

ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY



Building a healthy environment with thriving ecosystems and strong climate resilience



North Sydney Council
200 Miller Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Telephone (02) 9936 8100
Email council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au
Website www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au

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January 2025

Contents

Recognition of the Cammeraygal People	4
Mayor's message	5
Introduction	6
Background	7
Development of the new Environment Strategy	8
About this Strategy	9
Delivering the outcome	11



Recognition of the Cammeraygal People

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of North Sydney local government area (LGA), the Cammeraygal people

We recognise the Cammeraygal people as the Traditional Owners of the area known today as North Sydney.

We acknowledge that the alienation of Cammeraygal Country followed the first local land grant in 1794 which occurred without consultation, treaty or compensation.

Western archaeological evidence shows that Aboriginal people lived in the North Sydney area at least 5,800 years ago, and likely for thousands more. That evidence is precious. We seek to preserve it and through that to better understand Cammeraygal connection to Country.

After North Sydney Council was formed in 1890 through the merging of three boroughs, the word Cammeraygal was included on its coat of arms. Today it holds a central position in the Council's logo as a reminder of the long and ongoing Indigenous heritage of this place.

In recent years the spelling of Cammeraygal has varied to include Gammaraigal and Gai-maragal as our community has sought to reflect and honour the heritage of First Nations people in a more culturally appropriate manner.

Mayor's message

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development defines sustainability as a complex and multi-faceted concept. It involves interactions between environmental, social, economic and governance factors to achieve 'peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.'

In 2019, Council declared a climate emergency and, in doing so, renewed and strengthened a long-standing commitment to sustainability to ensure a healthy environment with thriving ecosystems and strong climate resilience.

A healthy environment is essential for the wellbeing and resilience of our community. North Sydney's unique natural landscapes, from bushland reserves to foreshore areas, provide vital habitats and enrich the quality of life in North Sydney.

This strategy reflects a collaborative effort among Council, residents and local partners to balance growth with environmental stewardship. Key actions include developing green corridors, expanding tree planting, transitioning to renewable energy, and engaging in community education. Together, we can address challenges proactively, safeguarding our environment and ensuring a sustainable future community that values its natural heritage.

As we embark on this ten-year journey, I encourage you to continue to actively work with Council and help create a resilient community that prioritises sustainability and environmental stewardship for generations to come.

Joe Barber

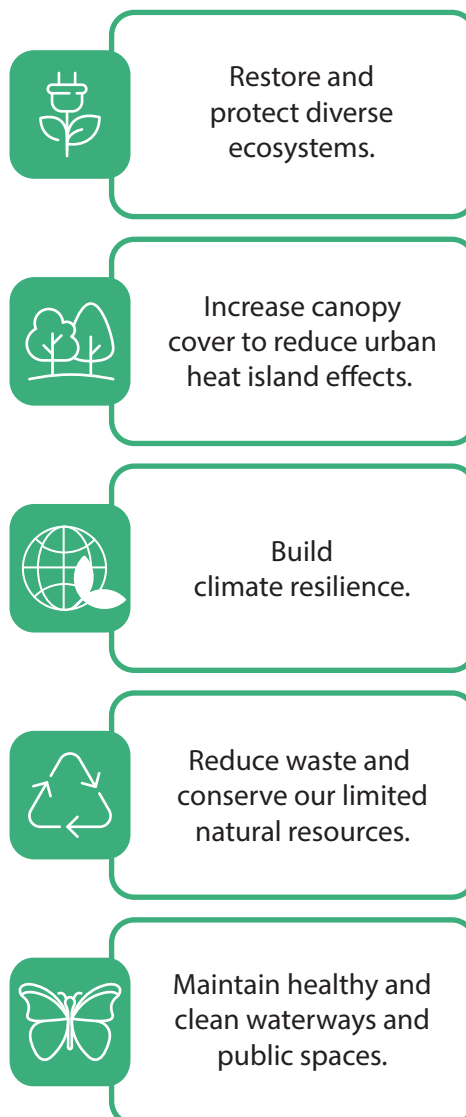
Introduction

In an era of significant environmental challenges, including climate change, tree canopy loss, habitat destruction and increasing urbanisation, the North Sydney Environment Strategy outlines a proactive and comprehensive approach to protecting our environment for the benefit of both current and future generations.

North Sydney is home to diverse ecosystems that are not only essential for biodiversity but are also vital to the health, wellbeing and resilience of our community. From our bushland reserves to urban green spaces, these environments provide essential habitats for wildlife, mitigate urban heat, and enhance our quality of life. However, the increasing pressures of development and the accelerating impacts of climate change continue to endanger these valuable resources.

This strategy details how Council will take action in collaboration with community members, businesses, neighbouring councils and other government agencies to address these critical issues.

