

8.1. Community Battery, Cammeray Park

The North Sydney Community Strategic Plan- Vision 2040 places environmental sustainability at the heart of Council decision making. The North Sydney community places exceptionally high value upon the environment and sustainability.

Indeed, clause 1.2 of the Community Strategic Plan provides the following directions in relation to the goal of an environmentally sustainable community:

“Reduce strain on natural resources through sustainable energy, water and waste reduction practices

Deliver the declaration to reduce the drivers of climate change and to prepare for the inevitable impacts to come”

The provision of renewable energy infrastructure is an important action to support this community vision to deliver an environmentally sustainable community.

On 23 February 2023, then Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon. Chris Bowen, MP visited Cammeray Park and announced that, if elected, the new government would deliver a community battery for Cammeray.

This promise was welcomed by the community and Council.

Since then, Ausgrid have applied to the Federal Government for funding for the provision of a community battery at Cammeray and identified two locations. The two locations identified by Ausgrid are Green Park and the corner of Park Avenue and Grasmere Road.

Council’s sustainability officers have been in contact with Ausgrid since December 2022 and have raised concerns as to whether the proposed locations are appropriate given that it is proposed do provide a very large piece of infrastructure into a location in which there has been an incredible and significant loss of public open space due to the Warringah Freeway Upgrade and Western Harbour Tunnel early works. Council advised Ausgrid that neither site was preferable and suggested integration into existing Ausgrid infrastructure (ie substations) or the Warringah Freeway Upgrade works.

Council staff also advised Ausgrid of the following concerns as to whether there is a direct community benefit and whether the proposed infrastructure is truly a “community battery” or will just augment capacity across the grid (instead of delivering directly to Cammeray households):

- how many households will be serviced by the community battery?
- estimated cost reductions for serviced households?
- will it store solar energy for later use or sharing?
- will it allow households that cannot install solar panels to enjoy the benefits of renewable energy through shared community storage?

In addition, Council's strategic planners raised the following issues which were provided to Ausgrid:

Green Park

- Two areas were identified – along Warringa Road and along Warwick Avenue.
- Land is zoned RE1 Public Recreation – does not meet objectives of the zone.
- Land is located adjacent to a heritage conservation area (CA 01 Cammeray) and a heritage item (I0024 - Cammeray Park)
- Trees generally located along the boundaries of the park and large concentration in the eastern portion.
- Positions of existing power poles are located under the canopy extent of existing trees (read within the driplines)
- Currently unobstructed views across the western portion of the park.
- Park has the appearance of extending all the way to kerb alignment of the road (i.e. no fences or footpaths).

Park Avenue and Grasmere Road

- Comprises a small part of the road reserve adjacent to 51, 53 and 55 Park Avenue
- Land is zoned R2 Low Density Residential – limited ability to meet objectives of the zone.
- Land is located adjacent to a heritage item (I0024 - Cammeray Park).
- Existing power pole is located in the road reserve and generally not within the drip line of an existing tree.
- Space is not capable of being used for passive or active recreation.
- Space is primarily grassed and is generally devoid of significant vegetation (only two trees).
- Potential to obstruct driver sight lines if not positioned back from the carriageway.

Council's strategic planners have provided the following recommendations in relation to location of the proposed energy infrastructure:

- Preferably located on private land, with potential to locate within road reserves but only where other criteria can be met.
- Not be located on land zoned RE1 Public Recreation. This is due to the overall lack of physical space in the LGA to accommodate open space, and the ever-increasing population resulting in increased demand for such space.
- Not be located where they would obstruct driver sight lines.
- Not be located within or adjacent to heritage items and heritage conservation areas.
- Not result in the removal of any tree. To be consistent with council's urban forest policy.
- Not be located within the drip line of any existing tree. To ensure existing vegetation can be retained.
- Located near/next to an existing substation or in a brownfields/industrial site.
- Structures must be positioned such that vegetation can be grown in front to screen their locations.

- Must be devoid of third party advertising

On 29 April 2023, Ausgrid commenced community consultation at Green Park. There was considerable community anger to the provision of a large structure on precious public green space.

On 3 May 2023 Ausgrid informed Council staff that due to negative community response they will no longer be pursuing the Green Park option for the community battery. Ausgrid will be closing their 'Have Your Say' page and releasing a statement in the next few days and have advised that they are working to identify new sites within Cammeray and will consult with Council on new options over the coming weeks.

I therefore recommend:

1.THAT Council write to Ausgrid seeking:

- (a) clarification as to whether the proposed works truly relate to a community battery or simply provide expanded capacity for the grid; and
- (b) Urge them to locate any energy infrastructure, including the proposed "community battery", in accordance with the recommendations from Council's strategic planners outlined above.

2.THAT a copy of this resolution be provided to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon. Chris Bowen, MP and the Federal Member, the Hon. Kylea Tink, MP.

3.THAT a copy of this resolution and the above correspondence be distributed to Precinct Committees.

**COUNCILLOR ZOË BAKER
MAYOR**