



# MINUTES

## **EXTRAORDINARY ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP MEETING STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP**

held online via TEAMS on:

**THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

## **Minutes of the Extraordinary Environment Strategic Reference Group Meeting**

### **Strategic Reference Group**

**held online via TEAMS on Thursday 10 September 2020**

**Commencing at 6:06pm**

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

##### **Committee Members**

Cr Natalie Warren (Chair)	Councillor
Cr Alex McTaggart	Councillor
Cr Stuart Sprott	Councillor
Sophie Scott	Community Representative – Manly Ward
Roberta Conroy	Bayview Church Point Residents Association
Alan Jones	Community Representative – Curl Curl Ward
Tom Hazell	Community Representative – Curl Curl Ward
Nigel Howard	Community Representative
Marita Macrae	Pittwater Natural Heritage Association
Jacqueline Marlow	Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment

##### **Council Officer Contacts**

Todd Dickinson	Director Environment and Sustainability
Yianni Mentis	Executive Manager Environment and Climate Change
Chris Munro	Manager Bushland and Biodiversity
Ximena Von Oven	Governance Officer

## **1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

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As a sign of respect, Northern Beaches Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of these lands on which we gather and pays respect to Elders past and present.

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## **2.0 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cr Daley, B Bragg, S Markich and V McDonell.

## **3.0 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary conflicts of interest.

## **4.0 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING**

Nil

## **5.0 AGENDA ITEMS**

### **5.1 DRAFT BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES**

#### **OVERVIEW OF UPDATE**

Y Mentis, Executive Manager Environment and Climate Change and C Munro Manager Bushland and Biodiversity briefed the SRG members on this topic.

The draft Bush Fire Management Policy has been drafted to guide the management of bush fire activities for the Northern Beaches Council area. The purpose of the draft policy is to implement effective, risk-based bush fire management to preserve life and reduce the impact of bush fire on property, infrastructure and the environment on land under the care, control and management of Council. The draft policy has been developed using best practice and provides a framework that addresses the major threats from bush fire. The policy plans for the consequences of climate change affecting bushland, particularly in relation to strategic bush fire mitigation measures.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The following points were discussed:

- Relevant plans, legislations and policies
- Purpose of the draft Bush Fire Management Policy
- Examples of Nature Conservation Council Bush Fire Policy 2014
- Key Policy areas:
  - Risk management
  - Fire management
  - Community engagement
  - Land use planning and development controls

- Draft principles
- Consultation undertaken
- Timeline

When drafting the policy Council has taken into account governance arrangements and also has considered environmental and conservation practices and has made sure the policy aligns with it.

The following questions were raised during the discussion:

**QUESTION:**

Have any plans for ecological recovery after bush fire been included in the draft Bush Fire Management Policy?

**ANSWER:**

That particular topic hasn't been included in the draft Bush Fire Management Policy however, Council does have an existing bush regeneration program which includes weed management, pest management etc.

**QUESTION:**

Has the way we burn bush sites been considered in the Policy? Animals living in bush fire prone areas should be considered when doing this practices in order not to trap them.

**ANSWER:**

Council does consider that scenario and undertakes surveys to verify what animals are living on bush fire prone areas. Council incorporates the information received from the surveys and includes it in the burn plan before it goes ahead.

**QUESTION:**

How formally does Council map significant trees ? Does Council have a Local Government wide mapping or an audit? When was the last time this was done?

**ANSWER:**

Council has done some mapping as part of the biodiversity surveys. Council is also updating their records on specific reserves where information and data is missing.

**QUESTION:**

How does Council measure the fuel load? What is the trigger point?

**ANSWER:**

The Rural Fire Service and fire management agencies have particular methodology to determine a fuel load. Climate requisites are also taken in consideration before any fire burning practice take place.

SRG members were asked to consider the draft principles and provide feedback as to whether the principles are clear and concise, and whether any further outcomes may be appropriate.

The following feedback was raised by SRG members:

- Focus on conservation of nature should be included in the policy.
- Prevention and preparedness should be the key focus of the policy.

- Hazard reduction burns on Council lands should be the last resort option.
- Council should provide more information to owners/residents of houses that live in bush fire prone land and explain how they contribute to fire risk.
- Manage fire regimes within Council reserves to conserve natural and heritage values.
- More information on aboriginal burn practices and how they work.
- More education about bush fire should be provided to residents that live close to bush fire areas.

Staff will incorporate comments where appropriate.

## 5.2 STAFF UPDATE

### OVERVIEW OF UPDATE

Y Mentis, Executive Manager Environment and Climate Change provided an update on the following topics:

- Purchase of Renewable Energy Certificates

Council resolved to adopt a renewable energy component of 30% as part of the electricity procurement for 2020. However, this was unavailable at the time of procurement. Council will be proceeding with purchasing renewable energy certificates equivalent to 30% of Council's electricity use for the period covering the 2020 calendar year from savings made through contract procurement with SSROC.

- Electricity Procurement Project

Council has resolved that staff should undertake appropriate procurement to source renewable electricity via a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for up to ten years to commence as soon as practicable in 2021 and source Large-scale Generation Certificates (LGCs) for 100% of Council's electricity load, to achieve Council's renewable electricity commitment, for the same term as the PPA. If successful, this will bring forward achievement of ECC strategy target from 2030 to 2021.

- Northern Beaches Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan

At the August 2020 ESRG meeting, staff from Council's Strategic & Place Planning Group outlined the work that is currently being undertaken to consolidate the planning instruments from the previous councils. Council planning staff will respond to questions raised by email.

## 6.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

*The meeting concluded at 7:45pm*

This is the final page of the Minutes comprising 5 pages numbered 1 to 5 of the Extraordinary Environment Strategic Reference Group held on Thursday 10 September 2020 and confirmed on Thursday 19 November 2020