Together, we will deliver **a healthy environment with thriving ecosystems and strong climate resilience** through the following five strategic directions:



The strategy is a long-term commitment to cultivating a thriving environment that supports both our ecosystems and our community for generations to come.

Background

This strategy is part of a suite of informing strategies (see Figure 1) that articulate North Sydney's needs and priorities over the next ten years. These strategies will form the basis for Council's new Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2025-2035, Delivery Programs and Operational Plans.

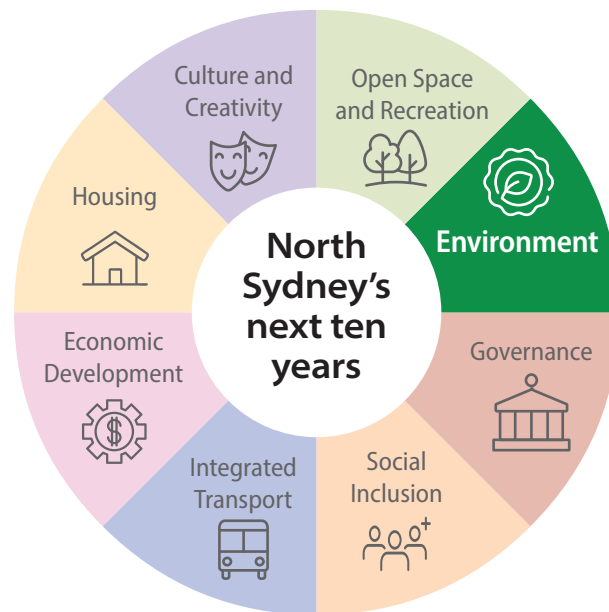


Figure 1: Suite of Informing Strategies

The role of Council

North Sydney Council plays an important role in shaping strategic directions that align with community aspirations and prioritising funding accordingly, however collaboration will be essential to driving meaningful outcomes.

Council's ten-year strategies must be viewed within the broader framework of local government's role in relation to State and Federal policies and jurisdictions.

While Council has significant responsibilities, its powers can be limited in certain areas. In these situations, advocacy and partnerships with other organisations may be necessary to influence specific actions in place of more direct initiatives.

Development of the new Environment Strategy

In 2020, Council engaged with the community to create the North Sydney Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030. This strategy established targets for both Council's operations and the broader community to meet various environmental goals, including responding to Council's climate emergency declaration, protecting native flora and fauna, safeguarding our waterways, reducing waste to landfill, and using resources efficiently.

The priorities and targets outlined in the 2030 Strategy align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which serve as the international best practice standard for sustainability reporting and are used by all levels of government in Australia.

In developing this strategy, the existing 2030 Strategy was reviewed alongside the latest environmental data, and updated to address emerging issues, revise targets and ensure ongoing relevance.

This new strategy reaffirms our commitment to fostering a **healthy environment with thriving ecosystems and strong climate resilience** and remains underpinned by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals including SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13: Climate Action, and SDG 15: Life on Land.

This strategy includes key measures for each strategic direction, with most targets either following the original 2030 Strategy or adjusted to reflect the next steps we will take to exceed the targets set in 2020.

There are three notable exceptions to this approach:



Timeframe for achieving 100% carbon neutrality: The deadline for Council to reach 100% carbon neutrality in its operations has been extended to 2035. This adjustment allows for the gradual transition of existing internal combustion cars, buses, heavy plant machinery and equipment to electric alternatives upon their scheduled replacement. Replacing them prematurely is not deemed best practice, from environmental and financial lifecycle perspectives.



Canopy cover increase: The target for increasing canopy cover to 34.4% has also been extended to 2035. Recent major infrastructure projects have resulted in significant tree loss. While extensive planting programs are underway and will continue, progress toward achieving the canopy cover target has been delayed.



Waste diversion/resource recovery rate: The current resource recovery rate has declined to 37%. This decline is largely due to legislative changes in 2018 that prohibited the processing of mixed solid waste from Council's red bins at alternative waste treatment facilities. The ban has limited Council's options for the recovery of organics from the domestic waste stream. Council is now actively undertaking research to enhance waste diversion and plans to implement a food waste recycling program by 2030. However, based on current technology and the lack of available infrastructure, it is unlikely that a waste diversion rate exceeding 50% can be achieved by 2030. Nonetheless, the new strategy incorporates the ambitious target of 80%, as set by both the Australian Government in the National Waste Policy Action Plan (2019) and the State Government in the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041.

About this strategy

The Environment Strategy details how Council, the community, businesses and other stakeholders will work together over the next ten years to build:

A healthy environment with thriving ecosystems and strong climate resilience

This strategy takes precedence over existing Council strategies and plans, except where required by legislation. Relevant information captured in superseded documents will be considered through service unit planning and, if necessary, adopted as supporting plans.

