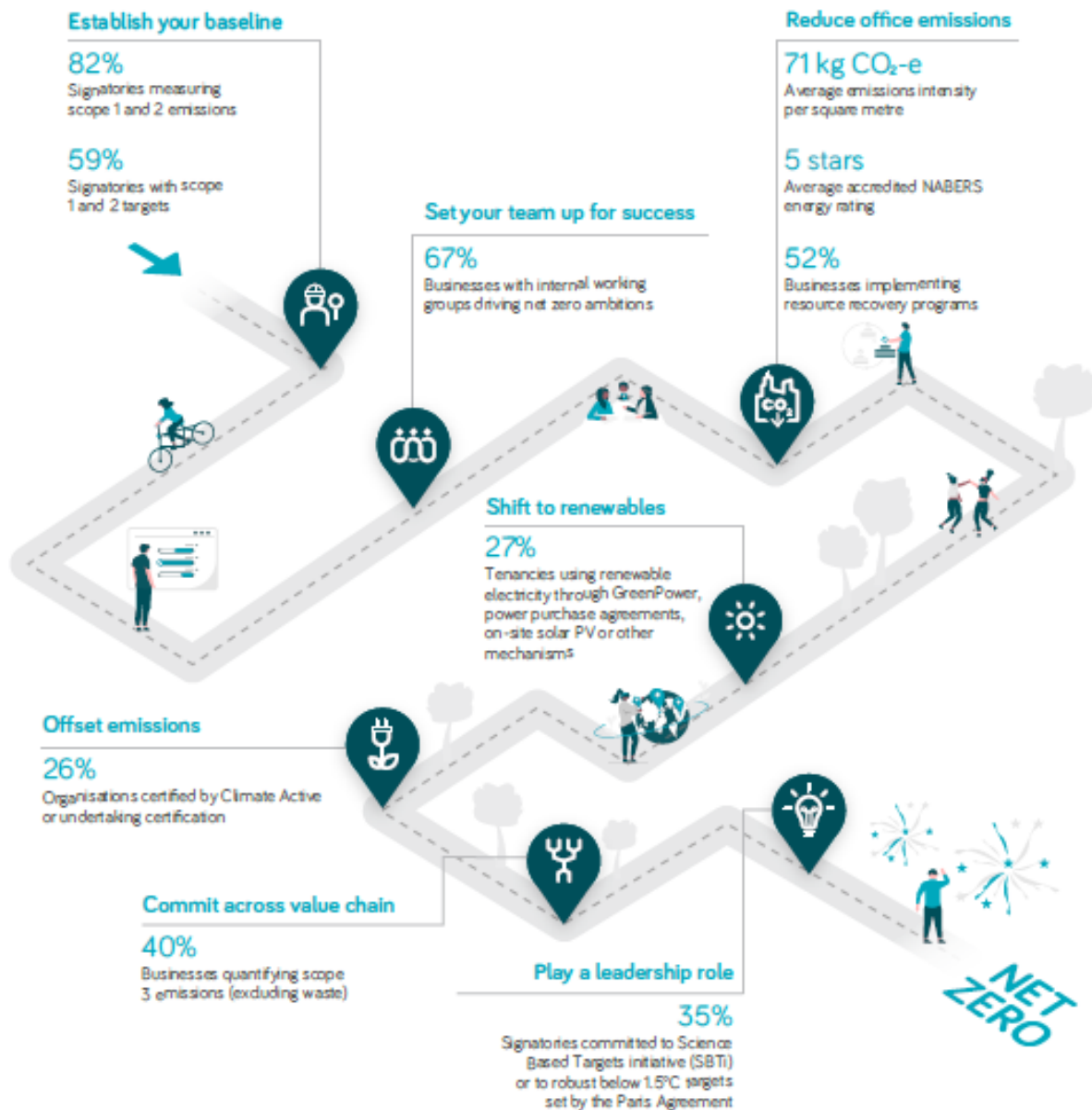


Figure 2. CitySwitch Annual Report 2022 – Monitoring how businesses achieve Net Zero Pathway

Better Business Partnership - BBP

Better Business Partnership (BBP) is a regional program developed in a partnership with Willoughby City Council and Ku-ring-gai Council, focussed on small businesses and assessment in 9 categories, including business health, waste, energy, water, transport, procurement, bye-bye plastic, community engagement and staff (see Figure 3). Businesses complete an online assessment tool, book an accreditation with the Program Manager who validates the information, develops a sustainability action plan, and provides a badge for all categories rated 51% or above on the assessment tool validation. Businesses get access to “Buy Better, Buy Local” campaign promotion and can apply to BBP Annual Awards for recognition of their achievements.