Principles

The strategy is guided by three key principles:



SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting our environment to ensure it can be enjoyed by both current and future generations.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Actively involving local residents and stakeholders to foster a shared sense of ownership and responsibility.



COLLABORATION

Partnering with neighbouring councils and organisations to share resources and achieve collective goals.



Structure

This strategy includes five strategic directions, with clear measurable objectives, that outline how we will strive towards the outcome of a healthy environment with thriving ecosystems and strong climate resilience.

Under each direction are specific projects and initiatives that will help us achieve the objectives. There is also a list of Council's existing services that support each strategic direction.

Figure 2 illustrates the structure of the informing strategy.



Figure 2: Structure of the Environment Strategy

Timing and delivery of new projects and initiatives will be dependent on availability of funding from a variety of sources, including but not limited to grants, developer contributions and Council's internal reserves.



DELIVERING THE OUTCOME





OUTCOME

A healthy environment with thriving ecosystems and strong climate resilience

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: Restore and protect diverse ecosystems

OBJECTIVES

-  Maintain and improve Council's bushland areas to ensure that at least 80% are in good condition by 2030 from a 2023 baseline of 75%
-  Maintain the number of locally native fauna and flora species found in North Sydney at or above the 2023 baseline of 562 species

- 1.1** Develop and deliver a Green Corridor Plan, in consultation with local schools and other relevant stakeholders, to improve connectivity between remnant bushland reserves and create strategic wildlife corridors in accordance with the vision established by the Connected Corridors for Biodiversity project. This includes delivering 500m² of new corridor planting each year.
- 1.2** Deliver upgraded bushland walking tracks in Badangi Reserve, Balls Head Reserve, Brightmore Reserve, Primrose Park, Gore Cove/Smoothey Park, Tunks Park and Berry Island Reserve.
- 1.3** Support regional biodiversity and collaboration through the Building Bridges to Boorowa program.
- 1.4** Collaborate with universities and marine science institutes to enhance seawall biodiversity in North Sydney's coastal area.
- 1.5** Facilitate the closure of Balls Head Reserve on New Year's Eve to prevent damage to bushland areas.
- 1.6** Develop a Brush Turkey Management Plan in conjunction with the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Service Develop and implement a range of community education and volunteering programs to help conserve Council's biodiversity. These include:

- Council's Adopt-a-Plot bushland rehabilitation program
- Native Havens home habitat gardening program
- Wildlife Watch citizen science project
- Community education activities
- Bushcare volunteers



Service Manage Council's bushland areas. This includes developing and implementing bush rehabilitation plans and projects, maintaining and providing new tracks and signage, implementing bushfire hazard reduction and ecological burning programs, managing pest animals, and managing the community nursery.



Shared projects, initiatives and services

Some projects, initiatives and services contribute to the delivery of outcomes from multiple Informing Strategies. These are indicated using symbols (see below) representing the other strategies that include the same activity.



Culture and Creativity



Integrated Transport



Social Inclusion



Economic Development



Environment



Housing



Governance



Open Space and Recreation

OBJECTIVE

🎯 Increase the canopy cover across the LGA to 34.4% by 2035 from a 2022 baseline of 24.9%

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: Increase canopy cover to reduce urban heat island effects

- 2.1 Plant at least 350 trees in streets, parks and reserves each year to increase tree canopy cover and mitigate urban heat island impacts.
- 2.2 Review planning controls in the North Sydney Development Control Plan to enhance tree planting, protect existing wildlife habitat and improve green connections.

Service Manage tree planning, planting, maintenance and preservation. This includes implementation of annual tree planting programs.



OBJECTIVES

🎯 Reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by 65% by 2035 from a 2018 baseline of 973,984 tonnes tCO₂e*

🎯 Achieve carbon neutrality for Council's operations by 2035

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3:

Build climate resilience

- 3.1 Review and implement new planning controls in the DCP to support the transition away from fossil fuels, reduce urban heat island effects and drive a lower embodied carbon footprint during the design, construction and operational phase of both commercial and residential buildings. This includes requirements for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- 3.2 Work in collaboration with other NSW councils to identify, develop and trial a scalable renewable electricity offer for residents and small businesses currently unable to install renewables on their building, helping them to purchase 100% renewable electricity at a lower cost than currently available.
- 3.3 Investigate and implement initiatives to increase solar capacity for schools in the LGA.
- 3.4 Deliver 80 electric vehicle charging bays on Council-owned land and in Council-owned car parks and facilitate the installation of third party charging infrastructure in the LGA..
- 3.5 Collaborate with industry stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of community batteries and virtual power plants on Council-owned land, targeting an additional 2 MW/h storage capacity to help facilitate the transition to a 100% renewable energy grid.
- 3.6 Increase Council's renewable energy capacity (panels and batteries) on new and existing Council infrastructure, to help achieve 100% real time renewable energy for all Council's operations.
- 3.7 Electrify Council operations, excluding plant and fleet, by 2030. This will require replacement of the remaining two gas boilers at Stanton Library and Council Chambers with electric heat pumps.
- 3.8 Transition all Council plant and fleet to electric by 2035.
- 3.9 Work with Ausgrid to upgrade existing permanently unmetered supply lighting to conform with sustainability standards and achieve long-term financial savings.
- 3.10 Progressively upgrade the lighting network owned by North Sydney Council to LED with smart controls.
- 3.11 Work with Ausgrid to add smart controls to existing and new LED street lights to allow for more efficient use of lighting infrastructure.
- 3.12 Investigate the feasibility of divesting from organisations associated with fossil fuels.
- 3.13 Review and update Council's procurement processes to support the circular economy, reduce extraction and production, and increase recycled content of purchased materials.

Service Manage projects that deliver direct sustainability outcomes. This includes energy and water conservation initiatives across Council facilities and operations.

Service Implement a range of educational programs, grants and other initiatives to equip the community and businesses for delivery of sustainability outcomes.

Service Research, plan and implement initiatives to promote sustainable transport.



* Source: Resilient Sydney

OBJECTIVES

- 🎯 Increase the resource recovery rate to 80%* by 2030 from a 2024 baseline of 37%
- 🎯 Reduce annual waste generation per capita by 10% by 2030 from the 2023 baseline of 315kg per person across all waste streams
- 🎯 Reduce North Sydney's potable water consumption by 10% by 2034/35, from the 2015/16 baseline of 7,325,333 kL**

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: Reduce waste and conserve our limited natural resources

- 4.1 Implement a food waste recycling program by 2030.
- 4.2 Advocate to other levels of government for legislation, infrastructure and technology to support delivery of the ambitious resource recovery rate of 80%.
- 4.3 Collaborate with neighbouring councils to identify and implement additional opportunities for resource recovery and alternative waste treatment.
- 4.4 Review and update planning controls in the comprehensive Development Control Plan (DCP) to enable food organics stream separation and collection in multi-unit developments. Ensure adequate onsite space for waste management equipment, such as compactors, in-sink disposal units, and other waste and recycling handling equipment.
- 4.5 Review and update Council's DCP to encourage the reuse of greywater, rainwater and stormwater, and to minimise potable water consumption.
- 4.6 Expand existing stormwater harvesting and water reuse systems at Bon Andrews Park/North Sydney Oval, Primrose Park and Tunks Park.
- 4.7 Prepare a strategic plan for The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability site to inform opportunities and priorities to increase community use and enjoyment, and develop a reserve for delivery.



- Service** Manage residential waste and recycling services including weekly collection, bulky goods clean-up and the Community Recycling Centre.
- Service** Manage the The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability. This includes providing sustainability programs, education and workshops.

* Target: National Waste Policy Action Plan 2019






** Source: Resilient Sydney

OBJECTIVES

🎯 Increase the amount of material that is kept out of our waterways through stormwater improvement programs by 10% by 2035 from the 2019 baseline

🎯 Maintain the percentage of residents who are at least somewhat satisfied with the cleanliness of local roads and footpaths (eg street sweeping) at or above 90%*

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5: Maintain healthy and clean waterways and public spaces

5.1	Deliver a water catchment community awareness campaign.	
5.2	Expand Council's Streets Alive and HarbourCare volunteer programs to promote social connections and improve our environment.	
5.3	Reduce the amount of pollution/debris entering the harbour by expanding the gross pollutant trap (GPT) network through the installation of at least three new GPTs by 2035.	
5.4	Maintain and renew existing GPTs to ensure ongoing effectiveness in capturing stormwater pollution.	
Service	Work with the community to improve our environment and build social connections through volunteer programs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets Alive • HarbourCare • Community gardens 	
Service	Implement compliance programs, activities and regulatory actions to help prevent and manage environmental pollution caused by development activities and business operations.	
Service	Manage and maintain Council's parks, gardens, reserves, streetscapes and foreshore areas including Maccallum Pool and Hayes Street Beach.	
Service	Clean Council's roads, footpaths, car parks, town centres and other civic spaces. This includes street sweeping; high-pressure water cleaning of footpaths, plazas and bus shelters; collection of illegally dumped materials; and the removal of graffiti and rodents.	
Service	Manage waste and recycling services for Council-owned facilities and public places.	

* Source: Customer Satisfaction Survey (Micromex Research)