Figure 3. Better Business Partnership Certificate

Out of the 156 accredited active businesses within the three partner Councils, North Sydney currently has 54 accredited businesses, Willoughby City Council has 46 accredited businesses and Ku-ring-gai Council has 56 accredited businesses.

Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs)

Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs) are focused on building improvements that can deliver significant savings at existing non-residential buildings, not strata titled, where agreement is attached to the land. To date Council has not entered into an EUA with a building owner.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Council has the opportunity to strengthen the strategic alignment of these programs in a number of ways:

1. Sustainable Business Communication/Engagement Plan can be developed to identify messages and campaigns of importance and ways in which Council can measure and monitor their impact. This can include communicating to businesses what actions they need to implement, as we do currently, but also focusing on where to find grants, rebates, green financing, and other financial support. This plan should be aligned with the Corporate Planning and Engagement Team to integrate Business Economic Development Strategies such as having a “North Sydney Sustainable Business Gift Card” ([similar to the AT Parramatta Gift Card](#)), or developing Council’s sustainable procurement criteria prioritizing businesses that are part of BBP or CitySwitch.

2. The Better Business Partnership program can be reviewed and upgraded to assist small businesses in measuring baseline emissions and monitor their carbon reduction. Council must consider that small businesses have specific challenges, and many times are financially limited, and as such a rebates scheme could be implemented that focuses on enhancing net zero impact for items including installing solar panels, heat pump hot water and the electrification of commercial kitchens.

3. Environmental Upgrade Agreements, further investigation on why and how Council should maintain EUAs as an option must occur. The lack of uptake can be a result of the complexity of the system with three different parties involved, the commercial building owner, financial institution, and Council. This is in contrast to green financing options, where building owners can negotiate directly with the financial institution, also being able to have more options and flexibility within the agreement. It is proposed that Council develop a SWAT Analysis to understand current risks and opportunities for promoting EUAs, contacting other Council’s and current suppliers in the market.

Businesses are a very significant stakeholder for North Sydney Council and responsible for a large environmental impact in our community. Council cannot meet its targets without bringing our residential and business community together, towards the common goal of reducing environmental negative impacts and navigating the path to net zero emission.

Consultation requirements

Community engagement is not required.

Financial/Resource Implications

No additional funding required. Funding for existing programs and proposed rebates will come from existing funds in the Environmental Levy. There are no resource implications.

Legislation

There are no legislative requirements.

3.2. North Sydney Living Futures Sustainability Festival

AUTHOR	Rebecca Farrell, Events and Engagement Officer
ENDORSED BY	Leonie Netting, Coordinator Coal Loader Sustainability Centre
ATTACHMENTS	NIL
CSP LINK	1.2 Environmentally Sustainable Community 1.4 Well utilised open space and recreational facilities 2.3 Prioritise sustainable and active transport 3.3 North Sydney is smart and innovative 5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does

PURPOSE:

To provide an overview of the North Sydney Living Futures Sustainability Festival in April 2023, as well as an update for the finale festival date scheduled for 29 October.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Seven of the eight events comprising the inaugural North Sydney Living Futures Sustainability festival were successfully delivered between 24 – 28 April 2023;
- The festival finale due to take place on Sunday 30 April to an anticipated crowd of over 5,000 visitors was postponed due to predicted severe weather conditions. This event has been re-scheduled to Sunday 29 October;
- Over 650 participants took part in the talk series which took place across seven different locations across North Sydney.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. THAT** the North Sydney Living Futures Sustainability report be noted.
- 2. THAT** the festival finale be re-scheduled for Sunday 29 October 2023.

Background

The inaugural North Sydney Living Futures Sustainability festival concept was a result of a Councillor Notice of Motion by Councillor Georgia Lamb in March 2022:

1. THAT Council organise for a 'Sustainable' festival at the Coal Loader as it is our sustainable achievement of North Sydney;
2. THAT the inclusion of a festival be considered as part of the current budget deliberations.

A detailed proposal for the event series was developed through a cross-Council collaborative approach and 'Living Futures' was conceptualised, set to be delivered in April 2023. The event series comprised of eight different events across North Sydney, culminating in a full day festival at the Coal Loader Sustainability Centre. Each event aimed to tackle a different trending sustainability theme, with the full day festival aiming to engage the wider community.

Report

The Inaugural North Sydney Living Futures Sustainability festival involved collaboration between 23 Council teams and attracted over 650 participants over seven events, each tackling a particular sustainability hot topic.

The festival finale that was due to take place on Sunday 30 April was postponed due to predicted severe weather conditions and is re-scheduled for Sunday 29 October. Currently organised for the upcoming festival finale include:

- Fourteen exhibiting Council teams showcasing their projects and initiatives;
- Multiple live demonstration areas including electric vehicles, e-bikes and sustainable cooking;
- A whole day of in-depth talks and tours;
- Over forty exhibitors;
- A full stage program including live music and entertainment;
- Collaborative art;
- Eco Kids entertainment and activities;
- Food and beverage.

A snapshot of the delivered festival talks:

The Future of Food

The Independent Theatre, Monday 24 April, 2023



Attendees enjoyed a selection of innovative food samples from Hearthe and Impossible before taking their seats to listen to passionate food sustainability advocate, writer, and former Good Food Guide Editor, Joanna Savill. Joanna emceed a panel of top Australian chefs for an evening of thought-provoking conversation as discussion explored what the future of food looks like and how every day Australians can help shape it.

The panel included Jez Wick, Head Chef of the Refettorio OzHarvest; Julian Cincotta, Chef and co-owner of Butter; Christopher Thé, founder of the world-famous Black Star Pastry.

Youth Leading Youth

North Sydney Oval. Wednesday 26 April, 2023



Held in collaboration with the team at North Sydney Oval, this panel of inspiring young leaders discussed how they have campaigned to make a positive change in the world.

The panel included an array of innovative and talented speakers including Lottie Dalziel, sustainability expert, founder of Banish, the BRAD program and this year's NSW Young Australian of the Year; Varsha Yajman, Indian-Australian climate justice and mental health youth advocate and paralegal in climate change litigation; Sophia Skarparis, Australian Geographic Young Conservationist of the Year for 2018-19, Kal Glanznig, Youth Delegate United Nations COP27, World Ocean Day Youth Advisory Council & co-founder Plastic Free Cronulla, and Dani Villafana, Associate Researcher at Deakin University, champion of intersectional feminism, passionate activist and changemaker, 2023 Newtown Woman of the Year.

Towards Net Zero Business

Presented by CitySwitch. The Green Moustache. Thursday 27 April, 2023



Thursday morning kicked off with a panel discussion and networking breakfast, organized and delivered by Council’s Sustainability team and CitySwitch. Guest speaker Barbara Albert from 100% Renewables demonstrated different scientifically based climate change estimated scenarios according to possible/probable actions we take in the years to come, indicating that businesses should act now. She also demonstrated how industry is adapting to these changes, showing that the biggest risk for business is to be left behind if it does not start measuring carbon emission baseline and committing to carbon reduction targets.

NTH SYD Eco-Tainment

Brett Whitely Place. Thursday 27 April.



Organised and implemented by Council’s Events Team this NTH SYD event engaged over 300 workers in the North Sydney CBD over two hours with live music and a line-up of entertainers who all have an eco-friendly twist. Eco-tainment included: Gaia Rhythm Mobile Eco DJ – a roving solar-powered DJ booth in a repurposed wheelie bin. Musical Chefs – a musical troupe playing on instruments made from upcycled kitchen items. Magician Adam Axford – performing magic with a sustainability message. 'Wonders of Water' van with Sydney Water – a way to experience water like you never have before with interactive games and virtual reality.

Energy Efficient Kitchens

Presented by Better Business Partnerships. North Spoon Café. Thursday 27 April.



Organised and implemented by the Better Business Partnership team, this free information and networking event discussed ideas on how to save local business money while helping the planet. Guest speaker Nisha Ghantwal, owner and director at The Mack Group Australia busted myths about electric cooking and demonstrate the economic, HR, and environmental benefits of an all-electric kitchen. Nisha showed that cooking without gas is already happening

and there will be a rapid industry shift soon. The Better Business Partnerships team were on hand to answer questions and drive ongoing engagement with local enterprises. Sustainable Style and the Circular Economy

Stanton Library. Thursday 27 April.



Organised and delivered in collaboration with the team at Stanton Library, community members interested in making a sustainable change whilst not sacrificing style were invited to join three passionate change-makers working in fashion and textiles. Discussion involved the social and ecological impact of fast fashion. The panel discussed the environmental, human, and economic impacts of the current textile trade, the power of choosing slow fashion, and embracing reuse and repair techniques to participate in building a circular economy.

Our panel of incredible and talented speakers included sustainable fashion expert, author and international public speaker Clare Press, award-winning sustainability advocate, ethical fashion speaker, and Ecostyles founder Nina Gbor, and visual artist, community art facilitator, curator and founder/President of Textiles Sydney Jane Theau. The event was moderated by sustainability & social impact champion, Hannah Franklin.

The Built Environment

Tunnel One @ The Coal Loader. Friday 28 April.



In the final talk of our week-long speaker series, our expert panel discussed the effects of man-made infrastructure on the natural and social environment and how good planning can lead to better outcomes for all. The panel included: Caroline Pidcock, award winning architect, prominent advocate for sustainable development. April McCabe, experienced urban & social

planner, place maker and strategist, Director at The Planning Studio, and Chair of the LFIA Biophilic Design Advisory Panel. Drew Heath, sole practitioner, and builder, specializing in handmade and handcrafted buildings with low environmental impact. Our MC for the night was Dani Villafana, Associate Researcher at Deakin University, 2023 Newtown Woman of the Year.



Options

The Environmental Reference Group has the following options in relation to this matter:

1. Recommend the festival finale to not go ahead at all
2. Recommend a different date for the festival finale
3. Note this report as well as the re-scheduled date for the festival finale on 29th October 2023.

These options are assessed in the table below.

Option	Finance/Resourcing	Risk/Opportunity	Consultation
1.	The cost of delivery would be saved	Community/stakeholder disappointment at the non-delivery of the event	Stakeholder and community
2.	None	A detailed analysis of dates was carried out to ensure non-clashes with other Sydney and Council events/school holidays etc. to land on the 29 October 2023.	-

3.	Delivering the event at a cost of approx. \$72,000 (funds/resources already allocated)	Delivering on the original Councillor Notice of Motion and agreed program that our elected body and community have been promised and expect.	Stakeholder and community
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Option 3 is recommended for the following reasons:

- We already have the funds allocated to deliver the event and to cancel would significantly increase the cost from service providers enforcing cancellation fees;
- We have a community and elected representative body expectation to deliver a widely marketed program of works;
- Anecdotal preference from community and stakeholders is to deliver the already prepared and promoted event in springtime.

Consultation requirements

Consultation with all festival finale service providers has been undertaken to re-schedule them for the new date, for which almost all are available for. Any who are unavailable are either being paid their cancellation fee or offered another opportunity to deliver an education component at another Coal Loader event.

Financial/Resource Implications

At the time of the decision making to postpone the event a cost benefit analysis was undertaken to estimate the cost per head to go ahead versus postponement. Based on the weather forecast and results of other events run at The Coal Loader under similar conditions it was determined infeasible to go ahead.

Delivery of the speaker series came in under budget at approximately \$12,500.
 Marketing and print collateral for the event series as a whole has cost \$10,500.
 Implementation fees for the event as a whole have so far accounted for \$35,000.
 Re-scheduling the event came at a cost of approximately \$20,000 (service provider postponement fees).
 Hosting of the event finale is estimated at \$72,000.

Therefore, the event delivery in full is anticipated to still be delivered on budget despite incurring cancellation fees. This would require that the un-spent budget for the festival finale to be delivered this calendar/next financial year has been allocated through the environment levy and will be rolled over.

4. General Business

At the beginning of the meeting representatives from Ausgrid will do a presentation on the proposed community battery project in Cammeray

1. Jane Theau would like to speak on the following items:

- instal more water bubblers in places where people buy bottled water, i.e.. shopping centres, cafes, near harbour kiosks, at bus stops etc.
- ensure that easy-to-use and **easy-to-access** container recycling facilities are mandatory when shaping planning decisions for any business that sells bottles and cans (especially bottle shops and supermarkets)
- situate container recycling and clothing recycling bins together (make it easy for people)
- reduce the frequency of kerbside household waste collection
- consider participating in the Boomerang Alliance's Plastic Free Places programme: <https://www.plasticfreeplaces.org/>

2. Phil Worrall would like to speak on the following items:

- Recycling
 - soft and hard plastics.
 - Xrays.
- Global Warming Issues
 - Carbon footprint of air travel.
 - Pet Ownership.
 - Cat Controls.

5. Closure